

**RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED**



**Council of the  
European Union**

**Brussels, 24 February 2016  
(OR. en)**

**6469/16**

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**MIGR 31  
COAFR 43**

**NOTE**

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**From:** European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS)  
**To:** Permanent Representatives Committee

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**Subject:** Joint Commission-EEAS non-paper on enhancing cooperation on migration, mobility and readmission with Ghana

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Delegations will find attached the above joint Commission-EEAS non-paper.



Brussels, 24 February 2016

ARES (2016) 954389

<b>FROM:</b>	<b>European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS)</b>
<b>TO:</b>	<b>COREPER Ambassadors</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Joint Commission-EEAS non-paper on enhancing cooperation on migration, mobility and readmission with Ghana</b>

**Country Fiche proposing possible leverages across Commission-EEAS policy areas to enhance returns and effectively implement readmission commitments.**

### **1 - Key migration features**

#### *Ghana nationals as migrants to the EU*

- In 2014, there were around 95 000 Ghanaian legally residents in the EU 28, with UK (48 000) IT (36 500) and ES (9 000) as the most important countries of residence. There were 5001 irregular border crossings by Ghanaian citizens registered in 2015.<sup>1</sup> ; a significant increase from the 2 412 recorded in 2014. Out of 4 285 return decisions in 2014, only 1 315 returns were effectively carried out, resulting in the return rate of 31%.<sup>2</sup> In 2014, 4 660 irregular migrants from Ghana were detected within the EU. In 2015 2788 Ghanaian nationals were found irregularly present in the EU which was an increase from 2242 in 2014.
- Ghana has the highest emigration rates for the highly skilled labour force (46%) in Western Africa and wants to reduce it. It has designed schemes of improvement of salaries and other incentives to retain highly skilled workers, to promote circular migration and to reduce the effects of brain drain. The country has thus an interest in cooperation to facilitate return and reintegration of skilled workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Frontex data

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat data

### *Migrant situation in Ghana*

- Ghana is a lower middle income country<sup>3</sup> currently experiencing serious macro-economic problems. Relations with the EU are good; democratic principles and other fundamental values are well respected. The country has important trade relations with the EU. It supports – and is looking forward to – the implementation of the West African EPA.
- Ghana is a country of origin and transit, but also a country of destination of regional migration, both legal and irregular. A vast majority of Ghanaian migrants (over 70%) reside in ECOWAS Member States, primarily in Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Togo. Around 20% of migrants reside in OECD countries, the main destinations being the UK, the US, Germany, Italy, and Canada.
- Ghana has a comparably well-developed education system and suffers the effects of brain drain of its skilled labour force, in particular in the health sector (physicians, nurses etc.), but also teachers and researchers.
- Ghana's authorities adopted a National Migration Policy with EU support at the end of 2015. This represents a bold attempt to provide a comprehensive framework to manage migration.

## **2 - Relations with the EU**

### *General*

- The EU and Ghana have long-standing political, cooperation and trade relations, framed by the agreements between the EU and the ACP countries. Ghana has signed the EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) which was initialled in June 2014.
- The EU maintains high level political dialogue in Ghana under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, through meetings between EU Heads of Mission and Ministers and senior officials (regular meetings, ad hoc meetings, etc.). The last political dialogue with Ghana, co-chaired by President Mahama and the EU Head of Delegation, took place in Accra on 12 June 2015. At the dialogue, the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) and the Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment were endorsed by the parties as the overarching frameworks for the further strengthening of the EU Ghana partnership on Migration and Mobility.

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<sup>3</sup> World Bank

*Migration relations Ghana-EU*

- Ghana plays an active role in ECOWAS and contributes to the dialogue within the framework of the Rabat Process. Ghana is part of the EU-ACP Dialogue on Migration and Development.
- President Mahama attended the Valletta Summit. In his intervention, he referred to ECOWAS common positions on migration and the interest of promoting biometric ID cards in the region. He also referred to Ghana's role as a country of destination within the region, and the potential of Ghana's agricultural sector for the creation of jobs for youth. He expressed his opposition to the idea of transit centres for migrants.
- Bilateral meeting between Commissioner Mimica and President Mahama took place on 31 January 2016 in the margins of the AU Summit in Addis-Ababa. While taking note on EU concerns on returns, President Mahama spoke of the need to create jobs in the country and expressed readiness to work with the EU to see how migration flows could be regulated.
- Some EU cooperation in the area of migration already exists, including: (i) The current Ghana Integrated Migration Management Approach GIMMA (EUR 3 million) being implemented by the IOM which contributes to the Government's efforts to improve migration management; (ii) a local call for proposal for Economic Activities (EUR 6 million) is also being targeted to areas of origin of migration. (iii) and two of the main sectors of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF NIP – Employment and Social Protection and Investment for Agriculture in Northern Ghana directly address one of the root causes of irregular migration, namely the lack of employment in poor areas of Ghana.
- Ghana is not eligible to the EU Emergency Trust Fund, except projects with a regional dimension.

