

## **MINISTERIAL EURO-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON "MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT".**

- Draft Concept Paper -

Migration constitutes an old reality which reflects the strong relation between Africa and Europe. These exchanges are first of all an opportunity, a source of cultural, social and economic enrichment for our two continents, but are also at the origin of a deep imbalance, if not a human drama. For want of a concerted regulation between countries of origin, transit and destination – knowing that most countries are indeed countries of origin, transit and destination – this imbalance becomes preoccupying for all. Elements as essential as human dignity, respect for State sovereignty, stability of the social and economic fabric or the guarantee of public order against organised crime, are therefore threatened as much in Africa as in Europe. These represent decisive elements for the stability and the progress of each one of our countries, as well as dimensions that are indissociable from the development partnership between Europe and Africa.

Conscious that each of our countries' destiny is intermingled, we wish to afford ourselves the means to set up a partnership between African and European countries located along migratory routes.

Africa is a young continent, of which 60 % of the population is under the age of 25. This youth, which drives social and economic development, should be able to forgo the uncertain and perilous paths of clandestine immigration by gaining back confidence and hope in the future. In this perspective, it is urgent to institute a new cooperation between Africa and Europe aimed at implementing rapid and concrete initiatives in the field of migratory policies and development; the purpose being to maximise benefits and reduce risks for all the relevant parties, particularly migrants. This cooperation must derive from the fact that irregular migratory flows are driven by powerful structural factors that are relevant to origin and host societies and are characterised, and which have a motivation that is predominantly economic and social in nature. They are characterised: by the use of terrestrial and maritime routes – often structured and controlled by illicit trafficking networks – and by the crossing of various countries leading to an entry on European territory in extremely precarious and dangerous conditions, which often result in human loss.

The organisation of a Euro-African conference on migration and development finds its justification in the context of human precariousness, as well as in the existence of specific migratory routes originating from Sub-Saharan Africa. This initiative, which stems from an organic vision of the migratory process and in particular from the synergy between development and immigration, aims to bring an integral and immediate response to the problem of migration between Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, on the basis of a partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination. This overall response should namely tackle: the structural development problems from which derives the said propensity to migrate; the work with societies of

migrants and diasporas as a factor of development, modernisation, and innovation in societies of origin; strengthening the capacity of countries of origin and transit so as to manage migration flows; the reinforcement of the fight against illegal immigration and the trafficking in human beings, including the readmission of illegal migrants; the improvement of legal immigration; the implementation of an active policy of integration as well as a policy to fight exclusion, xenophobia and racism in host societies.

Through the setting up of appropriate and agreed mechanisms, as well as the implementation of complementary actions, this conference aims to initiate a dialogue between countries of origin, transit and destination on the question of migration, so as to reach the following objectives:

1. Identifying strategic directions for an effective cooperation between all relevant countries and organisations so as to insure an efficient management of migration flows.
2. Strengthening development policies in the field migration, through an innovative approach based on partnership.
3. Elaborating a concrete Plan of Action and identifying the means necessary to its implementation.
4. Establishing a follow-up mechanism in order to guarantee the completion of agreed decisions.

The organisation of these flows therefore requires a response which addresses the different aspects and phases of the migratory process from every angle, in the framework of an approach that involves countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as in a perspective that is both global and balanced. This response must take into account current financing mechanisms, whilst calling for specific and sufficient funds, in order to reach marked goals in an optimal way. The financing of actions that have been agreed upon implies that adequate means be set aside. Community financing should be implemented in the framework of the December 2005 European Council Conclusions and without prejudice to the already open budgetary programming.

To reach these objectives, the Conference intends to draw on the longstanding dynamics of cooperation between the European Union, its member States and the countries of origin and transit, as regards African immigration, and wishes to be at the origin of complementary initiatives. The Rabat conference is intended to spur political and operational initiatives in synergy and coherence with all the fora pertaining to migration.

The Rabat Ministerial Conference should also pave the way to a cooperation, in partnership through all migratory routes from Central and Western Africa to Europe. In the participants' opinion, this operational concept could be applied for other migratory routes, such as those involving Eastern Africa.

## I. COOPERATION IN TERMS OF DEVELOPMENT.

The reinforcement of administrative and judicial capacities in African countries, as well as the consolidation of good governance is necessary to the creation of a climate that is conducive to economic development and to both foreign and local investments.

