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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Permanent Representatives Committee

Subject: Operationalisation of the external dimension of migration: Tasks for MOCADDEM and ways to improve its working methods
- Discussion paper

Scene setter

MOCADDEM was established on 12 January 2022 under the French Presidency by the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/60 to enhance the coordination between Member States and with EU services and react in a timely manner to issues related to the external dimension of EU migration policy. This coordination helps to identify operational actions and leverages in relevant policy areas to be mobilised by Member States and/or EU services, and, thus, contributes to the attainment of the Union's objectives for each third country concerned. To this end, MOCADDEM's work needs to be based on establishing clear objectives and addressing issues in cooperation with third countries, supported by a timely flow of information between all actors involved to ensure the effectiveness of EU operational actions.

MOCADEM's work shall be based on the outcome of the Working Party on the External Dimension of Migration and Asylum (EMWP) while also considering the work of other Council preparatory bodies. A number of Council formations have overlapping interests in the field of migration and their specific roles should be respected. The role of COREPER is to ensure the strategic direction and political control of the work of MOCADEM.

The formal evaluation of the mechanism¹ was initiated by the Czech Presidency and finalised by the Swedish Presidency in early 2023². On 11 January 2023, COREPER provided recommendations for further improvement of the work of MOCADEM, touching upon the expected outcomes and timelines, activities carried out at local level and exchanges among Member States, Commission and EEAS. Moreover, the discussion concerned better information exchange on migration-relevant missions and meetings, better coordination of work with the different Council preparatory bodies involved in the external dimension, and a case-by-case participation of the Schengen Associated Countries and international organisations, notably IOM and UNHCR. Furthermore, the Swedish Presidency suggested the 360 degrees approach to planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of the work in the external dimension while ensuring close links between EMWP and MOCADEM.

Following this, the Spanish Presidency conducted discussions on the reinforcement of the EU external migration policy in a preventive and proactive approach, more effective implementation on the ground and provided the first informal overview of MOCADEM action files³. Similarly, the Belgian Presidency initiated the discussion on local coordination and MOCADEM working methods⁴. The focus on increasing local cooperation has been fruitful in several third countries, including the coordination process of migration-related Team Europe Initiatives, the role of immigration liaison officers (ILO) and regular migration roundtables co-chaired by EU DEL and Member States or other informal exchanges among them.

¹ On the basis of the Article 6 of the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/60.

² WK 38/2023.

³ WK 12912/2023.

⁴ WK 8321/2024.

Lastly, the Hungarian Presidency facilitated the effective operation of MOCADDEM related to the Strategic Agenda 2024-2029. Its results included the streamlining of the action files' structure and identifying the key common messages to enable the EU and Member States to speak with one voice. In addition, the Hungarian Presidency organised the first virtual participation of an EU Delegation in a MOCADDEM meeting to provide insights from the field.

European Council Conclusions and the Strategic Guidelines

The recent European Council conclusions on migration (from October and December 2024) paid particular attention to the important ongoing work on the external dimension. The letter on migration from the Commission President Von der Leyen, sent prior to the December 2024 European Council, highlighted the ongoing cooperation with third countries, as well as possible future partnerships, pointed out that our growing relationship with partners brings tangible results. EMWP has been tasked to follow-up on the conclusions, while the implementation of comprehensive partnerships in the field of migration should be monitored in the framework of MOCADDEM.

The Strategic Guidelines for legislative and operational planning within the area of freedom, security and justice⁵ state the EU's goal to continue developing ambitious and durable comprehensive partnerships with countries of origin and transit in a mutually beneficial way, including border and security partnerships, the fight against migrant smuggling and the creation of legal pathways. The Commission is invited to consult with the Council and Member States on various ideas for strategically optimising, developing and implementing such partnerships.

⁵ Adopted by the JHA Council on 12-13 December 2024 and endorsed by the European Council on 19 December 2024.

Polish Presidency priorities for the external dimension

Strengthening cooperation with key third countries, bolstering the work on innovative solutions to counter irregular migration and fostering effective migration management are the priorities of the Polish presidency. Additionally, there is a strong focus on return and readmission, combating migrant smuggling and human trafficking as well as on enhancing the effectiveness of the EU's external border management. The Council should play its role in development of comprehensive partnerships with priority third countries of origin and transit, whether the cooperation remains informal, is based on a non-binding instrument or is based on a formal agreement. It should also ensure the proper coordination of different actors, monitor the progress of cooperation / implementation of actions. The works of MOCADDEM are instrumental to ensuring these aims.