*Migration relations Ghana-EU Member States*

- Despite relatively low number of Ghanaians found staying irregularly in Europe, a number of Member States report on difficulties in cooperation on return and readmission. Ghana has a police cooperation agreement with Italy (signed in 2010) and a bilateral cooperation agreement with the Netherlands. Sweden and the Netherlands recently reported problems in managing returns to Ghana.
- EU and MS have developed a Joint Multiannual Indicative programming 2013-2016 which amounts to a total of EUR 1,46 billion in support of Ghana's Compact 2012-2022 on "Leveraging Partnerships for Shared Growth and Development" with the objective of achieving Middle Income Country Status.
- Italian PM Renzi in his visit to Ghana on 1-2 February stressed migration as the key issue for dialogue between Europe and Africa.

### 3 - Key interests of the country and the EU

#### *Interests of the country*

- Ghana is mainly interested in facilitation of mobility and legal migration (labour migration agreements, skills upgrading and qualifications recognition, dignified movement of regular migrants). The country is keen to further develop its agricultural sector and reduce poverty, particularly in the Northern parts of the country.
- Ghana recently expressed its interest in concluding a fisheries agreement with the EU, in order to contribute to the sustainable development of the sector.
- Addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement (creation of employment opportunities, support to private sector development, improvement of the business environment and technical vocation and educational training, especially for young people and with a good potential in the agricultural sector).
- Ghana expressed its interest for support to the implementation of its climate change adaptation policy.
- Ghana also seeks partnership with the EU in implementing its migration related policies; practical examples are the ECOWAS biometric ID Cards, vocational education and training, and energy infrastructure.
- Ghana shows interest in continued collaboration with the EU through Erasmus +, Horizon 2020 and through EU programmes in higher education.

#### *Interests of the EU*

- Addressing irregular migration in particular through effective return and readmission of Ghanaian citizens irregularly staying in the EU, including joint identification missions.
- Ghana's positive role as a pole of growth in the region and as a recipient of sub-regional migration is also in the interest of the EU, as well as the promotion of circular migration and cooperation in education (scholarships, vocational training).
- The EU shares Ghana's interest for the entering into force and implementation of the regional EPA, given the importance of preserving tariff and quota-free access to the EU market and of promoting the EU's partnership with the region as a whole.
- EU shares Ghana's interest in implementing its migration related policies; practical examples are the ECOWAS biometric ID Cards, vocational education and training, and energy infrastructure.

#### 4 - Possible components of an EU incentives package<sup>4</sup>

- Further engagement, based on President Mahama's constructive participation to Valletta, at high level. President Mahama's interest in - and influence on - regional aspects of migration should be built on.
- Improving the different aspects of legal migration (including circular migration), taking into account Member States' areas of competence.
- Support Ghana's interest in limiting its brain drain, mainly in medical and educational professions.
- Given the relatively high voluntary return rate of skilled labour, proposals should also consider the facilitation of transfer of pension and social rights.
- Supporting Ghana's interest in its agricultural sector. Creation of jobs for (low skilled) immigrants from the sub-region, should also be responded to.
- Supporting Ghana's interest in developing its fishery sector in a sustainable way.
- Supporting Ghana's climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience programmes.
- Swift entering into force of the West African EPA as key to preserve Ghana's access to the EU market.
- Support to Ghana's interest in regional cooperation and improved management of migration flows, e.g. through regional bodies such as ECOWAS.
- Ghana could accede to support under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for projects with a regional dimension, if the Trust Fund Board agrees on the project.
- Enhancing of the mutual recognition of academic qualifications and mobility of students and researchers both within Africa and between Africa and the EU (Erasmus+ and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions).
- Given Ghana's middle income status, individual or EU donor's development cooperation is gradually losing importance. However, EU Joint Programming, amounting up to EUR 1,46 billion is key signal of a joined up approach from the EU and its MS to continue supporting politically Ghana's path to consolidate middle income status.
- Leverage of Schengen visa issuance, within the boundaries of the Visa Code, to be discussed with the Member States;
- restrictions in bilateral visa exemption agreements for diplomatic and service passport holders, to be discussed with the Member States.

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<sup>4</sup> No conditionality can be attached to needs-based humanitarian aid in line with the Humanitarian principles.

## **5 – Recommendations**

- Progress on return and readmission should be part of the agenda for future dialogue with Ghana, in line with the Valletta conclusions.
- Due to the good relationships of the EU with the country and the influence that it can exert in regional and international fora, the leverages are identified in areas on which the country has regularly expressed interest. To be noted that a considerable part of the positive incentives lie in Member States competence.
- A well balanced approach, combining collective EU messaging with a package of positive incentives seems advisable. However, the EU and its MS should stand equally ready collectively to consider some of the elements outlined in the fiche as possible negative incentives, having in mind the potential impact this could have on EU interest and other policies' objectives.
- Possible avenues of dialogue and cooperation should refer to Ghana's particular interest in limiting its brain drain, mainly in medical and educational professions. Given the relatively high voluntary return rate of skilled labour, proposals should also consider the facilitation of transfer of pension and social rights back to Ghana.

## **6 - Proposed next steps**

- Follow up to the technical mission to Ghana conducted on 18-19 February 2016 with a view to explore the possibility of concluding a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility.
- Conduct local political dialogue with particular reference to migration (1st quarter 2016).
- High-level dialogue, possibly

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