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**NOTE**

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From: Commission Services  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Operationalization of the Pact – Action plans for strengthening  
comprehensive migration partnerships with priority countries of origin and  
transit  
Draft Action Plan : Morocco

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Delegations will find attached a draft action plan for Morocco prepared by the Commission Services.

The Commission would very much appreciate that the text of the draft action plan be handled with discretion.

## Draft Action Plan: Morocco

<p><b>Overall EU Objectives – Lines to Take</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morocco is a major partner in the Southern Neighbourhood with which the EU has solid and long-standing cooperation which should be maintained in a partnership of equals, through dialogue, responsibility sharing, mutual trust, and respect.</li> <li>• The EU-Morocco Joint Declaration of June 2019 aims to deepen the relationship between the EU and Morocco across a number of areas. The EU will continue supporting Morocco on a wide array of issues including on migration and mobility, fostering green and climate action, digital agenda, investment, development, social cohesion, governance, fundamental rights, trade relations, and youth cooperation.</li> <li>• The EU is committed to further supporting Morocco according to jointly agreed priorities, through future EU funding in the 2021-2027 period.</li> <li>• Morocco is a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, with which it is important to maintain the success and credibility of past cooperation on migration. The EU considers Morocco a key partner in the shared challenge of preventing and tackling irregular migration, countering the smuggling of migrants, and thereby saving lives. Progress in implementation of the relevant strategic and legislative agenda remains key.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goals for managing migration and addressing forced displacement – Lines to Take</b></p> <p><b>Protection and support to host countries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU encourages Morocco to put in place the relevant legislation and strengthen the national asylum system, and intends to provide support to the Moroccan authorities in this area, including through operational support and capacity building by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Morocco's <i>Bureau des Réfugiés et Apatrides</i> (BRA) is encouraged to intensify its work regarding the regularisation of refugees.</li> </ul> <p><b>Root Causes of irregular migration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the proposed focal areas of EU-Morocco cooperation are relevant including a resilient and sustainable post-crisis economic recovery, developing entrepreneurship, social and territorial cohesion, job creation, education, improving social protection and good governance and better access to public services. Support to the reduction of socio-economic regional disparities should help reduce rural exodus and migratory pressures.</li> <li>• The EU encourages Moroccan efforts on increased engagement of the diaspora in particular with regards to productive investments in Morocco.</li> </ul> <p><b>Migration governance and management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the EU intends to continue support to the implementation of Morocco's National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum, Morocco's reinforced commitment to implementation of the strategy is key. Progress on the two outstanding laws on migration and asylum is central to the success of the strategy.</li> <li>• The EU counts on Morocco's enhanced and sustained efforts in preventing irregular departures, including by Moroccan citizens, in strengthening border controls, search and rescue capacities and operations, and dismantling smuggling networks. The EU will aim</li> </ul>

to support these efforts through funding, operational cooperation, capacity building and through regional support to improve the cooperation of law enforcement institutions of North African countries. The EU looks forward to collaboration through a tailor-made Operational Partnership under the Renewed EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling 2021-2025.

- The EU recognises that Morocco is increasingly a destination country and counts on Morocco to reinforce its efforts regarding the social and economic integration of refugees and migrants, the protection of vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking, and reinforcing the child protection system. This would strengthen synergies with EU-financed programmes.
- The EU strongly supports Morocco's efforts to reinvigorate the fight against trafficking in human beings and the operationalization of a national commission to prevent and fight it.
- The EU intends to continue supporting information campaigns on the risks of irregular migration.

### **Cooperation with EU Agencies**

- The EU appreciates Morocco as a leading partner in the region, providing a model others may follow concerning deeper co-operation with JHA Agencies, and is keen to develop these relations further:
  - The EU welcomes the strategic dialogue with **Frontex** and looks forward to discussing next steps for structured cooperation between the agency and the Moroccan authorities on issues such as situational awareness, risk analysis, training, operational cooperation. The EU invites Morocco to further strengthen cooperation with this agency, including by signing a working arrangement,
  - The EU also welcomes the strategic dialogue with **Europol** and looks forward to a high level visit of Moroccan officials to Europol at the end of 2021, accompanied by technical discussions. Future goals include the signing of a working arrangement in the short-term and an international agreement in the longer term, as well as the involvement of Morocco in operational activities under EMPACT.
  - **EASO** stands ready to provide operational support in strengthening the Moroccan national asylum system. In the short term, EASO will pursue cooperation at technical level with Morocco under the regional pilot project for North Africa. The EU encourages a structured cooperation between EASO and Morocco.

