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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Joint Valletta Action Plan - Updated version

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Delegations will find attached the draft of the updated version of the Joint Valletta Action Plan, as resulting from consultations in the Rabat and Khartoum processes.



## ACTION PLAN

### Updated version

#### PREAMBLE

As a means of following up on the Joint Conclusions that were adopted at the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) in Addis Ababa on 14-15 November 2018, the Action Plan has been updated to reflect delivery to date and acknowledge recent policy developments at regional and global levels. The actions listed will be implemented in full coherence with countries' sovereignty, national legislations and taking into account national and regional specificities.

#### INTRODUCTION

The updated Action Plan reiterates the principles of solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility, for each of the five domains that should continue to underpin the future implementation of the JVAP.

The current Action Plan builds upon and complements the existing dialogues and frameworks on migration and mobility between Africa and Europe, at continental, regional and sub-regional levels, and reaffirms its commitment to enhance operational synergies, advancing joint efforts in addressing common challenges.

While acknowledging the considerable progress already achieved, the Valletta Partners recognise that migration poses both long-term challenges and opportunities, which require a sustainable response. Accordingly, the Action Plan aims to promote a global, constructive and long-term approach to migration and mobility, which aims to benefit countries of origin, transit and destination. The JVAP is based on five domains which will be given equal attention.

The Rabat Process and the Khartoum Process are mandated to monitor the implementation of the JVAP. The state of play of the implementation of the Action Plan will feature regularly on the agenda of meetings organised in the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership, as well as bilateral political dialogues.

**In order to support the implementation of the Action Plan, the EU, its Member States and associated countries, will continue to deploy relevant financial instruments** available for cooperation with African partners in line with their legal and financing frameworks. Moreover, the European Investment Bank, in cooperation with African partners, the Commission, and other financial institutions, can provide financing to support the re-establishment of the conditions for self-sustaining economic growth and the development of human capital.

## 1 Development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement

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### 1.1 Investing in development and poverty eradication

- **Mainstream migration in development cooperation**
  - *Support African countries, regional and sub-regional institutions (such as the African Union), in developing, implementing and further strengthening migration strategies including contributing to better migration management while taking note of individual countries specificities*
  - *Develop options for migration policy mainstreaming processes that are based on principles of ownership, involvement and participation of key actors*
  - *Integrate migration in sustainable development and poverty eradication strategies and programmes, in particular in areas such as labour market/employment, private sector development, education, health, social protection and security, while ensuring full policy coherence*
  - *Encourage and enhance triangular cooperation between Sub-Saharan, Southern Mediterranean and European countries on migration-related topics to foster development in regions of origin and transit*
  - *Continue to carry out joint EU-Africa analyses of the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in order to improve the evidence-base of public policies*
  - *Pursue strategic reflection to further promote regional economic integration between European, Southern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan countries*
- **Boost socio-economic development, particularly by creating job opportunities, especially for young women and men**
  - *Enhance employment opportunities and revenue-generating activities in regions of origin and transit of migrants, including through public and private investment in favour of agriculture and rural economic development*
  - *Step up assistance to youth to acquire labour market-relevant skills through education, vocational training, and access to digital technologies, while ensuring equal opportunities for young women and men*
  - *Create new economic opportunities for young women and men through initiatives focused on, among others, targeted measures to create jobs and employment opportunities and stimulate entrepreneurship, and programmes with civil society to foster youth participation in the public sphere*
  - *Develop and support networks between European and African vocational training institutions, with a view to ensuring that vocational training matches labour market needs*
  - *Step up support to micro, small and medium sized enterprises (SME), including through access to finance and micro-loans, training and incubation with particular focus on women, youth and rural populations*
  - *Support and boost the local information and communications technology sector, including Information and Communications Technology (ICT) start-up communities, and work with them (for example through practical trainings, workshops, mentoring)*
  - *Support economic cross-border activities in border cities and markets*



