

Brussels, 24 May 2011

## Southern Mediterranean: towards a new era of dialogue and partnership

*By proposing to enhance cooperation on migration, mobility and security, the Commission hopes to reinforce long term relations between the EU and the countries of North Africa. The proposed set of measures will help support the democratic and economic transition in the region, promote people to people contacts across the Mediterranean and contribute to more effectively preventing irregular migration. These elements will now be discussed by the European Council on 24 June.*

### Why is the Commission proposing to enhance cooperation with the Southern Mediterranean?

The EU has responded to the migration crisis in the Southern Mediterranean in a rapid and effective manner (see [IP/11/532](#) and [MEMO/11/273](#) on the components of a wide ranging policy on migration), as detailed in the Communication adopted on 4 May. A first set of urgent measures has been largely endorsed by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 11 April 2011 (see [MEMO/11/226](#) on the European Commission's response to the migratory flows from North Africa).

There is however a need to address the long term challenges in the area of migration and mobility through the establishment of a **Dialogue for Migration, Mobility and Security** between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean countries. With this dialogue, the Commission is proposing a comprehensive and balanced approach to better manage the migration flows originating from or transiting through the Southern Mediterranean countries, as well as the access of their citizens to the EU territory.

The measures proposed in the present Communication represent the Commission's response to the call made by the European Council 24 March 2011 to present a "*plan for the development of capacities to manage migration and refugee flows in the Mediterranean flows in advance of the June European Council*".

### What is the aim of the Dialogues on Migration, Mobility and Security?

The dialogues for migration, mobility and security aim at preparing the conditions for the establishment of Mobility Partnerships between the EU and Southern Mediterranean countries.

**Mobility Partnerships** consist of a joint political declaration agreed on between the EU and its Member States, on the one hand, and a third country concerned, on the other hand. The Partnerships list a series of initiatives that the two parties will take in respect to each other. Each Mobility Partnership concluded with a Southern Mediterranean country will be tailored to the specific situation of the latter, as well as to the needs and proposals which that country, the EU and its Member States will express as regards their cooperation.

Within the framework of the dialogue on Migration, Mobility and Security, the EU intends to develop joint cooperation initiatives with the authorities and civil society in the Southern Mediterranean countries aimed at promoting the conditions that will allow for more accessible and better managed migration and mobility between the EU and its North African partners. Such conditions will include strengthening their capacity to prevent irregular migration, to improve border management, to readmit irregular migrants and to combat criminal organisations dealing with migrants' smuggling and

A successful dialogue with Southern Mediterranean countries which accept to fully cooperate in tackling all aspects of migration, mobility and security issues should lead to the launch of a Mobility Partnership on a case-by-case basis.

### **What will be the content of Mobility Partnerships?**

Mobility Partnerships are conceived as a long term framework which will evolve over time. Their content will promote the movement of people between the EU and its partners in a way that is beneficial to both sides. The concrete substance of such a partnership is to be defined by both sides, taking into account their specific needs and interests.

They could therefore include:

- the prospect to promote initiatives facilitating the use of existing **channels for legal migration** or to establish new more accessible regular channels, adapted to the specific Member States' labour markets needs. Initiatives may include for instance: the establishment by interested Member States of specific quotas for the access to available job vacancies by the nationals of the partner country; specific programmes and/or facilitated legal frameworks for circular migration (including also the seasonal sector); capacity building measures to manage remittances; support for return and reintegration programmes of the migrants nationals of the partner country who return to the origin country; the recognition of professional and academic skills and qualifications; cooperation in view of enhancing the capacity to acquire skills and qualifications that would be expedient within the EU labour market. In an effort to promote mobility, Member States are also requested to exploit the possibilities offered by the European Visa Code allowing for the issuance of multi-entry visa for specific groups such as students, researchers and business people.
- genuine cooperation expressed by the partner country on addressing some security-related issues and especially promoting capacity building in the country concerned (to prevent irregular migration, ensure smooth readmission of irregular migrants, and fight criminal organisations exploiting migrants). Partner countries would also be encouraged to increase their capacities for managing their borders and document security; step up cooperation with FRONTEX; cooperate in the EUROSUR project (once the latter will be launched); fight against trafficking and smuggling of human beings; as well as conclude and implement readmission agreements with the EU (including provisions related to migrants who are third country nationals).

## **Which countries are concerned by the development of Mobility Partnerships?**

The Commission intends to launch dialogues for migration, mobility and security with the Southern Mediterranean countries taking into account several elements:

- the overall relationship that the EU maintains with each partner country;
- the current level of capacity in the partner country to manage migration flows;
- the willingness of the latter to engage in a constructive and effective dialogue aimed at establishing the Partnership.

Due to the countries' geographic position, their importance as countries of origin or of transit of irregular migration towards the EU, as well as countries of destination for persons in need of international protection, the Commission proposes to offer the possibility of developing a Dialogue on Mobility, Migration and Security, first of all to **Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt**.