



Rabat Process
Euro-African Dialogue on
Migration and Development

Outcome document

Joint High-Level Meeting

Khartoum Process and Rabat Process

Empowering EU-Africa Cooperation: Innovative Pathways for Skills Mobility

16-17 October 2024
Lisbon, Portugal



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جمهورية مصر العربية
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Under the co-chairmanship of Portugal and Egypt

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Overview

- Co-chaired by Portugal and Egypt, this Joint High-Level Meeting built on the long-standing collaboration between the Khartoum Process and the Rabat Process, reflecting a shared commitment in tackling common challenges, enhancing synergies and exchanging good practices between the two regional dialogues.
- The meeting aligned with Domain 2 of the JVAP on Legal Migration and Mobility, emphasising the need to promote regular channels for migration and mobility from and between European and African countries.
- With representatives from 53 Dialogue partner countries, and regional and international organisations in attendance, the meeting gathered diverse perspectives for in-depth discussions on addressing demographic challenges, meeting common needs, and unlocking opportunities across the two continents.

Objectives of the meeting

- Foster a platform for dialogue on labour migration, skills development and mobility within the Khartoum Process and Rabat Process regions.
- Analyse African and European perspectives on labour migration and skills mobility, and share lessons learned and good practices in managing labour migration.
- Identify needs, priorities, challenges, and opportunities on labour migration and skills development to better support policymaking and strengthen cooperation between African and European countries.

Expected outcomes

- The meeting sought to yield policy takeaways and joint recommendations for the Khartoum Process and Rabat Process, along with proposals for follow-up actions and plans for future joint Dialogue meetings.

1) High-level opening ceremony

The opening remarks were presented by senior representatives, including Cesar Texeira, Member of the Board of the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA) of Portugal; Ambassador Dr Wael Badawi, Deputy Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt; Johannes Luchner, Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) at the European Commission; Dr Sabelo Mbokazi, Head of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union Commission (AUC); Albert Siaw-Boateng, Director of Free Movement of Persons and Migration at the Economic Community for Western African States (ECOWAS); and Sedef Dearing, Director for Migration Dialogues and Cooperation, at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

The high-level representatives reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing labour migration as a vehicle for sustainable development, stressing the importance of continued collaboration between governments, the private sector, civil society, and other key stakeholders.

Cesar Texeira underlined the necessity of continued efforts to guarantee pathways that promote safe, orderly and regular migration, as well as to work towards the dignified integration of those migrating to other countries to live and work. He also emphasised the importance of initiatives and tools that contribute to better and more efficient matching between the needs of markets and the skills of migrants. This is essential to ensure that migration is beneficial to all stakeholders and contributes to the personal and professional fulfilment of migrants.

Building on this commitment, Ambassador Dr Wael Badawi, current Chair of the Khartoum Process, highlighted the essential role of Migration Dialogues as platforms for coordinating efforts among partner countries. He emphasised that migration should be recognised as a powerful tool for sustainable development, benefitting migrants and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination.

Johannes Luchner addressed shared challenges between Europe and Africa, such as competitiveness, conflict, climate adaptation, and digital transition. He emphasised the EU's need to attract talent, highlighting recent initiatives like the Skills and Talent Mobility Package aimed at streamlining legal migration. Mr. Luchner stressed the role of the private sector in filling talent gaps and boosting local economies, advocating for brain gain over brain drain by promoting safe and organised mobility pathways.

Positioning the meeting as a call for a renewed Africa-Europe partnership, Dr Sabelo Mbokazi asserted the need for a coordinated approach to migration management, aligning EU development initiatives with the African Union's Agenda 2063 to create synergies that benefit both continents.

Albert Siaw-Boateng further illustrated the role of regional efforts by outlining ECOWAS's initiative to facilitate labour mobility as part of broader regional integration. Mr. Siaw-Boateng also stressed the need to align local strategies with broader international and continental initiatives to ensure effective and inclusive migration policies.

Sedef Dearing reflected on the progress made through the Khartoum and Rabat Processes, emphasising how both Dialogues have built a solid foundation for addressing common challenges and seizing opportunities. She underscored the strengthened cooperation and trust that have developed since the creation of the two regional dialogues.

2) Shaping the future: Keynote insights on talent attraction and skills mobility

▪ The African perspective

Ambassador Dr. Namira Negm, from the [African Migration Observatory](#) (AMO), delivered a keynote address emphasising the need for fair, evidence-based policies that not only enhance the potential of African talent but also tackle challenges such as brain drain and negative perceptions of migration.

While African migration is largely intra-continental, a growing number of African professionals and workers seek opportunities abroad, particularly in Europe and the Gulf. However, data show that only 3% of the African population lived outside their home country in 2020¹, underscoring that Africa is not a continent of mass emigration, nor are African migrants overwhelming other regions.

African labour mobility underscores the continent's increasing role in meeting global labour needs, yet brain drain remains a significant challenge, particularly in essential sectors. To address this, the AMO advocates for structured circular migration pathways that enable skilled professionals to contribute abroad while retaining strong ties to their home countries, through a data-driven approach.