### **Return, Readmission, Visa facilitation**

- The high number of irregular arrivals to the EU and of return decisions issued by Member States, together with the Commission's assessment of cooperation on readmission, show that it is crucial for Morocco to extend good cooperation on readmission to all Member States, reducing timeframes for identification and issuing of travel documents, and accepting charter flights. With a view to ensuring effective readmission for all Member States, one option – alongside strengthened EU engagement on readmission with Morocco – is that the EU seeks to relaunch negotiations on a readmission agreement and on a visa facilitation agreement.
- The EU is ready to support Morocco in strengthening readmission capacity and the reintegration of migrants returning from the EU. The possibility to establish a Return Case Management System could be explored.
- The EU stands ready to continue supporting voluntary returns from Morocco to the countries of origin, as well as the capacity of Moroccan institutions to sustainably reintegrate its own citizens after they are returned. To this end, technical assistance could be provided to allow for the establishment of respective government structures.

## Legal migration and mobility

- The EU is committed to doing more on legal migration, identifying sectors of mutual interest with a view to developing a Talent Partnership, with projects designed to avoid brain drain. There is a clear “win win” potential in cooperation building on existing projects on legal migration with Morocco supporting mobility schemes, traineeships, internships in various sectors through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and the Migration Partnership Facility.
- The EU will step up efforts to implement mutually beneficial mobility activities which promote circular migration, notably for higher education students, but also for staff and researchers. The Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programmes are key tools that can be deployed by the EU.

## Regional cooperation/whole of route approach

- Morocco is an important partner within the regional dialogue on migration – the Rabat process - and in the framework of EU-Africa relations. The EU recognises and supports Morocco’s contribution to shaping the global and continental migration agenda in international fora.
- The EU encourages south-south cooperation on migration management, building on existing EU-supported initiatives on border management and risk analysis. The EU further supports Morocco’s broader dialogue with sub-Saharan partners on the recognition of diplomas as well as rights for regular migrants.

## Measures

- **Political engagement** under the EU-Morocco Association Agreement (2000), EU-Morocco Mobility Partnership (2013), and EU-Morocco Joint declaration (2019) which defines the partnership priorities and covers mobility and migration (an addendum is being prepared to update the Joint Declaration), and an informal dialogue on migration and security.
- **Deploying a wide range of policy tools**, including activities concerning development cooperation, post-COVID 19 relaunch of the economy, social and territorial cohesion, security, visa, trade, agriculture, investment and employment, energy, environment and climate change, and education, which are adjustable over time and handled as part of a comprehensive and tailor-made approach.
- **Cooperation with JHA agencies**: a Roadmap of Joint Activities for 2021 with Frontex, next meeting of the Frontex-Morocco Comité Mixte in early 2022, discussions on strengthening cooperation with Europol are ongoing, including preparations for a high level visit of Moroccan officials to Europol at the end of 2021. Possibilities for a more structured cooperation between EASO and Morocco are being explored.
- **Funding activities from EU budget under Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020**: EU funding portfolio on migration stands at €370 million of which €238 million are drawn from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: around 80% is allocated for institutional support and border management, around 11% for protection, and around 7.5% for socio-economic integration.
- **Future funding from EU budget under Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027**: The draft bilateral Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Morocco is under preparation, which may be expected to contribute to addressing root causes, protection of migrants, reintegration of Moroccan returnees and developing a Talent Partnership, in the broader context of a possible focus on post-crisis economic recovery, climate, energy, environment, green economy, social and territorial cohesion, education, governance, rule of law and fundamental rights.

A new multi-country migration programme for the Southern Neighbourhood, which is

under consideration and which aims to include Morocco, could provide a flexible source of funding to respond to changing needs and routes. It can be expected to focus on protection of those in need, on supporting migration governance and management, including preventing irregular migration (including border management and countering migrant smuggling), on fostering return, readmission and reintegration and on providing a comprehensive approach to legal migration and mobility.