The Polish Presidency recognizes the role of COREPER in steering the Council discussions on the external dimension of migration and provide guidance to MOCADDEM in order to better serve its purposes related to the operational level. Building upon the work of previous Presidencies, Poland envisages a thorough follow-up work of the mechanism ensuring the necessary coordination and exchange of information also in terms of Member States activities and avoiding duplication with the work of other Council preparatory bodies, while ensuring the flexibility and responsiveness to developments and reinforcing the links with the local level. This is necessary for maintaining the operational nature of MOCADDEM and, in terms of working methods, a manageable pace of meetings. The Polish Presidency will ensure that the whole-of-route approach and geographical balance are maintained in MOCADDEM action files which should follow-up on more horizontal and strategic discussions in other fora, notably EMWP. Further efforts to improve the whole-of-government approach are also necessary, with a particular emphasis on improving the efficiency of return procedures and strengthening cooperation with key international partners. Finally, MOCADDEM should contribute to increasing consistency between EU and Member States actions and visibility of various programmes in the field.

Questions for discussion

In order to provide guidance for MOCADDEM, COREPER is invited to exchange views on the mechanism and ways to improve it by providing answers to the following questions:

- Is there any additional third country that you consider relevant for a new MOCADDEM action file?
- Could you highlight particular operational challenges related to the whole-of-government approach to the external dimension of migration and asylum?
- Taking into account the necessity to ensure the confidentiality of the cooperation with partner countries, what options can be considered to improve the scope and form of the information shared by the Commission and Member States with MOCADDEM?
- How can we ensure that the common messages annexed to the action files are used by all relevant stakeholders in a way allowing to truly speak with one voice?
- What are the main challenges when it comes to coordination of EU actors at the local level, notably sharing and mutually exchanging information on the programmes implemented by all relevant actors? What possible ways to address them could you suggest?
- Do you see added value in occasional, needs-based participation of EU Delegations, if relevant for the subject discussed?

Informal overview of MOCADDEM action files from 2022 to 2025¹

	Action Plan on	MOCADDEM action file	COREPER action file	MOCADDEM implementation report	COREPER implementation report
1	Afghanistan	27.04.22 WK 5931/2022	29.06.22 WK 9437/2022	28.11.22 WK 16235/2022	20.12.22 WK 17895/2022
2	Bosnia-and-Herzegovina²	07.09.22 WK 11204/2022	09.11.22 WK 15323/2022	25.10.23 WK 13494/2023	20.12.23 WK 16823/2023
3	Tunisia	18.02.22 WK 2454/2022 18.03.22 WK 3981/2022	13.04.22 WK 5074/2022	07.09.22 WK 11206/2022	09.11.22 WK 15357/2022
3	Tunisia (updated action file)	REV 17.05.23 WK 6324/2023 Update of revised action file 25.10.23 WK 13459/2023 29.11.23 Oral briefing – update WK 15558/2023	REV 31.05.23 WK 6584/2023 20.12.23 WK 16821/2023 Updated revised AF Discussion 16.2.24	12.09.24 WK 10548/2024	23.10.24 WK 12589/2024
4	Niger	08.02.22 No WK issued, only word version by email	09.02.22 WK 1863/2022	27.06.22 WK 9041/2022 07.09.22 WK 11207/2022	09.11.22 WK 15355/2022

¹ Please note that this informal overview has not been updated yet to reflect the new matrix format of action files.

² BiH AF merged with Western Balkan route matrix

	Action Plan on	MOCADEM action file	COREPER action file	MOCADEM implementation report	COREPER implementation report
5	Nigeria	18.03.22 WK 3982/2022	13.04.22 WK 5072/2022	07.09.22 WK 11208/2022	09.11.22 WK 15356/2022
5	Nigeria (updated action file)	REV 29.09.23 WK 11281/2023	REV 12.10.23 WK 12706/2023	Oral update 20.06.24	
6	Iraq	08.02.22 No WK issued, only word version by email	09.02.22 WK 1862/2022	27.06.22 WK 9039/2022 07.09.22 WK 11205/2022	09.11.22 WK 15351/2022
6.	Iraq (updated action file)	31.03.23 WK 3656/2023 17.05.23 WK 3656/2023 REV 1 02.06.23 WK 6777/2023 REV 1	05.04.23 WK 4348/2023	21.11.24 Update on the IR WK 14077/2024	11.12.24 WK 15413/2024
7	Libya	13.01.23 WK 117/2023 31.01.23 WK 938/2023 28.02.23 WK 2641/2023	08.03.23 WK 2937/2023	25.10.23 WK 13493/2023 Discussion 16.2.24	20.12.23 WK 16822/2023
8	The Gambia	13.04.22 WK 5425/2022	29.06.22 WK 9439/2022	28.11.22 WK 16234/2022	20.12.22 WK 17893/2022
8	The Gambia (updated action file)	REV 24.07.2023 WK 9953/2023	REV 06.09.23 WK 10724/2023	12.09.24 WK 10551/2024	23.10.24 WK 12588/2024

