

Valletta Summit on Migration

Speech by Mr Michael Spindelegger, Director General elect, ICMPD

Check speech against delivery

Valletta, 12 November, 2015

I would like to express my gratitude to Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta for organising and hosting the Valletta Summit, I would like to thank Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the Commission of the European Union and Frederica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission. Specifically, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for his tireless efforts of preparing this Summit on Migration, Ambassador Pierre Vimont, the Personal Envoy of President Tusk.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends,

This September the world came together in New York to adopt the new UN Sustainable Development Goals, which for the first time acknowledge the key role migration plays for global development.

At the same time, we experience the highest numbers of displacement since the 2nd World War, causing frightening numbers of migrants losing their lives trying to reach their destination, and also giving way to growing anxieties in the countries affected.

The coincidence of these two developments, makes it so plainly clear that we need to effectively address both dimensions of international migration:

1. Its fundamental contribution to development and prosperity of countries of origin and destination as well as of the migrants themselves
2. the more immediate concerns of protection, safety and security.

Therefore it is imperative to overcome the dichotomy of more or less migration and think in terms of better migration.

We have come together here in Valletta to ensure the ability of governments to effectively manage migration and to overcome our current crisis mode. We need to formulate a global response to the persisting dysfunctionality of the international migration system. Only then will we be able to make international migration the positive force it can be. Let Valletta be that turning point.

There is no single country that can adequately and effectively manage migration alone. Africa needs Europe and Europe needs Africa, and we have to recognise each other's specific circumstances, priorities and requirements.

ICMPD therefore welcomes the agreement make good use of the existing multi-lateral structures and frameworks of cooperation – especially the Rabat and Khartoum Processes as well as the Africa-EU migration partnership. We should further strengthen their scopes and boost their abilities to implement concrete actions.

The Valletta programme has made the subject of root causes of displacement and irregular migration a core feature and emphasises the development benefits of migration, which I welcome very much. It must be clear however that results will take time, and I am afraid: there are no shortcuts.

We need to engage together – Europe and Africa – in an unparalleled effort of practical and operational cooperation. We need to substantially upscale initiatives and move beyond the mere piloting of ideas.

A coherent and comprehensive set of policies is essential. However it is not sufficient: What we also need now is delivery coherence: a set of common objectives and goals, agreed actions, a clear delivery framework, dedicated resources and a robust monitoring system and communication strategy. Only by pooling our resources and efforts and by translating them into concrete joint actions will we be able to make real and tangible progress on the ground. The EU Emergency Trust Fund (for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa) could be just the tool we need: one that provides the required funds for flexible, speedy and efficient delivery on the Action Plan, the tool for delivery coherence that will make a real impact, building upon and upscaling existing programmes and initiatives. I am confident that the measures of the Action Plan paired with the Trust Fund will take us in this direction.

In order to achieve tangible impact, we need to

1. make migration the enabler for socio-economic development, for instance via closer links to the diaspora, and
2. Include questions of displacement more robustly when addressing instability, crisis and conflict.

Moreover, we need to

3. promote legal migration and mobility within and between our two continents, legal migration needs to become a real option for migrants.

4. Make international protection and asylum work effectively in solidarity and as a shared responsibility both within and between Africa and Europe.

Smugglers and traffickers will try to undermine our goals. We therefore

5. need to prevent and fight irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking in human beings.
 - a. Let's work more closely in sharing information and intelligence and
 - b. Step up operational cooperation,
 - c. Importantly, let's invest in systems and capacities for effective Integrated Border Management.
6. I am fully aware of the sensitivity and complexity of the subject, however, we have to find a common ground and understanding when it comes to the issue of return and readmission. A migration system will remain incomplete if it does not contain provisions for those that do not qualify or have the right to remain on the territory of a state. Who if not this Summit could build the required consensus on how to address return and readmission in a way that ensures and respects the rights and dignity of returnees and is capable of reinforcing our efforts to create orderly migration.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The task ahead is long and complex. We will experience set-backs and frustration. There is, however, simply no alternative. We need to pursue our goals in a persistent and determined manner. And because of the long-term perspective, we need to ensure that we are able to better explain what we are doing. The wider public needs to draw confidence from our ability to manage migration. An essential flanking measure therefore is the establishment of a robust monitoring system that shows our progress in the implementation of our policies.

ICMPD will invest its efforts in delivering on the Valletta objectives. Concretely, ICMPD will play its part in making sure that the EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue initiative (MMD) will assume its central role, in effectively supporting the Rabat and Khartoum Frameworks in their follow up work, particularly through the so-called MMD Facility, which is resourced with € 10 million for concrete technical assistance and capacity building actions, some of which feature prominently in the Action Plan. Also, importantly, diaspora engagement will be supported through the MMD initiative, too.

In doing so, Excellencies, friends, ICMPD will do its share to ensure that Valletta will be the long-aspired turning point, the biggest possible enabler for our collaboration. It is time to make migration better, 'to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies' as it was laid down this September in the Sustainable Development Goals (target 10.7). Thank you.