- Support **resilience**, in particular to the benefit of the most vulnerable, in particular women and children, and communities hosting protracted refugee and displaced populations, including through rural development, food and nutrition security, health, education and social protection
  - *Enhance the resilience agenda aiming at reducing food insecurity and under-nutrition, and increase the delivery of basic services*
  - *Address and strengthen cooperation on environmental and climate change issues in the most affected regions, including through adaptation to climate change, and the development of sustainable and renewable energies, notably via consensual electrification projects. Provide satellite data and information (Copernicus programme) to support rural development, the improvement of food security and the management of natural resources in a sustainable way. The existing access to Copernicus data and information products by African countries will be further facilitated*
- **Enhance sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance** opportunities for displaced persons, as well as for host communities
  - *Promote socio-economic opportunities for displaced persons which would also, benefit the host communities, and reduce dependency on humanitarian assistance*
  - *Enhance the provision of basic services for displaced persons and host communities, such as increased access to education, water, health services, and vocational training, in cooperation with regional and local authorities*

## 1.2 Development benefits of migration

- Promote cheaper, safer, legally-compliant and faster transfers of **remittances** and facilitate productive domestic investments
  - *Implement country-specific programmes, maximising the impact of remittances notably in rural areas*
  - *Support financial education and inclusion of migrants and their families*
  - *By 2030, reduce to less than 3 percent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 percent. In addition, continue work on the corridors identified for remittances transfers where the partners have committed to substantially reduce the costs by 2020, from Europe to Africa and within Africa, in compliance with existing national legislation*
  - *Explore, identify and promote innovative financial instruments to channel remittances for development purposes and to increase the volume of transfers through formal remittance channels*
- Promote **diaspora engagement** in countries of origin
  - *Develop country-specific actions aimed at enhancing the development impact of migrant diasporas, both in the EU and associated countries, and in Africa, to their country of origin. In this context, develop and support diaspora investment models (including entrepreneurship) aimed at leveraging migrants' savings for local business development and as a means of boosting local economic development*
  - *Further enhance the countries' outreach to and the knowledge of their diaspora*



### 1.3 *Addressing instability and crises*

- **Take action with regard to conflicts, human rights violations and abuses, which generate internal displacement, irregular migration and refugee flows. Special focus should be given to the situation in individual countries in Africa**
  - *Reinforce support to diplomatic initiatives, including mediation efforts, within the appropriate frameworks, for some of the most urgent crisis situations in Africa*
  - *Consolidate and support crisis settlement processes, in the appropriate fora, in terms of peace agreements and reconciliation by the international community*
- **Prevent new conflicts**
  - *Reinforce the support to the different sub-regional initiatives and mechanisms for conflict prevention and management, as well as to development and implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture*
  - *Strengthen cooperation regarding early warning and analysis of potential future conflicts of any nature, which might lead to displacement of the population*
  - *Launch measures to prevent and counter all forms of radicalisation and violent extremism, in particular among the youth, notably in the Sahel, Lake Chad, North Africa and Horn of Africa regions*
  - *Support national, regional, and local administrations and civil society organisations in their efforts to foster community cohesion and address human rights violations that contribute to instability in accordance with national law and international commitments*
- **Support State-building, rule of law and good governance**
  - *Strengthen capacities of public administration in security and rule of law, as well as improve border management*
  - *Support cross-border cooperation and specific actions with both security and development dimensions in remote border areas*
  - *Promote and strengthen police and judicial cooperation between origin, transit and destination countries*
  - *Protect and promote respect for Human Rights for all, including migrants and refugees, in countries of origin, transit and destination*
- **Reinforce State capacity to ensure security and fight terrorist threats, including through continuation of existing efforts to the benefit of local populations**
  - *Support EU Missions in the Sahel Region and Horn of Africa regions and foster their coordination*
  - *Strengthen capacity to fight terrorism and organised crime, in a human rights-compliant manner, including through training and professionalization of the internal security forces, as well as judicial authorities, including through regional cooperation*
  - *Encourage the exchange of information at regional level as well as with destination countries*