Additionally, Africa's unique demographic profile, as the youngest continent in the world, presents both a pressing challenge and an unparalleled opportunity to drive economic growth, fuel innovation, and position Africa as a leader on the global stage. Strategic investments in education, skills development, and market-relevant training will enable Africa's young population to become leaders in competitive global sectors, thereby transforming potentials into prosperity.

Key recommendations include:

- **Continent-to-continent skills exchange platforms:** Develop digital platforms that connect skilled African workers with opportunities in both regions, using AI to align skills with market needs and ensuring accessibility to training for students in African universities and research centres. These platforms should contribute to knowledge and skills transfer to origin countries.
- **Implement and expand dual certification programmes:** Advocate for dual certification programmes that enable African professionals to gain qualifications recognised in both regions, smoothing transitions and better acceptance of African skills. This includes highlighting existing programmes and sharing best practices.
- **Invest in circular migration programmes and the enhancement of legal pathways for migration:** Promote circular migration initiatives that allow for temporary work abroad with guaranteed re-entry and reintegration support. This will encourage skill enhancement and economic contributions while facilitating advanced African students' involvement in joint projects that benefit their home countries.
- **Develop holistic support programmes:** Establish programmes that foster the personal, social, and cultural growth of migrants, helping them maintain connections to their roots while contributing to both host and home countries.
- **Protect migrants' rights:** Create frameworks to safeguard migrants' rights throughout their journey, promoting ethical recruitment and ensuring fair treatment to combat discrimination.

¹ Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2022, https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2022-02/aef_summit_african-migrations.pdf (last accessed 12 November 2024).

- **Extend research on migration and mobility and the migration-development nexus:** Invest in research to deepen understanding of migration dynamics across the continent, ensuring that policies are evidence-based and focused on maximizing the developmental benefits of migration.
- **Encourage mechanisms for incorporating data** on skills mobility into migration databases and survey modules.

- **The European perspective**

Jo Antoons, Managing Partner at Fragomen Global LLP offered a European perspective on talent attraction and skills mobility, emphasising that a comprehensive approach, integrating immigration with workforce innovations, is essential for addressing Europe's demographic and economic future.

To address pressing labour shortages, the EU has focused on creating flexible pathways to attract and retain foreign professionals, strengthening workforce resilience and growth potential. Talent attraction strategy include initiatives like the [EU Blue Card](#), the [EU Talent Pool](#) platform which also supports Talent Partnerships with non-EU countries, and the [long-term residency directive](#).

European countries are adopting various measures to retain talent, focusing on expanding work opportunities, improving naturalisation and family reunification processes, and engaging foreign nationals already present. Germany has introduced policies such as a points-based Opportunity Card, relaxed residency rules, and indefinite extensions to its Western Balkans Regulations, while Ireland expanded its employment permit system in late 2023. Belgium's Walloon Region is easing work permit requirements for low- and medium-skilled workers starting in September 2024. Sweden has revamped its work permit application process for skilled workers.

Additionally, many countries are relaxing naturalisation and long-term residency pathways, with Germany allowing multiple citizenships and Norway easing permanent residency requirements. Several countries, including Denmark and Germany, have also simplified family reunification procedures, while the EU is enhancing employment freedoms for foreign workers through amendments to the Single Permit and Blue Card Directives. These efforts reflect a broader trend towards creating more inclusive, flexible migration systems aimed at boosting both attraction and retention of talent.

Furthermore, Europe is advancing toward a comprehensive digitalisation of immigration processes. Notably, Switzerland will issue both paper visas and digital barcodes starting February 2024, while Finland is automating its immigration services. The United Kingdom plans to eliminate physical immigration documents in favour of eVisas by the end of 2024.

Key recommendations for maintaining Europe's competitiveness and attracting the talent needed for growth and innovation include:

- Improving **skills and degree** recognition systems.
- Expanding pathways for **low- and technical-skilled roles**, with a focus on shortage occupations, and shifting from an academic to a **professional experience** focus.
- Promoting greater uptake of **long-term residence** options.
- Determined and **serious engagement** with SMPs, ensuring private sector involvement in their development, streamlining skills recognition, and introducing an EU-wide job-seeking permit.
- Ensuring the **effective implementation of the EU Blue Card Scheme**.

- **Initial reflections from Khartoum Process and Rabat Process partner countries**

The initial reflections centred on addressing the complex dynamics of migration, emphasizing the need for policies that balance brain drain with brain gain, improve skills recognition, and foster reintegration opportunities to support development.

- Several countries, such as **Nigeria**, raised concerns over the loss of skilled workers, particularly in healthcare, due to limited pathways for migration that enhance long-term skills retention. The call was made for European host countries to recognise the value of skilled African professionals and for embassies to facilitate migration that adds value for all parties.

