



## **CADIZ POLITICAL DECLARATION**

### **6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the Rabat Process**

**WE**, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Integration and Diaspora, in charge of migration issues, and High Representatives of the following countries: AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BENIN, BULGARIA, BURKINA FASO, CABO VERDE, CAMEROON, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, CHAD, CONGO, CÔTE D’IVOIRE, CROATIA, CYPRUS, CZECH REPUBLIC, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, DENMARK, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, ESTONIA, FINLAND, FRANCE, GABON, GAMBIA, GERMANY, GHANA, GREECE, GUINEA, GUINEA-BISSAU, IRELAND, ITALY, LATVIA, LIBERIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MALI, MALTA, MAURITANIA, MOROCCO, NETHERLANDS, NIGER, NIGERIA, NORWAY, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE, SENEGAL, SIERRA LEONE, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, TOGO and TUNISIA; High representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); of Algeria and Libya as observer countries; and in the presence of the European Commission and the European External Action Service;

**GATHERED** in Cadiz on 13 and 14 December 2022 at the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the Rabat Process, at the invitation of the Kingdom of Spain;

**TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** the main developments since our 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in May 2018 in Marrakesh which have a tangible and direct influence on migratory movements in our region;

**TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** in particular the adoption in December 2018 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration<sup>1</sup> and the Global Compact on Refugees by Rabat Process partner countries, reflecting the commitment of the respective countries to issues relating to migration management and international protection systems;

**RECALLING** the relevance of the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum<sup>2</sup>, proposed in September 2020 by the European Commission, many aspects of which are already in place;

**CONSIDERING** the scope of the new Migration Policy Framework for Africa and its Action Plan 2018-2030, complementing existing regional and policy frameworks on migration and asylum, as well as relevant regional and continental documents on free movement;

**RECALLING** the main commitments agreed to by European and African leaders at the 6<sup>th</sup> EU-AU Summit on 17 February 2022, notably on an enhanced and reciprocal partnership for migration and mobility;

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<sup>1</sup> Without prejudice to the position of each participating or observer State of the Rabat Process towards the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees.

<sup>2</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:85ff8b4f-ff13-11ea-b44f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC\\_3&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:85ff8b4f-ff13-11ea-b44f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_3&format=PDF)

**RECALLING** also the importance of strengthening cooperation on all aspects of migration and mobility, while taking full account of national competences, as expressed by stakeholders in the context of the ACP-EU partnership;

**AWARE** of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the reduction of global human mobility and the increased vulnerabilities of migrants, while **RECOGNIZING** the contribution of regular and well-managed international migration to societies both in Europe and in Africa;

**CONCERNED** about the consequences of protracted crises, conflicts, wars and irregular migratory movements, in particular along the Mediterranean routes, and their impact on increasing the vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees;

**TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** the recent trends in regular and irregular migration movements within and between our regions, and their overall increase on the main migratory routes in 2022, as well as the increasing requests for international protection;

**DETERMINED** to pay particular attention in the coming years to the evolution of human mobility in our countries and regions;

**AWARE OF** the opportunities inherent in better management of human mobility within and between our regions

**DETERMINED** to find appropriate and coordinated approaches to make migration safer, more regular and orderly in countries of origin, transit and destination, while taking full account of national competences and specificities;

**CONVINCED** that only a comprehensive, integrated and multidimensional approach can ensure the success of our collective actions in the face of the complexity of the phenomenon of international migration and asylum;

**REITERATING** our individual and collective commitment to the Rabat Process, its principles and objectives;

**RECALLING** the commitments made at our 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference and the relevance of the Marrakesh Action Plan;

**RECOGNISING** the progress made in the implementation of the Marrakesh Action Plan and the need to strengthen it to better achieve our objectives;

**ADOPT** the attached Cadiz Action Plan

**REAFFIRM** our desire to act in a balanced and integrated manner across all five pillars of the Cadiz Action Plan and the Joint Valletta Action Plan, while taking full account of national competences;

