



PORTUGAL 2007



First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Migration
(Algarve – 18, 19 November 2007)

Agreed Ministerial Conclusions

The Ministers:

RECALLING the 1995 Barcelona Declaration principles and objectives establishing a comprehensive partnership in the Euro-Mediterranean region;

RECALLING the Five Year Work Programme of the Barcelona Summit (28 November 2005) which calls for enhanced cooperation in the fields of Migration, Social Integration, Justice and Security through a comprehensive and integrated approach, reiterating the continued support for the objectives set out in paragraphs 11 and 12 of that Programme, while highlighting the need for improved practical cooperation at regional level;

RECALLING the 8th and 9th Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Tampere, 27-28 November 2006 and Lisbon, 5-6 November 2007 respectively), which emphasized the need to strengthen the management of migratory flows in a comprehensive, integrated and balanced manner beneficial to the Euro-Mediterranean peoples and the need to increase cooperation in the fields of legal migration, migration and development and illegal migration;

RECOGNISING that well-managed migration can contribute to optimise the economic and social benefits of migration, for countries of origin, transit and destination, and represents a bridge for the enhancement of mutual understanding between cultures and civilizations;

UNDERLINING the need to strengthen the joint management of migratory flows, in a spirit of partnership, shared responsibility, mutual benefit and solidarity, in a comprehensive, balanced, integrated and holistic approach and taking note of the many important initiatives taken by various Euro-Mediterranean partners aimed at making migration more beneficial, namely to development, with a view to strengthening capacity building and enhancing future policy developments;

RECOGNISING the need to work towards facilitating people-to-people exchanges, promote faster issuance of visa and look at specific procedures for certain categories of people and promote legal migration opportunities within the Euro-Mediterranean region, taking into account the needs of the respective labour markets;

UNDERSCORING the need for this comprehensive and balanced approach to fully respect and protect the rights of migrants and human rights, in particular those of female migrants and children, and to provide effective international protection for those in need, on the basis of the principles enshrined in international law and the specific commitments of each country, based on its adherence to specific instruments or agreements;

CONSCIOUS of the importance of family reunification as a way to protect the family and respect family life, according to principles of instruments of international law, and the commitments to promote fair treatment of migrants in the societies of Euro-Mediterranean partners in particular by combating discrimination, racism and xenophobia against migrants and their families, stressing respect for all religions and cultures and thus promoting dialogue between cultures, in accordance with internationally recognised values;

REAFFIRMING that social integration is an issue of common interest in the Partnership and EMPHASISING the importance of legal migrants' access to the labour market, education, healthcare, institutions and social services and enhancing legal migrants' participation in the economic, civic, social and cultural life in their countries of destination;

UNDERSCORING that migration constitutes a factor that contributes to economic and social development;

AGREEING to the need to further promote Euro-Mediterranean Partners capacity building in the institutional framework and management of migrants flows and to develop and intensify mutual cooperation and vocational training projects;

CONSCIOUS of the importance of defining measures to avoid brain drain and skills shortages phenomenon in relevant sectors and to promote the sustainable return of these migrants to their countries of origin;

RECOGNISING the need to promote mechanisms, services and effective financial products to facilitate the secure transfer of remittances, to reduce their cost and make them conducive to development, while respecting the private nature of these remittances and to cooperate in increasing migrants' awareness of and access to the formal banking system;

RECOGNISING that illegal migration, often involving serious risks for migrants, is a source of concern for the Euro-Mediterranean Partners and stressing the importance of fighting this phenomenon through a multi-faced approach that includes not only security but also economic, social and human dimensions.

UNDERLINING the need to enhance cooperation to reduce significantly the level of illegal migration, including trafficking and smuggling of human beings and the loss of life through hazardous sea and border crossings in accordance with International Law, and the need to promote cooperation in all aspects to fight illegal migration, such as the negotiation of different kinds of readmission agreements, reinforcement of capacity building in border management and migration;

RECALLING the important contributions from international initiatives such as the Rabat Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development held on the 10th -11th of July 2006 and the Tripoli EU-Africa Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development held in 22nd - 23rd November 2006 as well as the United Nations High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development held in New York in September 2006;

ACKNOWLEDGING the ongoing activities and *fora* on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean context both at bilateral and regional level;

With a view to contributing to the above-mentioned principles and objectives, Ministers commit to undertake appropriate and concrete measures to implement the following actions as a matter of priority:

Legal migration

Facilitate legal movement as one of the key elements of our cooperation, through promoting legal migration opportunities, being aware of the globally positive effect of legal migration in terms of development. It must be underlined that such policies need to take into account the needs of the countries of origin in terms of transferring competences and alleviating the consequences of the brain drain that migration can represent. In order to promote the framework that allows for the orderly management of legal migration in the interest of all parties concerned, it is proposed to analyse the possibilities of facilitating and simplifying legal migration procedures for workers in demand, in order to improve legal channels for migration. These efforts would focus on different categories of legal workers and could also include different forms of mobility such as circular and temporary migration, taking into account the needs of the Euro-Mediterranean countries labour markets as well as in terms of development.