*We commit to give priority to the following actions:*

- *Enhance employment opportunities and revenue-generating activities in regions of origin and transit of migrants in East, North and West Africa to enhance the professional skills and employability of young people, access to digital technologies, support to micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises and increased access to finance*
- *Launch, implement and follow up on projects linking relief, rehabilitation and development in peripheral and most vulnerable areas characterised by instability, forced displacement and irregular migration, providing a targeted response to tackle the main determinants of vulnerability (poverty, marginalisation, exclusion, destitution) and targeting populations at risk (especially youth and women)*
- *Support the African Institute on Remittances to serve as a focal point for all stakeholders in African remittances: a centre of excellence on African remittances as regards research, advocacy and private sector engagement, and a hub through which technical assistance and capacity building regarding remittances would be provided to African Union Member States' organisations (central banks, ministries, banks, and non-bank financial institutions)*
- *Support responsible private investment in African agriculture, agri-business and agro-industries and boost intra-African trade and exports of agricultural products through agricultural finance initiatives, and by working with like-minded organisations with a view to contributing to rural economic transformation*

## **2 Legal migration and mobility**

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- **Promoting regular channels for migration and mobility from and between European and African countries**
  - *Reinforce cooperation and create networks between relevant agencies and institutions in the field of job/employment creation and development, with a view to facilitating placements and job opportunities*
  - *Strengthen cooperation on pre-departure measures (e.g. foreign language and vocational training) as well as rights awareness*
  - *Step up efforts to promote legal migration and mobility within bilateral cooperation frameworks*
  - *Identify professions where participating States commit to make progress on facilitating recognition of skills and qualifications (including for migrants who decide to return to their country of origin – circular migration schemes)*
  - *Treat the portability of social rights of lawfully residing migrants in conformity with international conventions, bilateral conventions, and national laws applicable in this area*
  - *Support continental, regional and sub-regional frameworks for mobility and migration*



- **Promoting mobility of students, researchers and entrepreneurs** between Africa and Europe
  - *Implement the legal framework for conditions of entry and residence in the EU applicable to third country nationals*
  - *Use the Erasmus+ annual call and relevant national programmes of EU Member States and associated countries to support mobility of tertiary and vocational education<sup>1</sup> students and university staff between Europe and Africa partner countries*
  - *Use the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions calls to foster both the mobility of researchers between Europe and Africa, as well as to encourage joint research projects*
  - *Support the implementation of a Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation framework for harmonised qualifications in higher education through the Africa-EU initiatives and ensure that the terms of reference and mandate of the Continental Agency for Accreditation are developed and endorsed by stakeholders by 2022*
  - *Work towards mutual recognition of academic qualifications and professional certificates through the conclusion of bilateral agreements or by other means*
  - *Promote migration schemes in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), including training programmes for African entrepreneurs in European countries, including through circular migration*
  - *Strengthen partnership and 'brain circulation', building on the model of the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership grants and the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area initiative*
- **Support the elaboration and implementation of comprehensive national and regional strategies on migration and mobility**
  - *Encourage the development and implementation of national and regional strategies or policies for integrating migrants into host societies and for counteracting xenophobia and discrimination. In this context, promote fair recruitment practices and strengthen the capacities of local authorities and civil society to advocate for and protect rights of migrants*
  - *Enhance civil status registration (communication, practical frameworks, modernisation, exchange of information, network, training sessions) and support the creation of coherent and robust Civil Registry systems, as well as the issuance of secure identity cards and passports, in line with relevant regional initiatives*
- **Engage, in a spirit of partnership, in the creation of positive synergies between negotiations on visa facilitation and discussions in other areas such as readmission, as an element of the comprehensive logic of the Action Plan**
  - *Conclude on-going negotiations of agreements on visa facilitation and readmission and, where appropriate, open new such negotiations*
  - *Within existing legal frameworks, facilitate the process of issuing visas as well as procedures related to legal migration:*

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<sup>1</sup> Pending approval in legal texts

- *Simplify entry proceedings (including by maximising the possibility of issuing multiple-entry short-term visas, and the abolition of administrative fees for certain categories of persons)*
- *Facilitate the short stay visa issuing processes for certain types of visitors, such as students, researchers, business people and artists and holders of diplomatic passports*
- *Facilitate the procedures related to applications for legal migration, including family reunification*

