



Kingdom of Morocco
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation



Rabat Process
Euro-African Dialogue
on Migration and Development



Kingdom of Spain
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Thematic Meeting on Asylum and International Protection

Rabat, 15-16 June 2015

Concept Note

1. CONTEXT

Challenges in the area of asylum and international protection in the Rabat Process region

Although relatively spared by big crises engendering significant human movements, the Rabat Process region increasingly faces challenges in the area of asylum and international protection.

The number of deaths in the central Mediterranean Sea related to the dangerous crossings on boats carrying migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people, unaccompanied minors and trafficking victims alike, continues to increase exponentially. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), around 1'700 people who have travelled within these mixed movements died this year off the Libyan shores. This constitutes 30 times more deaths than during the same period in 2014. Even though the warm seasons have not started yet, it is possible that the sad balance of last year (3'500 victims) will be surpassed.

Part of the refugees and asylum seekers trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea originally come from countries in the Rabat Process region: the crises in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Mali and most recently the instability in the North of Nigeria related to the insurgency of Boko Haram have caused noticeable flows of internal and international displacement. Another part of the refugees and asylum seekers originally come from faraway countries (Eritrea, Somalia, Syria, etc.) but transit the countries of the Rabat Process region in search of protection.

The absence of national asylum systems that respond to the protection needs of refugees and asylum seekers in particular and, if necessary, also other groups of people on the move contributes largely to secondary movements towards other distant regions. This increases the risks related to travels undertaken in often perilous situations even further. Therefore, deaths could have been prevented if the protection needs of the concerned persons could have been met by the neighbouring states or even within safe zones in the respective countries of origin. The search for sustainable solutions, be it voluntary return or reintegration assistance, would also have been easier. This is shown by the success of the recent repatriation operation of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso and Niger, the local integration option chosen by some of the internally displaced persons in Liberia and Togolese refugees in Benin. Resettlement, which is

Funded by the European Union



Implemented by ICMPD and FIIAPP





Kingdom of Morocco
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation



Rabat Process
Euro-African Dialogue
on Migration and Development



Kingdom of Spain
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

still underused in the Rabat Process region, could offer a credible legal way to safety, including in the Member States of the European Union.

The adequate response to the rising challenges in the area of asylum and international protection in the Rabat Process region could thus consist of developing reliable national asylum systems, supported by a rapid mobilisation of international aid. Certain countries seem to have taken this direction, Morocco being one of them. The country has adapted its asylum legislation, one of the pillars of its new migration policy. The development of reliable national asylum systems should also be accompanied by measures dealing with rejected asylum seekers and those who prefer not to seek asylum, such as assisted voluntary return programmes and reintegration assistance.

The international mobilisation surrounding the humanitarian consequences of the current situation in the central Mediterranean Sea could provide the momentum to undertake this important task of updating the national capacities of managing asylum in the African countries of the Rabat Process region. Supported by international solidarity, UNHCR and IOM, as per their mandates, and the European Union, as main regional donor, have a key role to play in accompanying this progressive handover of assistance and protection responsibility to the governments of the countries in the region.

2. OBJECTIVE

This thematic meeting focuses on issues of asylum and international protection and particularly aims at identifying approaches to strengthen and develop national protection systems in view of a better regional cooperation in this area within the Rabat Process region.

3. KEY TOPICS

The meeting will focus on the following issues:

- The impact of the crises, both within the region and faraway, on mixed flows in the Rabat Process region
- Regional responses and cooperation in view of emergency situations
- Effectiveness and efficiency of regional prevention strategies and long-term planning in view of regional mixed migration flows
- Strengthening and developing reliable national asylum systems in view of a multiplication of regional asylum programmes and a possible setting up of a regional protection system

4. EXPECTED RESULTS

This meeting will lead to:

- The development of a mutual understanding of issues related to asylum and international protection

Funded by the European Union



Implemented by ICMPD and FIIAPP





Kingdom of Morocco
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation



Rabat Process
Euro-African Dialogue
on Migration and Development



Kingdom of Spain
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

- An identification of concrete initiatives and guiding lines that could allow the states to reach visible results for developing and improving their national asylum systems and to better prepare their regional emergency response

5. PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

Given the theme and the operational objectives of this meeting, it is desirable that the technical directors in the area of asylum and international protection of the dialogue's partner countries and organisations attend this meeting.

Funded by the European Union



Implemented by ICMPD and FIIAPP