- **South Sudan** emphasised the global demand for African talent and highlighted the role of private sector engagement in driving economic growth.
- **Egypt** emphasised the importance of promoting legal pathways along with supporting job creation in countries of origin so that migration is a choice. There is also a need for European partners to support reintegration tools, especially for migrants who wish to return and start businesses. Circular migration was highlighted as a flexible, mutually beneficial approach with promising long-term potential.
- **Somalia** advocated for legal migration pathways, particularly for countries affected by conflict, as a strategy to reduce irregular migration. It underscored the critical role of reintegration, especially through job creation, to address the economic impact of reduced remittances when migrants return.
- **Austria** raised challenges related to the recognition of foreign qualifications, noting significant disparities even within national education systems. A standardised approach could address these variations and promote equitable treatment.
- **Togo** highlighted the need for European populations to understand the essential role of migrants in filling labour gaps and contributing to economic growth.

Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP)

Resat Ozkan, from the [JVAP Follow-up](#) Team at ICMPD, outlined the collaborative efforts under the Khartoum and Rabat Processes since the 2015 Valletta Summit on Migration, focusing on labour migration, drawing on insights from the JVAP Database.

- Labour migration is central, with 522 initiatives out of 3,451 projects and policies funded and implemented across these regions.
- Since 2015, 286 policies, including international agreements, laws, and regulations, have been adopted. Alongside these, 236 projects focus on Domain 2 of the JVAP, which centres on Legal Migration and Mobility, with total funding of €891 million primarily sourced from the EUTF, Germany, ENI, and AMIF, among other funding partners.
- Key implementing organisations include UNHCR and GIZ, with Ethiopia, Tunisia, Kenya, Egypt, Morocco, and Mali as the primary countries of implementation.
- Policies and projects in the JVAP Database cover topics like diaspora, circular migration, registration, visas, and social security. Frequent policy amendments reflect an evolving environment, requiring adaptability from authorities.
- JVAP Partners may have different approaches based on legal, economic, and social norms, but cooperation remains strong, with multilateral projects receiving most funding

MMD Grant Facility

Marcello Giordani, Coordinator of the MMD Grant Facility at ICMPD, presented the new Programme Component supporting non-state actors' involvement, focusing on the strategic role of ICMPD's MMD Grant Facility in migration and mobility initiatives across Africa. With a funding of approximately €10 million, the facility aligns with the commitments of the Rabat and Khartoum Processes to addressing migration through sustainable actions and capacity-building. Aimed at bolstering African civil society, it supports civil society organisations, research bodies, diaspora groups, and non-state actors, in collaboration with local authorities.

Projects under this facility target key areas, including legal migration, mobility, and addressing irregular migration. The Grant Facility prioritises a transparent, inclusive evaluation process, receiving over 100 applications from diverse sectors, including academia, NGOs, and private organisations in Africa and Europe. Most applications involve consortiums, highlighting strong collaboration. Eligible projects are evaluated on both technical and administrative criteria to ensure they align with the goals and priorities of the Dialogues.

Upcoming milestones include finalising evaluations by Q4 2024, with contracting and implementation phases set to begin in first quarter of 2025 and conclude by the second quarter of 2026.

3) Strategies to cultivate skills development and talent attraction

In the first roundtable, participants examined African and European perspectives on talent attraction and skills mobility, exploring innovative programs like the EU Talent Partnership, Skills and Talent Mobility package, and various talent attraction and skills development initiatives.

- The [Migration Partnership Facility](#) (MPF), funded by the EU and implemented by ICMPD, seeks to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on migration and mobility between EU member states and partner countries. Drawing on its extensive experience in developing and managing labour mobility schemes, the MPF presented key building blocks for the design and implementation of such initiatives, namely research, training and skills, institutional capacity-building, and connecting markets. In addition, the migrant journey is divided into three key stages, each requiring ongoing support: preparation, mobility, and (re)integration.

- **The perspective of the [European Commission](#): an evolving approach to labour mobility and skills development**

While the development of new legal pathways remains a core competency of EU member states, the European Commission stressed the importance of fostering a European perspective on these matters. In this respect, the launch of the Migration Partnership Facility was a groundbreaking initiative. It has gained momentum in recent years, with member states presenting new projects and innovative ideas to enhance legal mobility. Building on these experiences, the EU has been working to develop new legal pathways, drawing from lessons learned to address key challenges and obstacles.

Two initiatives are noteworthy: (1) [MOVE GREEN](#): a collaborative initiative between Spain and Morocco that offers networking opportunities and professional qualifications to Moroccans seeking to work in the renewable energy and green economy sector, and (2) [ProMob PlastSkills](#): a partnership between France and Tunisia seeks to train Tunisian professionals in the plastic sector to then go work in France.

The EC highlighted a series of priorities to **enhance existing schemes**:

- **Implement existing EU legislation** such as the EU Blue Card directive.
- Increase the number of projects **focusing on implementation**.
- **Expand legal pathways** to attract skills beyond those governed by the EU Blue Card directive.
- **Facilitate procedures** to access the EU territory, particularly visa procedures.
- **Collaborate with the private sector**, with particular attention to small businesses that have limited resources to support labour mobility schemes and widely benefit from international cooperation.
- Support **research and data collection** to develop tailored initiatives.

The EC also advocates for diversifying these initiatives and expanding their geographical scope. The first generation of partnerships was closely aligned with the interest of the member states. Nowadays, **building on established foundations** is essential to **strengthen partnerships** with countries that already have mobility relationships and to develop existing projects.