Other EU instruments, notably the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) may under strict conditions provide complementary funding opportunities for the external dimension of migration.

- **Member States' bilateral engagement [see Annex II].** Morocco will be included in the Team Europe Initiative on the Western Mediterranean/Atlantic migration route proposed by Spain. The concept note encompassing the five Valletta action plan priorities was finalised and agreed with EU Member States in August 2021.

## Timelines for action

### A. Next Steps for engagement by EU and by Member States

- **Visit by HRVP Borrell** [TBC]
- **Informal Migration and Security Dialogue** (in the next months, TBC) to strengthen further cooperation in all aspects of migration, including discussions on the development of a Talent Partnership and potentially relaunch the negotiations on the visa facilitation and the readmission agreement, cooperation on countering migrant smuggling and discussions on a possible Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership, and to promote cooperation in the fight against organized crime, terrorism and radicalization, cybercrime and cooperation with the JHA Agencies.
- **Social Affairs and Migration Subcommittee** to take place in the wake of the above mentioned migration dialogue.
- **Association Council** (TBC)
- **Visit of Moroccan delegation to Europol** (Q4/2021 TBC)
- **EASO Regional Conference** on International Protection and persons with specific protection needs in North Africa and Niger on 12-13 October 2021 in Cairo.
- **Deployment of a new European Migration Liaison Officer (EMLO)** expected in Q4 2021/Q1 2022; making full use of the **ILO network** according to Regulation EU 2019/124.
- **Euro-African Regional Dialogue on Migration and Development - Rabat Process and Joint Valletta Action Plan:** Senior Officials Meeting of the Rabat Process planned for 17-18 November in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The meeting will take stock of the implementation of the Marrakesh Action Plan, which is the current strategic framework of the Rabat Process and mark the handover of the Chairmanship to Spain.
- **Erasmus+:** the call for proposals for 2022 will be published in November 2021. Under the "International Credit Mobility" strand of the programme, 3-year mobility projects will be selected, involving exchanges of higher education students and staff between Morocco and the EU, which will start their activities in the academic year 2022-2023, benefitting an estimated 6 000 Moroccan participants.

### B. Next steps for funding measures

- **NDICI-Global Europe – country/regional MIPs:** Second high-level geopolitical dialogue with the European Parliament (11 October 2021); Comitology procedure (November 2021); adoption of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Indicative Programmes (December 2021).
- **Team Europe Initiative (TEI) on the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean Route,** next steps: TEI proposed by Spain. The concept note has been revised. The TEI was validated by Member States at the meeting with the Member States' development agencies on 4

October 2021, with agreement to go ahead with the design and implementation of the TEI. Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, as well as Switzerland, have proposed indicative contributions

- **Common Operational Partnership (COP)** in Africa: further involvement of Moroccan authorities to be supported, i.e. the German-led activity on Nigerian organised crime groups active in trafficking in human beings (THB), involving Morocco (DGSN) as a transit country for victims and perpetrators (expert meetings and trainings). Timeframe 01/01/2020 – 31/12/2022, estimated contribution from the EU budget is €850 000.

## ANNEX I

### Existing EU cooperation and areas of engagement under the New Pact

#### i. Asylum/ international protection

- Morocco is increasingly a destination country and two rounds of regularisations have taken place (2013 and 2017).
- Developing the national asylum legislation and asylum system under Morocco's National Strategy of Migration and Asylum (SNIA) is subject to a €35 million "*Appui aux politiques migratoires au Maroc*" budget support programme under MFF 2014-2020. It has however seen little progress in recent years (framework laws have not yet been adopted by the government). Cooperation with UNHCR, allowing it to process asylum cases is exemplary for the region.
- Under the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) North Africa, projects to strengthen international protection for migrants and child protection with contribution from EU budget of around €3.5 million in the financial period 2015-2020. The last two projects were launched in January 2021. Implementation was led by the Italian Ministry of Interior, mainly with UNHCR and UNICEF as implementing partners.
- Protection of migrants in vulnerable situations, €6.5 million implemented by civil society organizations, from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.
- Enhancing self-reliance and access to rights for refugees in North Africa, implemented by UNHCR, €2.14 million from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.

