

## **EUROMED Migration V Peer-to-Peer Conference 'Multilateral Migration Partnerships for Sustainable Development in the Euro-Mediterranean Region' – Opening Session**

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*9 November 2022, Rabat*

Dear Minister Bourita, Ambassador Llombart Cussac, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you today and to open what promises to be a very meaningful event. We want to talk about partnership in migration and I think that the theme of the conference could not be more timely.

We are experiencing one of the most challenging periods in recent history. The Ukraine war has disrupted the existing global order on many different levels, and we are now facing the geopolitical changes and major repercussions of this conflict worldwide.

The war in Ukraine is not only a turning point in terms of the global order but also in terms of the landscape for migration. The Ukrainian refugee crisis is the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the end of the Second World War.

Beyond that, the consequences of the war in Ukraine have aggravated the already existing security threats and political instability, as well as the sustained economic stagnation we were facing due to the COVID-19 crisis. With rise in food and energy prices, high inflation and transport challenges, food insecurity is of particular grave concern.

As you know, the United Nations Climate Change Conference being held in Egypt at the moment brings to light the particular dire situation regarding the global climate crisis and the steps taken by the international community to tackle this.

I would like to allude to the theme of today's conference of 'Multilateral Migration Partnerships for Sustainable Development'. Indeed, the vision we want to present is that the only effective way forward from the mentioned challenges resides in a partnership approach. Global and interconnected challenges must be tackled together and, through the spirit of joint leadership and shared responsibility, even turned into opportunities.

Take migration as an example.

Although in the region we share common migration challenges, the specific situations in countries differ quite a lot. They differ in terms of the size and composition of migration flows and migrant populations. We have countries of origin, transit or destination, or all three together. Cultures differ between countries as much as their demographic, economic and educational situations. Geographic positions matter as much as historical ties that link countries in different ways. All these factors imply that despite the common task, solutions in the field of migration will always have to adapt to specific contexts, challenges and priorities.

At the same time, we must not forget that migration is not only about challenges but also about opportunities; about labour migration, development, investment or public–private–partnership; about many aspects that enrich our economies, our societies and the lives of our people.

At ICMPD we believe that migration partnerships are the most promising way to live up to our joint responsibility to deliver on the task, to address the challenges but also to seize the opportunities that migration offers.

It is also important to underline that we do not have to start from scratch when it comes to migration partnerships in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This cooperation has a long tradition and was significantly enhanced in the aftermath of the refugee crisis from 2015. There are many positive examples for this reinforced cooperation: the Union for the Mediterranean; the Valletta Summit and Joint Action Plan; the Rabat and Khartoum Processes; the 5+5 dialogue and African Union Continent to Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue.

The EU’s “Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood” from 2021 with its emphasis on economic cooperation and investment, also offers a way to address joint migration challenges. And the Marrakesh Pact and Global Forum on Migration and Development offer a global platform and valid framework for bringing such dialogue to the international sphere.

In order to reinforce these partnerships, we need to ensure joint ownership, recognise local competences and capacities and really respond to the respective needs, priorities, and goals of all partners. Joint leadership and shared responsibilities are the guiding principles for

redefining partnerships. That was the motto of Malta as last year's chair of the ICMPD Steering Group, complemented by this year's theme of 'strengthening operational capacities' of our German chair.

We have to invest in the capacity of our migration authorities to manage all aspects of migration, from labour migration to protection, integration and border management.

We have to invest in the capacity of our joint agendas to develop and implement practical solutions that really work on the ground. And we have to invest in the capacity of the people, including migrants, to enable them to use the opportunities our migration policies and legal frameworks offer to them.

This capacity-centred approach received strong endorsement from EUROMED participating countries in October 2021. It has also materialised through the Training Institute on 'Migration Capacity Partnership for the Mediterranean', the first concrete embodiment of the Migration Capacities Partnership approach, launched last year in Malta. In its young history, the training institute has already shown that this new era of cooperation and capacity can indeed evolve. And that professionalisation can drive migration governance forward.

When we focus on a joint vision and joint leadership in our migration partnerships, on common but flexible agendas, on better skills matching, on sustainable procurement and on all possible ways and efforts to enhance access to protection, then we will achieve quite a lot in terms of better migration management in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

The EU-funded EUROMED Migration programme that brings us here today is proving centrefold in aligning these agendas. It helps to bridge cooperation agendas on migration and to address priorities like the ones under discussion today.

I would like to thank the EU for supporting the trajectory and mechanisms to establish a dialogue that addresses these priorities.

I would also like to thank the Kingdom of Morocco for your leadership and inspiration. The reinforced cooperation between the Kingdom of Morocco and ICMPD, illustrated by the Seat Agreement we will be signing later today, Mr. Minister, represents a turning point in the realisation of the joint leadership approach.

Your role as host of these important discussions occasion help us drive the agenda forward and position Morocco as a joint leader in shared responsibility along migration routes. So do the invaluable input of the partner countries that make up the EUROMED Migration programme.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure that this conference will be an important milestone in exploring concrete ways to strengthen migration partnerships, to enhance national and regional migration governance capacities and to mitigate the challenges related to climate change.

I wish you every success in the event and ongoing discussions. Thank you.