The EC further aims to **develop coherent strategies** in regions like North Africa and West Africa, where irregular migration levels are high and legal pathways could help mitigate these trends. Overall, the European approach should be comprehensive and aligned with broader EU goals while taking into considerations the needs and realities of countries of origin in terms of retention and development of their talents and workforce.

- **The perspective of the [African Union Commission](#): enhancing free movement of persons and labour mobility across Africa**

The AUC firmly believes in the transformative impact education and skills development have on development. In line with this vision, the AUC has made education and skills development a key priority, with the 2024 theme of "Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century". To support this, the AUC is advancing frameworks for vocational training and the harmonisation of qualifications, while also promoting labour migration policies that encourage skills mobility across the continent. These initiatives are aligned with the broader goals of the [African Union's Agenda 2063](#), which underscores that the eradication of poverty will be achieved through investment in human capital, particularly by enhancing the skills of Africa's workforce.

While these frameworks and strategies are established, the **challenge lies in ensuring their effective implementation** at the ground level. In collaboration with the AU Heads of State, the AUC has established the [Joint Labour Migration Programme \(JLMP\)](#), involving key implementing partners such as the IOM and ILO. This collaboration supports Member States in enhancing labour migration governance across the continent, alongside the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). A key area of focus is supporting member states in enhancing labour mobility, particularly by strengthening labour market information systems to support skills development throughout Africa.

The JLMP has yielded valuable **lessons learned**, particularly in assisting AU Member States with the development of BLAs. In 2021, the AUC introduced [Guidelines for developing BLAs](#) to strengthen Member States and RECs' capacities **to effectively negotiate and conclude BLAs**, ensuring the protection of migrant rights. In addition, the JLMP also provides support to the RECs in developing labour migration policies at both the regional and national levels. This is complemented by the programme's use of **labour market information systems and the production of high-quality, up-to-date labour migration statistics**, which support evidence-based policymaking across the continent.

In parallel, the AUC has established the [African Continental Qualifications Framework \(ACQF\)](#), a policy tool designed to address the challenges of harmonisation of qualifications and recognition of skills across Africa. Additionally, the AUC has introduced the [Free Movement of Persons Protocol \(FMP\)](#), critical to achieving the socio-economic and political integration and prosperity envisioned in the African Union's Agenda 2063, to support Member States in facilitating the movement of people across the continent, including capital goods and services, to foster regional integration and facilitate trade.

The AUC has also provided **operational and technical support to the RECs' labour migration portfolios**. For instance, the East African Community (EAC) has implemented initiatives like the [EAC Common Market Protocol](#), which promotes equal access to markets and facilitates the movement of professionals within partner states. Similarly, in ECOWAS, a human development strategy has been adopted, focusing on education, skills development, and labour market participation. ECOWAS also works on harmonising technical skills recognition across its Member States.

- **The perspective of Portugal: a whole-of-government approach to labour migration and integration**

Portugal remains steadfast in its commitment to **fostering cooperation, integration, and recognition** as core elements of its approach to labour and skills mobility. These principles underpin the country's strategy, which emphasises the importance of adopting a holistic approach and working towards sustainable collaborative solutions. Portugal recognises that strengthening regular migration and tackling demographic challenges can only be achieved through joint efforts. This includes cooperation across public and private sectors, universities, non-governmental organisations, and trade unions, all of which play a critical role in skills development, talent attraction, and labour mobility.

At the heart of Portugal's **National Plan for Migration** is the alignment of supply and demand in the labour market, ensuring that skills and talent are effectively matched to meet national needs. Adopted in June 2024, the Plan is built around regulated immigration, foreign talent attraction, humanistic integration, and institutional reorganisation. Key actions include strengthening consular posts with Immigration Liaison Officers, enhancing cooperation between public institutions, business confederations, and employers, and promoting professional development through targeted training. Additionally, it aims to improve the recognition of foreign qualifications and skills to support talent integration. The Plan also focuses on talent attraction and includes measures which foresee the attracting of foreign students to higher education institutions.

Portugal is also supporting the European Commission's [Talent Partnerships](#) and the [EU Talent Pool](#). Nationally, Portugal has taken significant steps by establishing a BLA with Morocco and signing multiple Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Portuguese-speaking countries, like East Timor, Cabo Verde, and Mozambique. These agreements are pivotal in facilitating talent flow from countries with historical, linguistic, and cultural connections to Portugal.

Portugal recognises that matching labour demand with supply is not enough for successful migration outcomes. Integration plays a key role in ensuring that migrants contribute economically and successfully integrate into Portuguese society, which is essential for long-term success of migration policies and the sustainability of the labour market. To support this, Portugal has developed various **initiatives focused on the integration of migrants**, including their effective inclusion in the labour market. A cornerstone of these efforts is the network of **migrant support centres**, which serve as one-stop shops, offering services, such as Portuguese language courses, CV assistance, job placement support, and help with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Portugal is also placing a **strong emphasis on boosting entrepreneurship** and has undertaken programmes led by Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA), with the support of the Ministry of Labour, to help migrants start and grow businesses. Additionally, several civil society-led programmes are focused on providing on-the-job training, which not only strengthens professional skills but also helps migrants develop the soft skills needed for cultural integration.