	Action Plan on	MOCADEM action file	COREPER action file	MOCADEM implementation report	COREPER implementation report
9	Mauritania, incl. strengthened coop. with FRONTEx	08.06.22 WK 7989/2022 20.06.22 WK 7144/2022	29.06.22 WK 9432/2022	13.01.23 WK 111/2023	25.01.23 WK 886/2023
9	Mauritania	19.03.24 WK 3934/2024 REV 19.04.24 WK 5625/2024	24.05.24 WK 6767/24		
	Strengthening cooperation on migration				
10	Morocco	22.02.24 WK 2411/2024 REV 1 (not an action file per se)			
11	Pakistan	02.06.23 WK 6775/2023	28.06.23 WK 8505/2023 (Inf. Coreper)	23.05.24 WK 7048/2024	17.07.24 WK 9925/2024
12	Egypt	30.09.22 WK 12719/2022 17.10.22 WK 13843/2022 WK 14773/2022	09.11.22 WK 15349/2022	28.04.23 WK 5080/2023 Discussion 22.2.24	31.05.23 WK 6583/2023
	Egypt Update of CRP Implementation Report (WK 6583/23)			26.09.24 WK 11229/2024	30.10.24 WK 13147/2024

	Action Plan on	MOCADEM action file	COREPER action file	MOCADEM implementation report	COREPER implementation report
13	Senegal, incl. strengthened coop. with FRONTEx	10.05.22 WK 6489/2022 20.05.22 WK 7143/2022 30.06.22 WK 9435/2022	08.06.22 WK 7990/2022 29.06.22 WK 9435/2022	13.01.23 WK 107/2023 + COR 1	25.01.23 WK 888/2023
14	Senegal (updated action file)	REV 24.07.23 WK 9951/2023	06.09.23 WK 10725/2023 Discussion 23.05.24	10.12.24 WK 15076/2024	15.01.2025 WK 297/2025
15	Bangladesh	21.11.24 WK 14078/24	11.12.24 WK 15412/2024		
	Working together: operational approach to return	27.04.22 WK 5923/2022 10.05.22 WK 6492/2022 20.05.22 WK 7142/2022	29.06.22 WK 9428/2022	28.11.22 WK 16236/2022	20.12.22 WK 17899/2022
	Preventing and countering the Instrumentalisation of Migrants and forcibly displaced people at the EU's external border	30.09.22 WK 12722/2022 17.10.22 WK 13845/2022 10.11.22 WK 14944/2022	20.12.22 WK 17890/2022		

Action Plan on	MOCADDEM action file	COREPER action file	MOCADDEM implementation report	COREPER implementation report
Action file to follow up on the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans	31.01.23 WK 937/2023	15.02.23 WK 1911/2023		
Action file to follow up on the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans (updated action file)	REV 02.06.23 WK 6774/2023 Updated - REV 19.04.23 WK 5249/2024	REV (Inf. Coreper) 28.06.23 WK 8506/2023 24.05.24 – Updated REV WK 6768/2024	25.10.2024 WK 12653/2024	27.11.2024 WK 14538/2024
Action File on enhancing engagement and foster migration cooperation in the Western Balkans	28.11.22 WK 16233/2022 10.11.22 WK 15144/2022	20.12.2022 WK 17883/2022		
Action file on the MOCADDEM follow up to actions 1-13 of the Action Plan on the Central Mediterranean	13.01.23 WK 116/2023	25.01.23 WK 889/2023		

Action Plan on	MOCADDEM action file	COREPER action file	MOCADDEM implementation report	COREPER implementation report
Updated Action file on the MOCADDEM follow up to actions 1-13 of the Action Plan on the Central Mediterranean (updated action file)	REV 22.06.23 WK 7905/2023	REV 28.06.23 WK 8588/2023 (Inf. Coreper)	26.09.24 WK11227/2024	30.10.24 WK 13153/2024
Action file to follow up on the EU Action Plan for the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic routes	24.07.23 WK 9955/2023	13.10.23 WK 12705/2023	03.10.24 WK 12139/24	20.11.24 WK 13903/2024
Action File to follow up on the EU action plan for the Eastern Mediterranean route (matrix)	29.11.23 WK 15557/2023	20.12.23 WK 16820/2023	26.07.2024 WK 10190/2024+COR1	25.09.24 WK 11274/2024 + REV 1