



6TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
RABAT PROCESS
Euro-African Dialogue
on Migration and Development
CADIZ-2022

Senior Officials Meeting

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Palacio de Congresos

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Document**



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Introduction

On 13 December 2022, the Kingdom of Spain, in its capacity as Chair of the Rabat Process, hosted the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the Rabat Process in Cadiz. The meeting brought together senior officials from EU Member States, North, West and Central African countries, the EU and ECOWAS, as well as representatives of international organisations (IARC, UNHCR, IOM and UNODC). Introduced by a high-level opening ceremony, the meeting presented the final drafts of the Cadiz Political Declaration (PD) and Action Plan (AP) that will set the multiannual framework of cooperation of the Dialogue for the period 2023-2027. The meeting also provided an opportunity to present the numerous activities of the Dialogue during the implementation period of the Marrakech Programme 2018-2022 and to discuss the issue of a strengthened governance of the Process.

- **High Level opening ceremony**

Mr. Martijn Pluim, Director of Migration Dialogues and Cooperation at the ICMPD, began his intervention by saying that the presence of high-level political representatives from all the partner countries of the Rabat Process confirmed the relevance of the migration dialogues, especially in these times of tension (global pandemic, Russian-Ukrainian crisis, climate change, high demographic pressure on the African continent, etc.). Mr Pluim indicated that, under the impetus of the Spanish Presidency of the Dialogue, the partner countries had collectively contributed to the drafting of a new Political Declaration and an updated Action Plan reflecting the main migration trends and international developments since 2018. Through these new texts, partner countries reiterate the founding principles and objectives of the Rabat Process and renew their commitment to finding appropriate and coordinated approaches to better address all aspects of migration and mobility.

Mr. Dedou Panamsi Hemou, Head of the ECOWAS Liaison Office in Brussels, began his speech by recalling that the Kingdom of Spain had played an important role in revitalising the Dialogue during its year of presidency, in particular by proposing to extend the Steering Committee to new countries. He recalled ECOWAS' readiness to put in place regional tools within the framework of the Rabat Process. He then specified that the renewal of the commitment of partner countries should be done with adapted mechanisms and coordination of interventions. He concluded his speech by expressing his solidarity with Morocco, as leader of the African Union on migration, for its upcoming presidency.

Mr. Johannes Luchner, Deputy Director General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) began by recalling the European Commission's long-standing commitment to the Rabat Process, through increased engagement at political, operational and financial levels. M. Luchner welcomed the results achieved in recent years in terms of governance and migration management, in protection (tripartite force with the African Union, the European Union and the UN in Libya), in the fight against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings (joint operational partnerships and joint investigation teams between African and European countries), with search and rescue operations on both sides of the Mediterranean, in tackling the root causes of migration (support for vocational training for young Africans), in legal migration (opportunities for students and workers on both sides of the Mediterranean) and finally in return and readmission. Mr Luchner concluded his intervention by stating that the European Commission's objective was to capitalise on these partnerships and actions, to assess the achievements and to strengthen cooperation between the EU and Africa to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable and to support safe, orderly and dignified migration.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, **Mr. Fouad Kadmiri**, Director of Consular and Social Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Abroad, recalled that Morocco had demonstrated its commitment to the migration issue over the years, both at the national level (adoption of the National Immigration and Asylum Strategy in 2014), regional level (through the 5+5 Dialogue the Union for the Mediterranean and the Euromed Migration V dialogue) and internationally (with the hosting in December 2018 of the Intergovernmental Conference that adopted the Marrakech Pact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the hosting of the

ministerial meeting of the Global Compact Migration Champion Countries on 24 March 2022). Mr. Kadmiri continued his intervention by specifying that the African Observatory on Migration, inaugurated in Rabat in December 2020, allows to generate a better knowledge and understanding of the migration phenomenon and to develop the collection, analysis and exchange of data between African countries in order to contribute to a better understanding of migration trends. Morocco also indicated that the spirit of consultation and cooperation will remain during its presidency in order to carry out innovative actions, such as sharing information on regular migration opportunities; linking national employment promotion agencies; concluding migration agreements; investing in training adapted to the needs of the labour market; upgrading skills; facilitating the mutual recognition of diplomas and skills; and promoting positive communication on migration.

