Speech of Mr Peter Widermann, Director General of ICMPD, for the 4th Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development in Rome

Rome, Italy, 27 November 2014

Your Excellencies, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Italy and current Presidency of the European Union, as hosts of the 4th Ministerial Meeting,

Ministers, Excellencies, honourable delegates of participating states and international organisations, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

Allow me, to express my sincere gratitude to the Italian authorities for convening this 4th Ministerial Meeting of the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development and for giving us the opportunity to take stock of our progress and achievements as well as to reconfirm our strong commitment for continuing our partnership under the Rabat Process – a partnership that has grown and matured significantly since its inception in Rabat, in July 2006.

It gives me great pleasure to speak to such a distinguished audience and contribute to preparing the ground for the upcoming Rabat Process’ strategic and operational programme.

As Director General of ICMPD I am here in a dual role,

first we are supporting the Process, together with our partners of FIIAPP through the support project and we are holding the role of observer in Rabat,

second ICMPD is an organisation that strives for better migration management and that – in addition to research and capacity building – strongly supports migration dialogues.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the last few years, migration has continued to make headlines. And, much to my regret, it has continued to make sad and tragic headlines. Especially, along the routes that connect Africa and Europe and particularly the Mediterranean Sea, the irregular and clandestine forms of migration continue to create a sense of urgency on the part of politicians, migration practitioners, as well as among a growing number of the concerned public.

I am afraid there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution and I can’t offer you a blueprint, but I can share with you the following 3 observations:

1. We observe that migration dialogues such as this one continue to be the bedrock of effective international cooperation in migration.
A complex and multi-faceted phenomenon like international migration requires effective coordination and cooperation. Cooperation that is based on mutual trust and understanding of the needs and priorities of all partners involved.

It requires a common and joint political agenda that sets the purpose and objectives and that defines the measures and actions.

The political will expressed in the multi-annual strategies and work-programmes as defined under the Rabat Process – from Rabat, to the Paris Programme, to the Dakar Strategy and now to Rome – create the framework within which only joint problem-solving, decision-making and migration governance becomes possible as a whole.

2. We observe, furthermore, that specifically regional settings hold the greatest potential for creating functioning migration frameworks.

The level of trust and understanding among partners, the connections created by migration routes and systems, the relative congruence of challenges and opportunities related to migration in the same region or among neighbouring regions seem to contribute to an environment that is conducive to creating policy frameworks that are supportive of creating better migration.

3. Finally, we observe that migration processes gain in practical relevance when they are equipped with the required means and resources for concrete follow up and implementation of its conclusions and recommendations.

Dedicated mechanisms aimed at implementing concretely and on the ground, the action programmes should always accompany and flank the political dialogue. Moreover, effective monitoring of progress and achievements should complement the dialogue on technical level.

Excellencies, it is these features that have created a recipe for success for the Rabat Process, for almost a decade. I note with satisfaction that the Rome Programme is built on and manages to further expand these key features.

In view of the size of the challenges and in recognising our individual and collective responsibility for creating better migration frameworks in our regions, I would like to end my short statement by wishing the Rabat Process, the Rome Ministerial and the ensuing Rome programme all the success, so that migration in and between our regions becomes first and foremost, safe, legal and voluntary.

Thank you