**REITERATE** our determination to pursue our commitment in a spirit of shared responsibility, cooperation and solidarity, with full respect for the sovereignty of States, national legislation, international law and human rights, and to recognise the contributions migrants make to the sustainable development of countries of origin, transit and destination, provided that these are regularly staying migrants;

**AGREE** to redouble our efforts to mitigate and prevent the vulnerabilities associated with irregular migration as well as those caused by forced displacement, such as armed conflicts, and to address their root causes, such as the differential in levels of economic and human development, as well as the risks of climate change and food insecurity;

**EMPHASISE** in this regard the need for continued support to strengthen the capacities of countries of origin and transit, while ensuring the alignment of our interventions with national development strategies, including increased attention to women, youth and diasporas as levers of change;

**AGREE** to place the issue of job creation and future prospects, particularly for young people in countries of origin, transit and destination, at the heart of the priorities of our actions and response strategies;

**ENDEAVOUR** in this regard to further facilitate legal migration in a triple win partnership approach, including in the area of visa issuance, and with respect for national needs, competences and legal frameworks, with innovative proposals focusing on education, training and skills development, as well as on the development of forms of circular migration and the fight against brain drain, in order to better respond to the real needs and capacities of migrants and contribute to the development of countries of origin, transit and destination;

**COMMIT OURSELVES** to deepen our cooperation to find durable solutions for refugees and persons in need of protection, as well as to ensure proper treatment of vulnerable migrants and victims of human trafficking, and to strengthen existing regional and continental mechanisms and asylum systems to provide adequate reception and international protection;

**REITERATE** our commitment to strengthen cross-border cooperation in order to prevent and combat more effectively irregular migration and criminal networks of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, which are responsible for serious violations of the human rights and dignity of migrants. **WE ARE RESOLVED** to unite our efforts so that the tragedies caused by the actions of these networks cease to plague our two continents;

**AGREE** to strengthen our cooperation with a view to achieving more tangible progress in the areas of return, readmission and reintegration of irregular migrants, including through more effective identification and travel document issuance procedures, the compliance with the obligation of each State under international law including Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement<sup>3</sup> for its parties to readmit its own nationals in full respect of human dignity and of the principle of non-refoulement, and increased efforts to promote voluntary return and facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees in their country of origin;

**AGREE** to support the activities of migration research centres on the African continent, such as the African Migration Observatory (OAM) and the African Centre for Migration Studies and Research (CAREM), so that they can contribute to feeding and enriching our Dialogue with reliable data and analysis on migration;

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<sup>3</sup> Until the new agreement between the EU and OACP countries replaces this article and comes into force.

**DECIDE** to strengthen the ownership, visibility and institutional governance of the Rabat Process by endorsing the enlargement of the Steering Committee, the streamlining of the role of the reference countries, and the granting of permanent observer status to the UNHCR, IOM, UNODC and ICRC;

**AGREE** to mobilise adequate and sufficient financial resources to support the implementation of the Action Plan through the use of appropriate instruments and initiatives (Team Europe Initiative, etc.) and national resources of European and African countries dedicated to the implementation of partner countries' policies and strategies, in accordance with their respective procedures and programming;

**COMMIT OURSELVES**, with the support of the Rabat Process Secretariat, to establishing mechanisms and developing relevant tools to periodically monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Cadiz Action Plan in order to improve its scope and impact.

**CONGRATULATE** the authorities of the Kingdom of Spain for the facilities made available to our 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference to ensure its full success and **WISH** the Kingdom of Morocco every success in its future presidency.



## **Cadiz Action Plan**

### **Area 1: Development benefits of migration and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement**

Objective 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to “*facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.*”

Since its inception, the Rabat Process has consistently promoted the positive potential of regular migration and the key role of the diaspora for countries of origin, transit and destination. Strengthening the synergies between migration and development is a priority area and a specificity of the Rabat Process. The Dialogue partners therefore agree to pursue this approach and will in particular focus their actions on optimising the benefits and opportunities of regular migration for development, while taking full account of national competences, by involving diasporas as a priority in this process.