*We commit to give priority to the following actions:*

- *Ensure the mobility of at least 35,000 African students and academic staff are funded through the EU-supported Erasmus+ programme by 2020 and 105,000 by 2027*
- *While respecting national selection and admission procedures, launch and follow up on pilot projects that pool offers for legal migration (e.g. for work, study, research, and vocational training) by some EU Member States and associated countries to selected African countries as an element of the comprehensive logic of the Action Plan*

### 3 Protection and asylum

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#### 3.1 Protection

- **Reinforce the protection of refugees, persons in need of international protection, and other displaced persons, uphold the human rights of all migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, support the integration of long term refugees and displaced persons in host communities, and strengthen the capacities of countries of first asylum, transit and destination**
  - *Further work by all sides to prevent the loss of life at sea and in the desert, including, where appropriate through joint action at sea and on land when agreed with the countries concerned. Enhance the capacities of countries to protect refugees and internally displaced persons, including security in refugee camps, support local development for host communities and forcibly displaced persons, and enable better management of forced displacement*
  - *Support countries in their efforts to adhere to and comply with the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)*
  - *Facilitate access to justice, legal assistance, witness-protection, health and socio-psychological support for refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers, and victims of serious crimes*
  - *Further engage with actors from civil society organisations on how to ensure more accessible, equitable and effective international protection*



- Further support capacities of national and regional stakeholders in priority regions along the main migratory routes
- Support EU, African and global resettlement efforts for refugees, and increase the legal avenues available to persons in need of protection, both bilaterally and through multilateral structures (in particular through UNHCR and IOM)
  - *Implement the EU Member States' commitment to resettle to the EU the agreed target identified for those in clear need of international protection*

### 3.2 Humanitarian response

- Enhance the efforts of countries to provide **humanitarian assistance** in countries most affected by forced displacement
  - *Ensure provision of life-saving emergency assistance, in affected countries, which focuses on basic services (education, health and nutrition), food assistance, shelter, water and sanitation, and protection. Assistance targets the most vulnerable, regardless of their status*
  - *Strengthen the link between humanitarian assistance and longer term development measures to improve livelihoods, self-reliance opportunities, and to facilitate durable solutions*

*We commit to give priority to the following actions:*

- *Address the protection and developmental needs of people suffering long-term displacement and their host communities, in line with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, and drawing on Regional Development and Protection Programmes in the Horn of Africa and North Africa. The focus is on durable solutions, enhancing the protection capacities of host countries, and creating development and livelihood opportunities for displaced populations and host communities, including in areas such as income-generation, jobs, and education*
- *Carry out trainings and improve the quality of the asylum systems, in close cooperation with UNHCR and with the support of EASO, in countries of origin, transit and destination*
- *Develop projects to improve resilience, safety and self-reliance of refugees in countries most affected by forced displacement, in close coordination with host countries and international organisations*

## 4 Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

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- Support appropriate legislative and institutional frameworks, regional and national action plans and strategies, in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, the United Nations Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention



- *Support to the rule of law and law enforcement, judiciary and border management authorities in order to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, including on tracing and seizing assets and criminal proceeds, as well as on crime investigation and prosecution. Support could include capacity building and provision of relevant equipment. The human rights dimension will be fully reflected in capacity-building and training projects*
- *Train law enforcement and judicial authorities, e.g. on proactive and reactive investigation methods and judicial treatment of victims/witnesses, and assisting in setting up specialised anti-trafficking and smuggling police units*
- *Step up capacity building to counter the production and use of forged and fraudulent documents, including by engaging European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) and Europol*
- *Ensure effective implementation by relevant national authorities of existing legislation and measures against employers who exploit irregular migrants*
- *Step up efforts for effective investigation and prosecution of migrant smugglers and traffickers of human beings, and more effective protection of victims that complies with fundamental rights and takes the gender of victims into account*
- **Contribute to prevent and address irregular migration and to fight related organised crime, such as migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, including through agreed actions and missions**
- **Provide protection, support and/or assistance to stranded/vulnerable migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking. Special attention should be given to vulnerable groups, notably women and children**
  - *Support the establishment of standard operating procedures for the referral of victims of trafficking at national and cross-border levels, and the provision of systematic and predictable consular assistance to stranded migrants, including in regard to the issuance of travel documentation and the facilitation of transit and re-entry into the country of origin*
  - *Support relevant authorities and civil society organisations to provide protection and rehabilitation services, including in the framework of post-return reintegration, notably medical and socio-psychological counselling, training, requalification and assistance*
  - *Strengthening international cooperation to ensure that victims who wish to return can access the support they need to reduce the risk of future exploitation*
  - *Support regional initiatives on children at risk, in order to ensure comprehensive and sustainable child protection to prevent, and respond to, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children*
- **Improve intelligence gathering**
  - *Encourage all States to gather intelligence on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, with the support of Interpol and other appropriate agencies*
  - *Support Interpol intelligence gathering exercises in relation to migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings*
- **Improve information and intelligence sharing**