- **The perspective of Kenya: leveraging new technologies for better skills mobility**

In Kenya, **youth represent 63% of the total working-age population** and disproportionately face high levels of unemployment. While the country has worked to develop policies and strategies to tackle this issue, their implementation has been insufficient, and translating these policies into actual job opportunities has proven challenging.

In parallel, a shift in trends is taking place, with an increasing number of Kenyans seeking job opportunities abroad. Taking stock of that reality, the Government of Kenya has **prioritised labour migration and skills mobility as a central policy strategy** to address high unemployment, as outlined in the [Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda \(BETA\)](#). To support these objectives, various legal, policy, and institutional reforms are being implemented such as the [National Policy on Labour Migration](#) and the [National Labour Management Bill](#). This effort is part of a **broader regional context**. Since January 2020, the [Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration for East and Horn of Africa](#) has brought together member states to exchange good practices on labour migration and facilitate the harmonisation of labour migration policies in the region.

Kenya is committed to **supporting skills development and skills matching**, in line with the [Guidelines on Skills Mobility Partnerships](#). Its strategy includes the development of **innovative digital tools for skills mobility**, such as:

- The [National Employment Authority Integrated Management System](#) (NEAIMS), a digital platform centralising public employment services and labour migration-related processes, with accredited agencies to protect workers' rights and prevent fraud. Kenya is also developing a National Skills Inventory to map available skills, support skills matching and address training gaps.
- The [Ajira Digital Programme](#), led by the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Digital Economy (MICDE), aims to empower over one million young Kenyans by providing access to digital job opportunities.
- The [Open University of Kenya \(OUK\)](#), launched in August 2023, is the country's first virtual public university designed to increase access to affordable higher education and training nationwide.

In addition to digitalisation, Kenya has developed an **innovative funding mechanism** to share the costs of skills development. The **Contributory Migrant Workers Welfare Fund** is designed to provide protection, welfare, and assistance to Kenyan migrant workers throughout their migration journey, during their stay abroad, and upon their return.

- **The perspective of Ghana: Strategy for Skills Development, Youth Employment, and Regional Labour Mobility**

Ghana is committed to enhancing its population's skills, creating higher-quality job opportunities, and improving employment outcomes for its youth, who represent 60% of the population. However, the growing pressure on the labour market, due to the gap between job supply and demand, has resulted in significant outflow of skilled workers.

Youth unemployment remains a major concern, with 18.3 million workers in the informal sector, where exploitation and abuse are prevalent. In response to these challenges, Ghana has implemented several **strategies to stimulate economic growth**, reduce poverty, and improve living standards. The [Labour Act](#) of 2003 and the National Migration Policy have been pivotal in advancing the country's efforts to manage labour mobility effectively.

With support from ECOWAS, Ghana is also working on the recognition and harmonisation of qualifications across the region to promote skilled worker mobility and ensure broader acceptance of qualifications. Central to this effort is the establishment of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) alongside the **development and implementation of functional labour market information systems** to provide timely and accurate market information. Ghana is leading the way with its centralised [Labour Market Information System](#), and in collaboration with ECOWAS, is working to introduce similar systems across the region.

Through the [Ghana Jobs and Skills Project](#), which focuses on skills development and job creation, the government is also working to **promote and raise awareness on safe, legal migration pathways**. This includes providing career guidance for specific professions, assisting employers in their recruitment processes, and ensuring that policies align with international standards. Ghana is particularly dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of its citizens abroad, prioritising the safe movement of workers and the protection of their rights. As part of this, the government is exploring the potential for signing and monitoring BLAs with other countries in the ECOWAS region. Regional cooperation and coordination are essential to ensure the protection of workers and facilitate the movement of people, goods and services.

Q&A session with KP-RP partner countries

- **Belgium** has actively participated in MPF initiatives aimed at strengthening the talent pool in countries of origin, in line with labour market needs. Drawing from their experience, ENABEL emphasised the importance of involving employers in both countries of origin and destination, collaborating with the private sector to identify market gaps, and fostering multi-country EU partnerships to maximise the impact of lessons learned.
- The **European Commission** reaffirmed its commitment to support intra-African mobility and South-South cooperation. It highlighted the significance of regional talent mobility, including that of the diaspora as a key driver for development.
- **Côte d'Ivoire** shared its experience with free movement protocols and talent mobility, noting that non-nationals are granted the same rights as citizens, including access to healthcare and education, which facilitates integration. Côte d'Ivoire is also currently developing a National Labour Migration Policy with the support of the AUC and ILO to address the increasing number of Ivoirians seeking job opportunities abroad.
- **Senegal** stressed the importance of linking skills mobility to remittances, emphasising their role in securing the future of children in migrant families and encouraging the diaspora's contribution to the development of countries of origin.
- **Cabo Verde** highlighted several good practices, including training and language courses for migrants, ensuring access to basic services, and promoting circular migration through various programmes to mitigate brain drain and enhance development outcomes.