The management of migration flows between Africa and Europe must firstly be part of a partnership aimed at fighting poverty and promoting sustainable development. The pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the application of the Cotonou Agreement and the European Strategy for Africa, as recently adopted, are – amongst others – the bases for this Euro-African partnership. Thus, sustainable development and bridging the digital gap; strengthening capacities in the food, sanitation and medical sectors; access to education and professional education, all contribute to local development and consequently, to addressing the root causes of migration.

In order to reach these objectives, it is necessary to make better use of migration's potential as a factor of development, modernisation, innovation of the societies of origin. This can be done by facilitating remittances, professional training and professional qualifications of migrants, and also by facilitating voluntary return through the promotion of economic reintegration projects in the countries of origin and strengthening ties between diasporas and societies of origin. The conclusions on cooperation and development recently adopted in Paris within the Ministerial Conference of the 5+5 Dialogue offer a coherent approach in this field.

On this basis, the Conference seeks to attain the following objectives:

- 1. The problematic of migration must be understood in terms of mobility of skills and human resources.** An improved dialogue between EU member States and African countries regarding questions legal migration, as well as the optimisation of legal immigration and the facilitation of visas proves to be necessary.
- 2. Access to the European labour market,** especially by the establishment of an information exchange mechanism in consideration of European and African needs, **could help optimise the potential of long term, circular and temporary migration.**
- 3. The promotion of initiatives favourable to productive investments** (including those held by migrants), leading to the development and to the political stability of the country.
- 4. Developing knowledge and African know-how in all domains,** as well as implementing of a system which facilitates the transfer of immigrants' private funds for productive purposes; represent some of the initiatives that would contribute to driving and supporting the continent's development. By means of such skills and

income transfers towards Africa, the contribution of African immigrants could play a leading role in the development of countries of origin.

5. **Tripartite cooperation** with EU-member States should be intensified so as to further implicate those African countries that possess specific competences, which are sometimes better suited to the assets and challenges of Africa's development.
6. **The implementation of a strategy in favour of a migration - conceived in a perspective of mutual interests, the fight against stereotypes, xenophobia and racism - is fundamental.** In this perspective, the media could play a decisive role in migrants' integration, an important factor of development and vector that facilitates the coming-together of people, **especially by emphasising immigration's positive aspects** such as the cultural and social contribution of migrants in host societies. When the contribution legal immigration is done with the respect of the values of the societies involved, immigration should not be construed as a threat but rather as a source of wealth, as much for the host country as for that of origin.

## II. COOPERATION IN TERMS OF MIGRATION FLOWS.

A coherent approach to the management of the migration phenomenon starts with a dual observation: the first is that migration flows are positive for the relevant societies if they are properly controlled according to mutual interests and if they are regulated in a concerted manner. They are harmful when they occur clandestinely, thus involving enormous costs in terms of human suffering and the destabilisation of societies of origin, transit and destination. The second observation is that the migration phenomenon creates a narrow relationship between all affected countries, which translates, in Africa, into the setting up of migration routes that encourage the trafficking in human beings and the work of mafias.

As such, the Conference wishes to give impetus to cooperation, especially in the following fields:

1. **The strengthening of financial, logistical, technical, material and human capacities** intended to control migration flows, should allow African countries to adapt their means to the extent of the illegal immigration phenomenon.
2. **Operational cooperation** (police cooperation, exchange of intelligence, mutual judicial aid, liaison officers, etc...) **between all countries** involved in the fight against illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings and organised crime should help generate conclusive results, especially in dismantling cross-border trafficking networks. **The establishment of an adapted national legal arsenal is necessary**, essentially by reinforcing the penal framework, if needed, and by adopting dissuasive sanctions towards mafias that organise exploitation of immigrants,

- 3. Territorial and border control, with full respect for national sovereignty, is each and every State's responsibility and is essential to a better dismantling of networks and itineraries pertaining to illegal migration, trafficking in human beings and organised crime, particularly by means of technical support and training.**
- 4. Cooperation for the return, in their home countries, of persons in an illegal situation** - with respect for their rights and human dignity, particularly through the conclusion of readmission Agreements **with all relevant countries of the region and the effective application of article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement** – or any other similar agreement - should be given preference, so as to ensure full efficiency in handling this question.
- 5. The implementation of effective actions against structures which facilitate undeclared work** should result in the adoption of voluntarist and adequate policies aimed at preventing illegal work and human trafficking networks, which represent an important factor as regards irregular migration towards European countries.
- 6. Launching awareness-raising campaigns on the dangers of clandestine immigration, in the countries of origin.**

All these actions must be undertaken in the framework of a responsible and solidary partnership, with determination as well as with respect for people, their rights and their dignity.