Rabat Process partners recognise the multiple root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement. These root causes, most of which are interconnected, need to be addressed further through a wide range of responses, tailored at both the policy and operational levels. Taking into account the mixed nature of migration flows, partners reiterate the commitments made in the Valletta framework to invest in development and poverty eradication, to address the root causes of irregular migration, and to support humanitarian action and development cooperation for the countries most affected by forced displacement. In addition, the partners commit to addressing the drivers of environmental degradation and climate change and mitigating their impact in the most affected regions.

#### **Objective 1: Maximise the positive impact of regular migration**

Action 1: Identify and share good practices that enable countries to better understand the profiles of their diasporas abroad, and those present on their territories, and to adopt or optimise strategies that promote the economic, social and cultural potential of these diasporas for development, while analysing the potential obstacles to the adoption or optimisation of these good practices.

Action 2: Contribute to reducing the costs of remittances and facilitating the transfer of remittances by migrants to their countries of origin, including by supporting innovative or existing initiatives using the potential of new technologies. Partners could use, for example, the work done by the African Institute for Remittances and its network of focal points.

Action 3: Promote actions to raise awareness of and support for entrepreneurship and productive investment by young people from the African diaspora and women, and encourage them to use their skills for the benefit of their countries of origin.

**Objective 2: Develop a common understanding of the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in the Rabat Process region**

Action 4: Analyse and address root causes (including access to quality education, creation of sustainable economic opportunities and decent jobs, vocational education and training, social protection, improved access to finance, building resilience and anticipating and mitigating climate change), and share best practices in migration data collection and analysis, support the activities of migration research centres, and develop practical recommendations for improving the integration of migration issues into policy-making.

Action 5: Promote the more systematic integration of issues related to the root causes of irregular migration - including climate change - and forced displacement into national socio-economic development strategies and programmes, and into development cooperation programmes, while promoting the ownership of existing regional normative frameworks.

**Area 2: Regular migration and mobility**

Taking note of the above-mentioned objective 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Rabat Process partners recognise the need, in accordance with national needs, competences and legal frameworks, to develop and strengthen regular migration channels. These should be based on efficient civil status systems and partnerships, in particular, the mobility of certain categories of travellers (such as students, young professionals, entrepreneurs and researchers) between the countries of Europe and North, West and Central Africa

**Objective 3: Promote regular migration and mobility, in particular of young people and women, between and within Europe, North, West and Central Africa, including through Talent partnerships**

Action 6: Promote high-level dialogue between authorities of departure and destination countries, as well as employers, to identify scope for labour mobility schemes – including, for example, in the context of Talent Partnerships with identified countries.

Action 7: Encourage the establishment of programmes and exchange networks between vocational training institutes and employment agencies in Europe and Africa, in order to better valorise the academic and professional skills of young migrants, achieve improved skills matching and adapt technical training to the needs of the labour market. Particular emphasis will be placed on activities targeting women and youth.

Action 8: Promote, within national legislative frameworks, the recognition of diplomas and work experience, portability of social rights of regular migrants and their families, for example through the conclusion and implementation of appropriate bilateral, regional or international agreements.

Action 9: Identify good practices and success factors that can guide the development of appropriate policies and support inter- and intra-regional mobility, including the promotion of circular migration to provide work experience for young people and women from Africa in European countries, ensuring the conditions for return, including through entrepreneurship.

Action 10: Promote communication, awareness raising and access to information on regular channels of migration by involving all stakeholders (the State, the diaspora, the media, social networks, civil society, international organisations and the private sector).

#### **Objective 4: Encourage the facilitation of visa issuance procedures**

Action 11: Continue an open dialogue in a spirit of partnership on visa issuance, including through technical meetings and training.