4) Boosting talent mobility through bilateral cooperation

The second roundtable explored strategies to strengthen talent mobility through bilateral cooperation between African and European countries, with speakers sharing insights on existing frameworks such as bilateral labour agreements (BLAs), memoranda of understanding (MOUs), and skills partnership programmes.

BLAs are not a new tool, but recent agreements have become more detailed, focusing on skills and human rights safeguards in line with the [UN Network on Migration's Guidance on BLAs](#), developed with the support of IOM and ILO. Successful BLA negotiations require a multi-stakeholder approach, involving trade unions, workers, and businesses to better address market needs.

▪ The perspective of Egypt: learning and building on existing cooperation frameworks

Egypt emphasised its commitment to the development of **coherent and comprehensive labour mobility frameworks**, based on reliable data and evidence, with key international partners in Europe, Africa and the Gulf. This commitment aligns with [Egypt's Vision 2030](#), which pledges, amongst others, to promote social development, social justice and sustainable growth, to uphold human rights, freedom of movement and socio-economic rights, and to foster a better future for migrants and communities.

To this end, Egypt has negotiated **several key agreements**:

- [Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the European Union](#): signed in 2024, this agreement promotes a holistic approach to dealing with migration, with irregular migration as one of its components that requires expanding legal mobility pathways and strengthening the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) system in Egypt.
- Negotiation of MoUs with several destination countries from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with a particular attention to **fair recruitment practices**.

Egypt also **expanded its collaboration with EU member states** on a bilateral basis. In 2022, **Egypt and Greece** signed a bilateral agreement for seasonal agricultural workers, resulting in a database of over 5,000 workers employed under this agreement. In June 2024, **Egypt and Cyprus** signed a MoU, enabling Egyptian nationals to access the Cypriot labour market in various high-demand sectors.

Beyond these examples of bilateral cooperation, Egypt also participates in the [THAMM programme](#), implemented by ILO, IOM and GIZ. Egypt underscored **existing challenges** related to visa procedures, language barriers and skills recognition, which currently restrict access for Egyptian workers to the German labour market. The project has seen **several successes**, including the creation of training programmes for labour attachés, guidance on MoU negotiation, and workshops and awareness campaigns on fair recruitment targeting media professionals, recruitment agencies, and the private sector. An emphasis was put on the need to scale up these skills mobility programmes, and facilitate their implementation, so that countries of origin, destination and the migrants themselves can benefit from them.

- **The perspective of Spain: scaling up pilot projects for sustainable circular migration**

Spain's overarching goal for labour mobility is to **balance domestic labour needs** with **fair and humane migration policies** that are mutually beneficial for Spain and countries of origin. Their labour migration strategy is articulated around **two complementary key pillars**.

- **Strategic partnerships in the form of bilateral labour agreements:** BLAs are essential legal frameworks that strengthen cooperation with key partner countries, ensuring worker protection and social rights through specific clauses. However, Spain suggests that they should be complemented by less formal arrangements, as their scope remains limited.
- **Circular labour migration:** In this perspective, Spain underscored the importance of circular schemes that not only address immediate labour market gaps but create lasting, mutually beneficial outcomes for migrants. One example is [WAFIRA](#), an EU-funded pilot project targeting Moroccan women for seasonal strawberry picking in Spain. Although current pilot projects are mostly focused on agriculture and remain limited in scope, Spain expressed its intention to expand these initiatives to drive sustainable change.

Several strategies were outlined to achieve these goals:

- **Rigorous evaluation:** Continuous data collection to refine methodologies and ensure long-term impact.
- **Capacity building:** Training local authorities and empowering stakeholders to manage and support reintegration efforts.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Involve governments, NGOs, private sector, migrant communities from the outset.
- **Policy integration:** Embedding successful outcomes into national and regional policies, such as BLAs.
- **Diverse funding models:** Partnering with private sector, international organisations, and governments for sustainable funding.
- **Adaptability:** Flexibility to adjust strategies based on evolving migration and labour market dynamics for long-term relevance.

Pilot projects in new sectors are also being developed and are intended to be replicated with Spain's partner countries, building on good practices and lessons learned from this framework.

- **The perspective of Uganda: embedding migrants' welfare in BLAs**

External labour mobility is a significant source of employment for Ugandan workers, with labour mobility pathways first established in 2005. Since then, Uganda has negotiated four BLAs with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. However, there have been reports of human rights abuses and exploitation, particularly amongst unskilled domestic workers. In response, the government of Uganda adopted in 2021 the [Employment \(Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers\) Regulations](#), which govern BLAs to protect migrant workers' rights and welfare in countries of destination.

Despite these advances, **several challenges** remain. The **negotiation process** is lengthy, and the number of people benefitting from BLAs remains limited. As a result, many migrant workers travel to countries without agreements, where their rights cannot be adequately protected. **Implementation and monitoring mechanisms** are weak, with insufficient resources to deploy labour attachés abroad to monitor, report and document violations of workers' rights. This led to the suspension of the BLA with Jordan due to inadequate monitoring practices. **Social security mechanisms** for migrant workers are lacking.