Ms. Dolores Rios, Ambassador for Migration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain, concluded the opening ceremony by recalling Spain's commitment and leading role in the Rabat Process since its creation in 2006 and the importance of adopting the Political Declaration and the Cadiz Action Plan, which take into account the comments and observations of all partner countries and constitute balanced texts. Finally, she referred to the importance attached by Spain during its Presidency to strengthening the governance of the Dialogue, in particular by enlarging the CoPil to include two new European countries and two new African countries, but also by granting permanent observer status to the IOM, the UNHCR, the ICRC and the UNODC.)

• Assessing the past and looking into the future of the Rabat Process

The Secretariat of the Rabat Process presented all the activities carried out during the implementation period of the Marrakech Programme 2018-2022, which were diverse in nature: political meetings, thematic meetings, technical workshops, labelled meetings, round tables, workshops, etc. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of meetings were held face-to-face and several events were also held in virtual and hybrid formats.

The Rabat Process produced more than a hundred knowledge tools during the period 2018-2022, whether they are documents related to political and thematic meetings (conclusions, recommendations), knowledge tools (infographics, cartographies, etc.), communication tools (website, videos, brochures, etc.), monitoring tools (calendar of activities, evaluation forms, stocktaking report) or strategic documents. All these tools allow Dialogue partners to make evidence-based decisions and support the formulation of projects and programmes.

Several results can be observed during the period 2018-2022:

1. The meetings and workshops organized during the period 2018-2022 addressed all 5 areas of the Marrakech Action Plan on topics as diverse as root causes of migration, the migration-development nexus, remittances, labour migration, border management, combating human trafficking and smuggling or return and reintegration.
2. Dynamic tools have been put in place, such as labelled initiatives and lead country actions. These activities have diversified the activities of the Dialogue and made it more dynamic. This system was designed to strengthen the sense of ownership and involvement of Dialogue partners.
3. Tools for data collection, analysis and sharing have been developed. Access to reliable and relevant data and the effort to capitalise on information and knowledge not only better informs the Dialogue, but also serves as a stronger basis for the development of policy and technical recommendations. During the period 2018-2022, collaboration with stakeholders engaged in data collection and analysis in the Rabat Process region has been strengthened.
4. Synergies with other regional processes and fora have been strengthened to ensure a comprehensive approach to migration and to constantly enrich the Dialogue with new practices. Under Spain's leadership, the Dialogue has made significant progress in governance to strengthen partner countries' ownership and

involvement in the Dialogue, including the principle of enlarging the Steering Committee to include two new European and two new African countries.

5. The Rabat Process also confirmed its leading role in the follow-up, implementation and updating of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP).
6. Finally, the communication strategy towards the general public has been strengthened since 2018. The website is the main awareness and communication tool, centralising all information and resources. Social media outreach has also been intensified, including live coverage of Dialogue meetings on the Rabat Process Twitter account. In addition, a LinkedIn account was created in 2022 to enhance the visibility of the Dialogue and communicate on activities and publications.

- **Presentation of the final drafts of the Political Declaration and Action Plan of Cadiz 2023-2027 and final coordination before the Ministerial Conference**

Mr. Jorge Romeu, Deputy Director General for Migration Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain, began by saying that the 5 areas of the Joint Valletta Action Plan and the Marrakesh Action Plan had been retained in the Cadiz Political Declaration and Action Plan because they were still valid. However, some additions had been made to both texts, including the issue of climate change as a cross-cutting priority (actions 4 and 5), the protection of unaccompanied minors (action 14) and missing migrants (action 17).

Mr Romeu said that in the Cadiz Political Declaration, the partner countries 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 lead countries and the granting of permanent observer status to UNHCR, IOM, UNODC and ICRC. In the same Political Declaration, countries commit themselves to supporting the activities of migration research centres on the African continent, such as the African Migration Observatory (AMO) 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.

Based on the cooperation needs put forward by partner countries, the five thematic areas now include 10 objectives, 29 actions and a final clause aimed at establishing relevant mechanisms and tools to periodically monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Action Plan.

The Kingdom of Spain called on the partner countries to adopt these two balanced texts at the Ministerial Conference.

- **Rabat Process governance**

The partner countries endorsed two decisions regarding the governance of the Rabat Process. First, they endorsed the decision to welcome four new countries to the Steering Committee: Niger, Nigeria, the Netherlands and Switzerland. They also adopted the decision to grant permanent observer status to the international organisations IOM, UNODC, UNHCR and ICRC.