Action 12: Support actions to make the different national visa systems more comprehensible and transparent, including support for the creation of local information structures or the development of online information portals.

#### **Area 3: Protection and asylum**

The Rabat Process partners reiterate international commitments on protection and asylum to which they have subscribed, including those contained in the Valletta Political Declaration, and in particular the commitment to provide protection *“to all those in need in accordance with international and regional instruments.”* They reaffirm their respect for the dignity of migrants as well as of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons and the protection of their human rights, regardless of their status. Partners encourage countries in their efforts to accede to, and implement, existing international protection conventions, including the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. They also encourage capacity building of national institutions in charge of asylum systems. They reiterate their willingness to continue their cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected host countries, in particular in the context of resettlement operations for refugees by EU and African countries as well as in the context of humanitarian assistance to the countries most affected by forced population displacement.

#### **Objective 5a: Promote measures to enhance the protection of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons**

Action 13: Identify existing cross-border and regional protection initiatives in the Dialogue sub-regions, and propose actions to stakeholders to improve the protection of refugees and forcibly displaced persons, including through capacity building of national institutions in charge of asylum systems and in particular their registration. Particular attention will be paid to taking into account the most vulnerable persons, gender specific needs, the best interests of the child, and the needs of unaccompanied minors.

Action 14: Prioritise the needs of unaccompanied minors, focusing on reducing the risks of neglect and exploitation they face, including through appropriate individual assessment of their situation and needs.

Action 15: Promote the adoption of local, national and regional action plans to define the modalities of an effective response, in particular in the event of mass displacement.

#### **Objective 5b: Promote actions to respect the dignity and the human rights of migrants and persons in need of protection**

Action 16: Take all possible measures, in accordance with the applicable legal frameworks, to avoid the separation of families, including in the management of border crossings, rescue at sea and disembarkation procedures, and medical evacuations. To the greatest extent possible and in timely manner, work towards the reunion of family members when separated.

Action 17: Ensure that the disappearance of migrants is prevented, the fate and whereabouts of missing migrants is clarified and feedback is given regularly. To this end, establish trans-regional coordination channels and share information on missing persons with their families, while respecting basic data protection rules, and improve coordination between forensic services to identify deceased migrants along migration routes.

**Objective 6: Promote the integration of refugees and forcibly displaced persons into host communities**

Action 18: Promote, among sustainable solutions, the integration of refugees, the adequate reception of asylum seekers and forcibly displaced persons through socio-economic measures and awareness-raising campaigns for local communities on the one hand, and on the rights and obligations of refugees and asylum seekers in host countries on the other.

Action 19: Share experiences and good practices promoting access to work, livelihoods and other economic opportunities, within the relevant national legislative framework, and enabling persons benefiting from international protection, in particular women, to become more self-sufficient.

**Area 4:**

**Prevention and effective reduction of irregular migration, fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings**

The Rabat Process partners reiterate their international commitments to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, both of which are serious forms of organised crime under international law (The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime 2000, and its supplementary Protocols against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children).

In accordance with the Valletta Political Declaration and the Niamey Declaration, partners commit themselves to intensify efforts to prevent and combat these crimes, both in Europe and Africa, and along the migration routes, by means of various instruments. This will require a greater commitment and cooperation in identifying and dismantling networks, prosecuting and bringing to justice those involved, and protecting the victims. In addition, combating the informal economy resulting from the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings is encouraged, as is increased awareness of the phenomenon and its dangers.

The partners recognise the contribution of regional, sub regional and international organisations and civil society organisations in this field. The benefit of the Rabat Process lies, among other things, in its capacity to network the actors concerned by these two phenomena in order to promote mutual learning and improve cooperation.

**Objective 7: Strengthen the capacities of relevant public institutions responsible for integrated border management, prevention and combating of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings**

Action 20: Improve, with full respect for the human rights of migrants and with a protection-oriented approach, the detection capacities of national authorities in the area of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, as well as in the area of integrated border control and management. Strengthen partner countries' border management capacities in all areas, including equipment and training, as well as the sharing of operational information, within the given legal frameworks.