#### ii. Addressing root causes

- Support to the migration legislative and institutional framework to promote social inclusion at the local level through enhancing employability of both the Moroccan diaspora and the migrants living in Morocco, implemented by ENABEL, €8 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (2018-2022).
- Development pillar of the Regional Development and Protection Programme North Africa, Self-sufficiency of target groups and host communities is enhanced, support to civil society €2 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, implemented by civil society organisations (2019-2022).
- Support to the Moroccan diaspora for the creation of economic activities and employment opportunities in Morocco, MEET – Africa Phase II, implemented by Expertise France €2.5 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (2019-2023).
- Supporting South-South cooperation between Morocco, Mali, Senegal and Ivory Coast on migration and development, protection, and diaspora development implemented by GIZ and Expertise France - €8.6 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (2019-2022).

#### iii. Migration governance and management

- €35 million budget support programme "*Appui aux politiques migratoires au Maroc*", to implement the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum, including with the adoption of the legislation on human trafficking, asylum and migration. It has supported amongst others the adoption of legislation on human trafficking, the operationalisation of the national commission on human trafficking and the efforts of the prosecutor's office to tackle it. By the end of 2021 a €1.5 million project in support of the national commission should further complement these efforts as well as a grant to civil society to provide direct coordinated support to the victims.
- €101,7 million budget support programme covering the period 2019-2021 to support the Ministry of Interior in managing irregular migration, respectful of human rights, including through border management, international cooperation and awareness raising. This includes

strengthening of cooperation with Frontex and Europol, human rights training of its staff, reinforced deployments along the borders, development of standard operating procedures for the identification of vulnerable populations, the awareness raising of minors on the risks of irregular migration. There has been a positive impact on Morocco's ability to intercept irregular border crossings as well as political dialogue with the EU – however the events of Ceuta in spring 2021 have shown possible weaknesses of this cooperation.

- €144 million border management package (EUR 70 million budget support completed in 2019, EUR 44 million programme managed by FIAPP, the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies and €30 million programme managed by ICMPD, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, funded from EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa under MFF 2014-2020).
- A network of Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Profiles and Dialogue, implemented by ICMPD, €1.9 million from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.
- Morocco is also part of the:
  - Euromed Migration V regional project, €5 million implemented by ICMPD
  - Fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, including, protection of victims and children, implemented by UNODC €4.3 million, EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
  - The Common operational partnership North Africa against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings (COP), funded until 2022 from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.

#### *Awareness-raising Campaigns*

- Two recently launched projects ongoing until 2022 funded from EU budget: Safe Journey (ProgettoMondo – €966 240, Timeframe 01/12/2020 – 31/05/2022); Objectives: Safe Journey aims to contrast irregular migration with an informative Campaign about alternatives to it); Shababuna (Generalitat de Catalunya & others – €645 070, Timeframe: 18/01/2021 – 17/01/2023; Objectives: engaging and empowering the voice of diaspora communities within the EU to provide information and raise awareness to counter migrant smugglers' narratives for prospective migrants in Morocco.

#### **iv. Returns, readmission, reintegration**

- The Commission has a mandate to negotiate an EU readmission agreement with Morocco since 2000. The last negotiation round took place in 2015 when negotiations were suspended. A reinforced dialogue and enhanced cooperation on readmission is needed, including potentially the relaunch of parallel negotiations on readmission and visa facilitation agreements.
- Work with Member States and the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) on reintegration assistance to returnees. Through Caritas International Belgium a total of 269 Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration schemes have been granted since June 2016.
- EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration (as of 30 March 2021) 1 939 people assisted to return from Morocco and 80 assisted with post-arrival reception/reintegration in Morocco.
- Under the €35 million budget support programme, the return of thousands of migrants to their countries of origin in line with IOM standards has been facilitated.
- ERMES III project, pre-departure assistance, return counselling, reintegration, implemented by CEFA ONLUS €0.6 million, supported by the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.

#### **v. Legal migration and mobility**

- The Commission has a mandate to negotiate a visa facilitation agreement (2013). Only one negotiation round took place in 2015 when negotiations were suspended.