To address these challenges, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development introduced in 2018 the [External Employment Management Information System](#) (EEMIS), a digital tool allowing the Ministry to clear domestic workers, license private recruitment agencies, vet director of companies, and accredit training institutions. It also supports matching between job seekers and available offers abroad. The Ministry is developing an additional feature to allow migrant workers to report any forms of violations while in their country of destination.

- **The perspective of France: ensuring win-win partnerships through flexible programmes and agreements**

France’s strategy for bilateral and regional cooperation focuses on **win-win partnerships** and **circular mobility approaches**. Its goal is to balance its own needs with those of its partners, with a special attention to brain drain and the development of countries of origin’s workforce. To achieve this, France has deployed a combination of formal frameworks and informal programmes to foster cooperation with key partner countries and enhance labour mobility.

[Formal tools for bilateral cooperation](#) include:

- Seven agreements for the **concerted management of migratory flows** (“concerted management agreements”, or CMAs) with countries such as Congo, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Benin or Gabon.
- 18 agreements on the **mobility of young people and professionals**.
- A reform of professional immigration schemes was introduced in the [2021 immigration law](#), adopted in 2024, which created a **“Talent” title**. There are currently 10 categories of Talent appellations, ranging from investors to medical and paramedical professionals.

These agreements have often failed to meet their intended objectives. The main issue is their rigidity, which makes them difficult to adapt to the evolving dynamics of the job market. As a result, there is a significant gap between the initial engagement and the effective implementation of these agreements.

Acknowledging these limitations, France has simultaneously prioritised **new forms of mobility and cooperation frameworks**. The [THAMM programme](#) in Tunisia serves as an example of this approach, having been successful, particularly with the [“Polyvia”](#) pilot project, which trains Tunisian workers in the plastics sector to supply both the French and Tunisian job markets. The project is flexible, highly adaptable, addressing sector-specific shortages in France while developing the labour force in Tunisia. It will be expanded to include the transport, logistics, and textile sectors.

- **The perspective of Nigeria: moving beyond BLAs: innovative tools for bilateral and regional cooperation**

Skills mobility is crucial for Nigeria's economic development, as it fosters knowledge exchange, innovation, and global competitiveness. To facilitate and capitalise on labour migration, Nigeria has adopted comprehensive policies and developed innovative tools.

At the **regional level**, Nigeria has been at the forefront of regional cooperation for the movement of workers. It ratified the **ECOWAS protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment** in 1980, ensuring the right of entry, visa-free travel, residence and business establishment to members of ECOWAS. Nigeria also pioneered the creation of the [Technical Aid Corps](#), a south-south cooperation framework to support skills mobility to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, deploying Nigerian professionals to provide technical expertise and foster knowledge-sharing.

Bilaterally, Nigeria remains committed to developing BLAs as crucial legal frameworks for worker mobility, but faces several challenges:

- **Long and complex negotiations:** They often involve several ministries, which complicates administrative procedures. At the same time, key implementing partners are often missing from the negotiating table. These elements hinder the efficient design, adoption and implementation of BLAs.
- **Mismatch of priorities:** Nigeria is attentive to limit brain drain and the export of its skilled workers, while countries of destination seek after the Nigerian qualified workforce.
- **Lack of safeguards and guarantees** regarding the protection of migrant workers.

Nigeria has made notable progress in **global skills matching** through new technologies, as seen in **two recent initiatives**. The [National Talent Export Programme \(NATEP\)](#) was launched in September 2023 to bolster job creation in Nigeria through the facilitation of talent export abroad, focusing on digital technology, engineering and healthcare. The [National Electronic Labour Exchange \(NELEX\)](#) is a platform that connects job seekers with employers at home and abroad and supports the

collection of labour market data. Overall, formal bilateral cooperation in Nigeria goes hand in hand with broader, ambitious, global programmes which aim to position Nigerian workforce as a leader in skills mobility and talent export.

Q&A session with KP-RP partner countries

- **South Sudan** shared their positive experience in harnessing the benefits of migration for development, recommending that recruitment cycles occur every two to three years to enable seamless labour market integration for new arrivals in destination countries.
- **Djibouti, Austria,** and other countries raised questions on preventing trafficking in human beings. The AUC outlined several initiatives, including the establishment of Continental Operational Centre, aimed at combating this phenomenon.
- **UNHCR** highlighted the situation of refugees, recommending the development of complementary pathways to integrate them into labour markets, aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees.
- **Denmark** emphasised opportunities for labour migration, particularly for students, researchers, and healthcare professionals. Recent legislation now allows doctors and nurses to enter Denmark before their qualifications are officially recognised, addressing challenges with skills recognition across countries.
- **Senegal** welcomed the existing cooperation with Spain, noting recent agreements that include a labour mobility component.
- **Guinea Bissau** highlighted its various agreements with Spain, Portugal, and ECOWAS, underscoring the importance of regional and international partnerships in labour migration.

5) Conclusions

Over the two-day event, a rich collection of valuable recommendations and best practices were gathered to advance skills mobility. These insights will be consolidated into a **reference document** featuring key policy takeaways and joint recommendations annexed to this document.