Projects:

- Setting-up a working group on the migration aspects of the labour market that would include representatives of all Euro-Mediterranean partners and relevant social partners (including specialised labour organisations and employers) with the aim of carrying out an in-depth exploratory and technical study of the labour situation and labour market needs for migrants. This initiative will also explore possibilities for labour matching, and undertake field studies, when necessary. Information and experiences exchanged, as work in this group progresses, may be shared with other sectors in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership on an informal basis to ensure coherence. In this context, it is noted that there will be a workshop, in December 2007, to begin preparations for the Euro-Med Ministerial Meeting on Employment to be held in 2008.
- Promote the introduction of training courses, including in the countries of origin, for migrant workers with the aim of enhancing their abilities which they will keep and make use of once back in their countries.
- Promote pre-departure professional training and linguistic courses to potential migrants.
- Carry out information campaigns directed towards potential migrants on legal migration and labour opportunities concretely available in the countries of destination.
- Consider how to make the use of EU portal technology in the area of migration and employment beneficial to all Euro-Mediterranean partners;

- Explore the possibilities for establishing centres to provide information on and manage job-seeking and employment opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean region, while fully respecting national competences, to be developed by the Mediterranean partners with the support of the EU Member States, taking into account lessons learned with existing examples (e.g. ANAPEC).
- Promote programmes and activities for newly arrived legal immigrants, including information packages regarding migrants' rights and the importance of respecting national values and legislation.

Migration and development

Agree on the need to address the root causes of migration mainly poverty, unemployment, and the development gap, including through encouraging result-oriented partnership projects in this regard within countries of origin, to create a momentum for sustainable development.

Encourage and promote foreign direct investment in order to generate employment and reduce migration outflow.

Help to set up mechanisms and services and effective financial products to facilitate the transfer of migrants' remittances and micro credit opportunities: promote transfers through the formal banking systems, reducing costs and making it a safer and rapid process and thereby increasing the available income of migrants and their respective beneficiaries. This will result in an incentive for migrants to transfer larger sums of money and in that manner voluntarily contribute to the development of their countries of origin.

When considering this theme, it will be important not to forget that, taking into account that these sums are privately owned, facilitating the transfer of funds is just one more possible instrument for improving the means which may contribute for development. It does not replace consolidated policy Official Development Aid and Direct Foreign Investment.

Projects:

- A seminar on transfer of funds and micro-credit opportunities, will take place, in which all stakeholders would intervene. It is therefore proposed to reflect upon: the encouragement on using financial services, by increasing migrants' awareness of and access to the formal banking system, also through activities such as financial literacy training programs; the improvement of general efficiency of services supplied, namely through alternative methods of transferring money, making use of new technologies.
- Construction of a Euro-Mediterranean website which may gather all the available information on remittances and respective transfer procedures, including those related to costs involved, therefore increasing the information and process transparency and, in this way, promoting competition amongst finance institutions so as to decrease the transfer costs.
- Study the possibilities to support financially migrants legally residing in Europe, aiming at co-financing their investment projects in their countries of origin.

Illegal migration

Considering that Euro-Mediterranean partners are, to a large extent, origin, destination and transit countries, it is important to promote cooperation and capacity building, through the exchange of experiences, good practices and regular training, with regard to managing migration flows at the borders and to return and readmission.

Projects:

- Promotion of projects aiming better security standards in Euro-Mediterranean partners' national travel documents such as introduction of biometry and new technologies at security services, which may lead to the reinforcement of trust in the travel documents utilisation and the corresponding facilitation of the movement of people.
- Promotion of training courses for the countries of transit: a) on methods for the detection and identification of false or falsified and counterfeit identity and travel documents; b) on enhancing capacity building related to departure flows and; c) on strengthening the relationship between fighting illegal migration and the respect for the relevant international instruments, in particular with regard to search and rescue at sea. Migration management will be promoted using existing national capacities. Taking note that the European Borders Agency could support any initiatives of Euro-Mediterranean partners in promoting activities linked to border management and migration. All Euro-Mediterranean partners can, on a voluntary basis have access to the training courses of the European Border Agency;

- Workshop on voluntary return and readmission issues, including, *inter alia*, to reflect upon matters such as information campaigns covering all aspects of illegal migration, identification procedures, assisted voluntary return including reintegration measures, and negotiation of readmission agreements between Euro-Mediterranean partners and with source countries.

Financing

The financing shall be secured from, *inter alia*, available institutional resources to support the Euro Mediterranean partnership, other financial instruments of the European Union and national contributions of Euro-Mediterranean States participating in projects.

Implementation and Follow-Up Framework

Maintaining regular meetings between the Euro-Mediterranean partners, through establishing a working group at Experts Senior Officials level with a view to implementing the above-mentioned objectives and actions, as well as reviewing achieved progress and report, in close cooperation with the European Commission, to the Euro-Mediterranean Committee.