*Ongoing projects:*

- PALIM (Pilot Project Addressing Labour Shortages through Innovative Labour Migration Models Belgium),
- THAMM (Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa, Germany, Belgium, France),
- HOMERE (High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment, France),
- YGCA (Young Generations as Change Agents).
- Mentor II (Mediterranean Network for Training Orientation to Regular migration, Italy),
- MOVE GREEN - Co-development for innovation and employment in green and circular economy between Andalucía and Morocco, Spain) and an additional one,
- WAFIRA (Spain) is under evaluation.
- They support mobility schemes, traineeships, internships in various sectors for Moroccans.
- THAMM, HOMERE and Mentor II are multi-country programmes. These projects are financed through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and the Migration Partnership Facility, funded under the EU budget.

**vi. Regional approach**

- “South-South Cooperation on Migration” project in collaboration between Morocco and several West-African countries, e.g. Senegal and Ivory Coast, implemented by GiZ, supported by € 8.6 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

## ANNEX II

### Member States' bilateral engagement

**Belgium** – migration is one of the key sectors of intervention in development cooperation. Through its development agency Enabel, Belgium is currently working on several bilateral projects aiming at supporting Moroccan institutions in implementing their National Strategies on Asylum and Migration (SNIA) and on the Mobilization of the Moroccans residing abroad (SNMRE). These projects focus more specifically on reception conditions and integration of third country nationals in a South-South cooperation framework, on mobilization of the diaspora for development or on legal migration/work related mobility ((1) Amuddu: Appui de la mise en oeuvre de SNIA, Gouvernance migratoire, création d'emplois et promotion de l'entrepreneuriat, €4.6 million (2) Appui à la mise en œuvre de la stratégie nationale en faveur des Marocains résidant en Belgique – MBI (2018 – 2022), €1.5 million.

**Czech Republic** – Morocco is one of the North African priority countries of the Permanent Health and Humanitarian Program MEDEVAC coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic. In 2020, the Czech Republic approved financially conditioned participation in the Joint Migration project of the Visegrad Four countries and Germany in Morocco. The project focuses on two pillars – (1) border protection (migration) and (2) economic growth (development). The Czech Republic will contribute with the total amount of €3.75 million. The primary objective is to focus on migration monitoring and management in Morocco. ICMPD acts as an implementing partner. The objective of the development pillar is to address root causes and prevent irregular migration from Morocco by strengthening national capacities, improving the labour market participation of the most at-risk populations and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises.

Morocco is also one of the priority countries of a programme for support to countries of origin and transit in Africa for the period 2020-2022. The program aims to address root causes of irregular migration and targets North Africa, as well as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The Czech government approved annual contribution of CZK 100 million (approx. €4 million) over a period of three years. In 2020, part of the funds were used to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this, a Tied Aid Financial Donation amounting to €0.26 million in the form of medical equipment supply to a Hospital in Marrakesh was made.

**Denmark** - currently has one bilateral project in Morocco concerning migration and mobility, entitled "The Assistance and Protection of Unaccompanied and Separated Migrant Children in Morocco Phase II" which aims to contribute to improve their assistance and protection. The International Organization for Migration is the implementing partner. The project period is 1 September 2019 to 28 February 2022 for a total of DKK 22.379.195.

**France** - France holds, since 1997, a high-level meeting between heads of state every two years, notably to address migration topics. A specific dialogue on migration was set up in May 2018, which takes place yearly.

**Germany** - provides support for a number of programmes:

*Border management:*

— Providing Trainings and Equipment with the focus on detecting Document Frauds;

- Air Security (Providing Trainings and Equipment mainly at the international Airport Mohamed V in Casablanca).
- Germany also intends to provide support under the Operational Mediterranean Initiative, an Initiative to strengthen a coordinated and more structured cooperation between the EU and five selected countries (Tunisia, Mauretania, Libya, Algeria, Morocco) at an operational level in the areas of border management and counter-smuggling, next steps would be a joint workshop between the EU, interested MS and Morocco.

*Return and readmission:*

- Advice and return counselling in Germany; e.g. reintegration scouts provide individual support measures for potential returnees;
- Advice and return/reintegration counseling via the migration advice centers in four cities; Vocational training, entrepreneurship and employment promotion to support to reintegration of returning migrants;
- FORAS-Program (Arab „Perspectives“) supporting voluntary returns from Morocco to countries of origin (primarily Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Togo and DR Congo).