Initial **key insights** include:

- Both Africa and Europe recognise the need for **skills development to support economic growth and innovation**, focusing on vocational and professional training and regional labour mobility.
- There is a shared interest in advancing labour migration cooperation through **skills mobility partnerships, bilateral labour agreements,** and **recognition of qualifications.**
- Both continents are committed to **balanced talent retention strategies**, to avoid the brain drain effect with a focus on circular migration, support integration and a positive narrative about migration in countries of destination, as well as facilitating legal migration pathways for a ‘triple win’ outcome.
- **Intracontinental mobility:** the role of internal mobility within Africa and Europe is crucial for skills development, attraction, and retention of skills.
- **Aligning skills with employment opportunities** in countries of origin and of destination is essential, as is ensuring worker protection and support for integration or reintegration. Migration extends beyond labour dynamics and skills matching; it is fundamentally about people.
- Partnerships can create **meaningful opportunities for youth and migrants**, benefiting countries of origin and of destination, through the exchange of skills, ideas, and cultures.
- Dialogue partner countries emphasised that significant efforts remain necessary to enhance mobility within and between both continents, and to effectively develop, attract, and retain skills that offer **mutual benefits** for all stakeholders.

Strategic pulse survey

The online feedback survey yielded 71 responses. The results reflect a high level of satisfaction exceeding 90% for thematic relevance and presentation quality.

Respondents highlighted the meeting's value in **strengthening networking and cooperation** between European and African partners, as well as with international organisations. The survey shows that participants gained valuable insights into contextual challenges, perspectives of origin countries, ongoing initiatives, partnerships, and country priorities. Many also underscored the meeting's relevance in addressing shared challenges across regions, emphasising the importance of a continental approach.

Looking ahead, there is a clear **call for stronger synergies between the two Dialogues**, with a focus on more regular exchanges and joint meetings to address shared challenges and leverage global and continental learning opportunities. Additional suggestions include enhancing communication between the two Processes to keep partner countries informed on relevant developments.

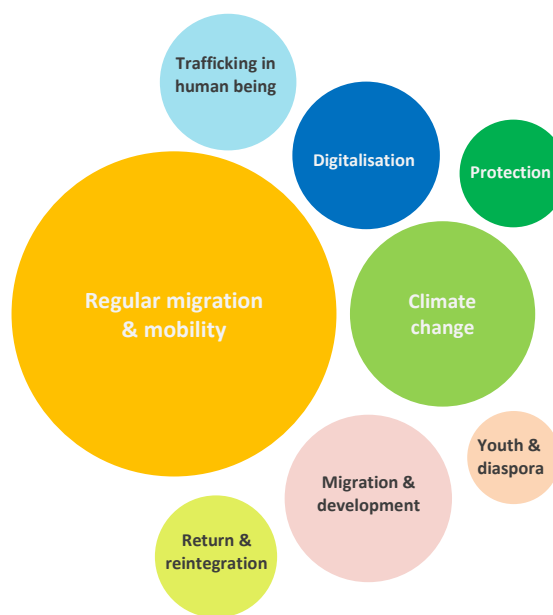
Participants expressed a need for more actionable steps and a stronger emphasis on concrete solutions, particularly through practical support for implementation, capacity-building, operationalisation, and enhanced access to funding and related information.

Avenues for future Joint thematic meetings

Key thematic priorities identified for future joint meetings include skills and talent development, climate-induced mobility, and addressing the root causes of migration. Survey responses also pointed to the integration of digitalisation, data, and technology, as well as cross-cutting themes, with migrant integration emerging as a recurring overarching priority.

Top key areas of interest identified by respondents for future joint meetings include:

- **Legal pathways, regular migration and mobility**, including strategies to promote legal migration pathways, streamline qualification recognition, support migrant skills development and talent mobility, engage employers in the discussion, and create sustainable migration agreements that benefit both origin and destination countries.
- **Climate Change / climate-induced mobility**
- **Migration and development / addressing the root causes of migration.**
- **Digitalisation, technology, data collection and sharing**
- **Trafficking in human being**
- **Return and reintegration**
- **Protection and asylum**
- **Youth and diaspora engagement**



Note: The graph illustrates the distribution of priorities mentioned by the respondents.

Participation and outreach

Participation

- The Joint High-Level Meeting brought together a diverse audience of 156 participants, including representatives from 53 partner countries involved in both Dialogues, as well as senior experts from regional and international organisations, such as the African Union Commission (AUC), European Commission Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), ECOWAS, ICMPD, IGAD, ILO, IOM, UNHCR, and the European Union. Development organisations like ENABEL and GIZ also participated.

Outreach

- The event was widely covered on the **social media** channels of the Rabat Process and Khartoum Process. Over the course of the activity, the coverage generated a total of 8,970 impressions and 246 engagements on LinkedIn. Additionally, the RP and KP profiles were mentioned in 11 posts by other stakeholders discussing the meeting on LinkedIn. Posts from the RP profile on X (former Twitter) received 3,835 impressions, resulting in 312 engagements and 13 retweets.
- The initial outcomes were also highlighted in an [in-focus article](#) published on the **ICMPD website** and promoted in three different posts on social media.