Rabat Process

Thematic meeting on Return, Readmission and Reintegration

31 May-1 June 2016 – Brussels, Belgium

Concept Note

Profile of participants: Technical profile

Context

The Rabat Process offers its partner countries a unique platform for exchange and cooperation in order to reinforce border management, promote efficient cooperation between States and to exchange practices. The Rome Declaration and Programme which defines the policy framework of the Rabat Process for 2014-2017 recalls the importance to strengthen cooperation in border management, and also in the areas of readmission and return, combating document fraud and irregular migration. Regarding the Valetta action plan, this thematic meeting is in line with the priority action 5 which focused on return, readmission and reintegration.

In the first place, migrants in an irregular situation should be convinced to return voluntary. If needed with the help of the state where they reside. Return management requires three actions: one has to have the migrant who is in an irregular situation at hand or to know where the migrant resides, in order to start the return procedure. Then the responsible authorities of the country of origin and of destination have to collaborate in order to determine the nationality of the migrant. Finally, the transfer of the migrant should be organised. During these processes, the judicial and humane aspects should constantly been taken into account.

Improving the migration management requires actions on many fronts. This also includes stepping up the effectiveness and efficiency of identification of migrants. The identification process usually involves (i) using all the available elements to establish the nationality (for instance official documents such as driving licenses) - however many migrants use false or fraudulently obtained travel documents and it may be necessary to make further inquiries; (ii) verification of identity using biometric elements (for countries in possession of electronic national identity management systems covering (at least a part of) the adult population; and (iii) in-depth interviews to ascertain nationality, which remains the most commonly used approach. In some instances, even if a person is in possession of identity documents,

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the authorities of its country of origin require further, more thorough checks of identity. It is therefore important to enhance the process of identification as part of comprehensive improvements of countries authorities' capacities/national strategies on migration management.

In order to ensure the sustainability of return, it is necessary to provide (i) reintegration assistance in a more systematic manner, including following forced return and to (ii) stimulate the voluntary return, thus preventing and improve relations and cooperation on irregular migration. Stories of returnees, who are recipients of reintegration assistance, can be used as convincing messages in campaigns raising awareness on risks linked to the irregular migration to Europe. Supporting the plans of emigrants who wish to return and defining the terms of their professional reintegration in their countries of origin through supportive policies and with the help of the diaspora is also a crucial element.

Learning from the best practices across the region, the reintegration package should comprise four major interventions: economic empowerment (skills development, assistance to develop tailor-made business plan, micro-finance), psycho-social support (positive and developmental thinking), and awareness-raising programmes (conveying messages on the consequences of irregular migration, minimising stigma and discrimination towards the returnees), institutional development (strengthening the capacities of local authorities and service providers).

Objectives

This thematic meeting will pursue the following main objectives:

- Establish a technical dialogue in the field of return, readmission and reintegration among the countries of the Rabat Process.

- Present practices of cooperation on the operational level on return in the pre-departure phase, in identification and reintegration, in order to assess possibilities for replication.

- Reinforce efficient cooperation mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of return through well-managed return, identification and reintegration while taking into account the particularity of the Rabat Process which gathers countries of origin, transit and destination.

- Determine concrete measures for follow-up on identified initiatives and methods of collaboration

Key topics

The meeting will focus on the following three areas:

- Pre-departure phase: return and promotion of voluntary return. How to improve the different procedures in the pre-departure phase and better communicate, inform and educate on voluntary return?

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- Innovative identification techniques and cooperation mechanisms that allow effective and efficient identification.
- Reintegration packages and special measures for vulnerable migrants.

Expected results

This thematic meeting should lead to:

- An understanding on the way forward to strengthen practical and operational cooperation between Rabat Process countries in order to ensure efficient return, readmission and reintegration
- The identification of concrete initiatives and good practices that could allow States to reach visible results