*Diaspora cooperation:*

- Facilitation of knowledge and skill transfer by supporting projects of diaspora organisations within the framework of ongoing technical cooperation across sectors as well as facilitation of employment placements of highly qualified experts who wish to return to Morocco;
- Support to diaspora entrepreneurs wishing to found start-ups contributing to economic development in Morocco.

*Economic integration of youth:*

- Returning and potential (irregular) migrants are part of the target group of a variety of projects to create employment opportunities particularly for young and/or disadvantaged Moroccans as a contribution to preventing irregular (re-) migration to Europe, e.g. by fostering employment opportunities in the water- and waste water sector with a focus on rural and peri-urban populations liable to migration.

*Migration governance in Morocco:*

- Developing Moroccan authorities and communities capacities, especially at sub-national and municipal levels, to implement national migration policies and thus welcome and integrate migrants (RECOSA);
- Strategic communication: “Your Life Matters”: Raising awareness on the risks of irregular Migration in Morocco“ by IOM, the project addresses Moroccan citizens as well as migrants from other countries in Morocco.

**Italy** - The Project “Je suis migrant” implemented by ProgettoMondo MLAL was completed in September 2020. It promoted the integration into education, culture and economic spheres of returning migrants, sub-Saharan migrants and young people from the suburbs in Morocco. Concerning legal migration, pursuant to the Joint Italo-Moroccan Declaration for the Establishment of a Multidimensional Strategic Partnership (PSM) and having regard to the high quality of Moroccan Universities, priority sectors (such as energy, maritime, industrial and infrastructure, culture, education, training, research and sustainable development) have been recognized as target for the strengthening of economic relations. A regional project - AMEM “– Appui à la Migration Equitable pour le Maghreb – financed by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and led by ILO aims at improving workers’ rights and enhancing labour management. Another regional project - Y-MED - second phase 2019/2021 - aims at facilitating the training and job-placement of young people from the Mediterranean through a traineeship and

circular migration programs, financed by Contributo Volontario Italiano and implemented by IOM. The project facilitates the circulation of knowledge and competencies among enterprises and triggers innovation and internationalization processes, it is a good opportunity to encourage circulation of competence. The Project includes 45 internships in Italian Enterprises for the youth coming from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.

**The Netherlands** - Strengthening Protection and Assistance to Vulnerable and Stranded Migrants in and transiting through North Africa (PROTECT II) funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by IOM. This regional programme (Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Egypt) facilitates the voluntary return of more than 2 500 migrants in vulnerable situation currently stranded in Morocco and allows the organization of international capacity building and exchange activities between the different actors involved.

**Poland and Slovakia** - are stakeholder in the project 'Partnering with Morocco for development' together with V4 Member States and Germany.

**Romania** - works with IOM on assisted voluntary return of Moroccans.

**Spain** - highlights in the framework of operational collaboration between the security forces of both countries in the fight against irregular immigration:

- cooperation in the sealing of the border perimeters of Ceuta and Melilla both at the operational level with the deployment of Moroccan Security Forces and in the surveillance of the perimeter areas where Spain is carrying out infrastructure reforms;
- mixed maritime, land and air patrols, between the Guardia Civil and the Royal Gendarmerie. Thanks to the close cooperation between both countries, rescues have been carried out in the Moroccan SAR zone and landings in Moroccan ports. This has reduced rescue times and, consequently, the risk of loss of human lives;
- the exchange of information and police collaboration to dismantle human trafficking networks (in Spain and Morocco) has been strengthened;
- the participation and cooperation of the Spanish and Moroccan Security Forces, on an annual basis, in Frontex's Operation Indalo;
- the Police Cooperation Centres of Tangier and Algeciras.

In 2017-2019, the Ministry of the Interior allocated economic assistance to Morocco in order to co-finance the expenses generated by the operational deployments of the Moroccan security forces for border surveillance and the fight against irregular immigration to Spain, the reinforcement of their operational capacities and the maintenance of the material used in the aforementioned deployments. Since October 2013, the Ministry of Interior has been participating in the Assisted Voluntary Return with Reintegration Program (AVRR) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Morocco. At the end of 2020, the Ministry of Interior and IOM-Spain signed an International Administrative Agreement, under which IOM presented a new project within the AVRR program in Morocco.