Action 21: Strengthen international, bilateral, inter- and intra-regional judicial and police cooperation, including information exchange, paying particular attention to financial investigations and the possible establishment of a legal framework delimiting the scope for sharing personal information.

Action 22: Pursue and support efforts aimed at the development and implementation of appropriate legislative and institutional frameworks at both national and regional levels, in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the relevant supplementary protocols against the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings.



**Objective 8: Improve the protection of smuggled migrants, persons in need of international protection, and victims of trafficking in human beings.**

Action 23: Facilitate the sharing of good practices in terms of awareness raising and information on the risks of irregular migration and trafficking in human beings, targeting children and women in particular, and involving all stakeholders (the State, the diaspora, the media, social networks, civil society, international organisations and the private sector).

Action 24: Formulate concrete responses regarding the protection and assistance of affected and trafficked persons, in particular women and girls (shelter, legal advice, social, psychosocial and health services, interpretation, reintegration, etc.) and promote their inclusion in national, regional and sub-regional level initiatives and policies.

Action 25: Strengthen cooperation with civil society organisations, which play a key role in detecting the crime and in identifying and assisting victims of trafficking in human beings, to ensure that they can carry out their activities effectively.

**Area 5: Return, readmission and reintegration**

The Rabat Process partners reiterate their commitment to fulfil their obligations under international law on return and readmission and recall the importance of sustainable reintegration. They reiterate their commitment to the principle of *non-refoulement* and agree to promote voluntary return. They recall their joint commitment to improve cooperation on return and readmission in a spirit of shared responsibility, while taking full account of national competences, and in accordance with international obligations in this field, including the obligation of each State under international law including Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement<sup>1</sup> for its parties to readmit its own nationals in full respect of human dignity and of the principle of *non-refoulement*. This cooperation should be effective, transparent and conducted in full respect of the human rights, safety and dignity of migrants.

The Rabat Process partners welcome the joint progress achieved in the political and technical dialogues in this area. It is important that these efforts continue and that this dialogue is translated into concrete actions, leading to enhanced cooperation and more effective implementation of returns and readmissions.

**Objective 9: Strengthen the capacities of the competent authorities to improve and ensure the process of identification and issuance of travel documents**

Action 26: Enhance dialogue to promote consular cooperation, including through the exchange of experience and good practice on return, readmission and sustainable reintegration at national, regional and cross-border levels (including through regional consultations), and to improve their effectiveness.

Action 27: Promote the use of innovative techniques and electronic systems (e.g. use of video-conferencing for identification or pre-identification, more systematic use of fingerprints and biometric evidence, use of joint actions for complex cases) in order to improve cooperation on data and information exchange and thus facilitate the readmission process, in line with existing agreements and human rights obligations, while respecting the principle of data protection. Where appropriate, provide support (technical assistance, peer support or training) to a specific group of countries to help them implement these techniques.

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<sup>1</sup> Until the new agreement between the EU and OACP countries replaces this article and comes into force.

**Objective 10: Encourage programmes aimed at ensuring safe return, including from transit countries, and the sustainable reintegration of migrants, with respect for their human rights and dignity**

Action 28: Organise peer-to-peer meetings between European and African cities and with other relevant authorities to enable mutual learning on migration management including sustainable reintegration, building on existing networks (such as the *City-to-City* initiative) and capitalising on their achievements.

Action 29: Strengthen assisted voluntary return programmes and promote actions aimed at building national capacities for sustainable reintegration, ensuring that returning migrants are accompanied and included in development policies and programmes at the local level. These actions may be carried out, as appropriate, in conjunction with civil society organisations.

Final clause: The Dialogue partner countries, with the support of the Rabat Process Secretariat, commit themselves to establishing mechanisms and developing relevant tools to periodically monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Cadiz Action Plan in order to improve its scope and impact.