Morocco is “priority country” for the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation (AECID) and develops cooperation programmes financed from the national budget. Some of these programmes target migration goals directly since others include migration as a horizontal approach mainly in programmes dealing with youth, minors, gender and rural areas.

## ANNEX III

<b>Key figures and trends</b>
<p><b>Irregular migration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illegal border crossing of Moroccan nationals to the EU: 6 319 in 2021 as of 31 July, of which 4 273<sup>1</sup> to Spain via Western Mediterranean and Western African route (2 310 in the same period of 2020). In the whole of 2020, the number of Moroccans arriving to the EU stood at 17 121 (8 020 in 2019).</li> <li>• Irregular arrivals from Morocco: In 2021 as of end of August, 8 421 arrivals from Morocco were registered to mainland Spain and Canary Islands, compared to 5 709 in the same period last year<sup>2</sup>. A total of 19 935 arrivals to Spain from Morocco were recorded in the whole 2020.</li> <li>• Illegal stay of Moroccan nationals in the EU: 41 220 in 2020 (41 535 in 2019), of which 18 175 in Spain, 8 710 in France, 3 340 in Italy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Return</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moroccan nationals ordered to leave the EU: 33 645 in 2020 (34 750 in 2019) of which 11 980 in Spain, 8 510 in France, 3 463 in Belgium. In the first quarter of 2021, 5 365 Moroccan nationals were order to leave the EU, of which 2 405 in France, 870 in Belgium and 535 in Spain.</li> <li>• Return rate: 8% in 2020 (29% in 2019). The return rate in the first quarter of 2021 was 12%.</li> <li>• Highest return rate in 2020: 100% in Romania, 26% in Sweden, 24% in the Netherlands</li> <li>• Lowest return rate in 2020: 0% in Hungary, Slovenia, Malta.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Asylum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First time asylum applications by Moroccan nationals: 6 775 in 2020 (8 950 in 2019) of which 1 215 in Slovenia, 945 in Spain, 900 in Germany. Based on provisional data from EASO, in 2021 as of 12 September, 9 530 Moroccans lodged asylum applications in the EU+, of which 47% were lodged in Spain, 12% in Austria, and 11% in Italy.</li> <li>• First Instance asylum decisions: 5 465 in 2020 (7 550 in 2019). 2 730, in 2021 as of 30 June 2021.</li> <li>• EU recognition rate: 8% in 2020 (8% in 2019). 10% in 2021 as of 30 June.</li> <li>• EU recognition rate incl. humanitarian protection: 10% in 2020 (9% in 2019). 13% in 2021 as of 30 June.</li> </ul>
<p><b>International Protection in Morocco</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> This data does not include the estimated 7 000 – 9 500 arrivals in Ceuta between 17 and 18 May 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Data from REME 2020 August report and REME 2021 August report, produced by NCC-Spain Eurosur. While the data for August 2021 expressly refers to arrivals from Morocco to mainland Spain and the Canary Islands, the data for August 2020 does not specify the area of arrival.

- Registered refugees and asylum seekers hosted in Morocco: according to UNHCR 14 952 people of concern in 2021 as of 31 March (13 549 at the end of 2020), were present in Morocco (8 491 refugees and 6 461 asylum seekers) - mostly Syrians (4 705), followed by Guineans (2 054) and Cameroonians (1 256).

#### **Legal migration**

- First time residence permits: 133 009 in 2019 of which 62 996 in Spain, 35 094 in France, 15 972 in Italy – no available data for 2020.
- Total valid residence permits: 1 960 323 at the end of 2019, of which 810 539 in Spain, 524 969 in France and 428 813 in Italy – no available data for 2020.

#### **Visas**

- Short stay visa applications to the EU: 180 443 in 2020 (705 293 in 2019) of which 84 627 handled by France, 68 971 by Spain, 7 985 by the Netherlands
- Share of Multiple Entry Visas (MEVs): 50.6% in 2020 (42.9% in 2019). Visa refusal rate : 23.6% in 2020 (20.5% in 2019)

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