- *Enhance cooperation, in particular with Interpol National Central Bureaus (NCBs) and regional bureaus in African countries in order to foster policing and improved intelligence sharing between African states.*
- *Support information exchange between Interpol and Europol.*
- **Foster operational police and judicial cooperation**
  - *Enhance operational police cooperation and exchange of information between countries of origin, transit and destination, including, where appropriate, through Joint Investigation Teams with the agreement of countries concerned. This cooperation should involve, where appropriate, Interpol and EU agencies, in particular Europol*
  - *Facilitate timely exchanges between States regarding mutual legal assistance in cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons*
- **Develop further and maintain, where appropriate, communication networks between EU and African countries** to support maritime surveillance and to save lives at sea in compliance with fundamental rights and data protection standards
- **Fight corruption and support alternative income generation opportunities** in countries where migrant smuggling and services for migrants are important economic factors
- **Provide easy and continuous access to adequate and credible information on legal migration opportunities and the dangers** of engaging in irregular migration, as well as giving a realistic view of living conditions in European countries
  - *Support mechanisms in countries along the main migratory routes, which aim at ensuring the provision of direct assistance and information to migrants, the registration of migrants, as well as providing opportunities for safe and voluntary return and reintegration in cooperation with countries of origin. These mechanisms should also include support to local communities and should be complementary to initiatives aimed at the reinforcement of local and national capacities to manage migration*
- **Provide capacity building and financing for investments for improved border management systems at regional and national levels**
  - *Support national capabilities to control land, sea and air borders as well as maritime surveillance capabilities for the purpose of prevention of irregular migration, cross-border crime, terrorism as well as enhanced search and rescue*
  - *Promote the development and implementation of national and regional strategies and action plans on integrated border management*
  - *Strengthen the capacities in border management on respect for human rights of migrants*
  - *Promote or further enhance platforms that provide for the exchange of strategic knowledge and joint analysis by engaging relevant authorities*
  - *Support training mechanisms for border guards and police, including regional training centres and common curricula*



*We commit to give priority to the following actions:*

- Establish or review and implement national and regional anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking legislation, policies and action plans in countries and regions of origin, transit and destination. Maintain a network of national contact points for anti-smuggling and trafficking activities to enhance cooperation, including with counterparts in EU Member States and associated countries and in Europol*
- Implement projects focused on strengthening institutional capacities to fight against migrant smuggling and human trafficking networks, both in origin and transit countries located along the major migratory routes, and raise awareness of this problem among the populations concerned by irregular migration, the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings*
- Support and develop specialised joint investigation units against migrant smuggling and human trafficking networks, in countries or regions of transit and origin at their request*
- Organise information campaigns in countries of origin, transit and destination, to raise the awareness of the general public and potential migrants and victims on the dangers of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, as well as their recruitment processes. All available communication channels should be used, from individual counselling to traditional and social media, including through public broadcasting service programmes aimed at informing the general public and potential migrants about the migratory situation in Europe*

## **5 Return, readmission and reintegration**

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Strengthen cooperation in order to facilitate the return, readmission and sustainable reintegration of irregular migrants, both from EU Member States and associated countries and from African countries of transit and destination, bearing in mind the obligation of each state under international law [including the post-Cotonou Agreement and its Africa Protocol for its signatory parties] to readmit its own nationals in full respect of human rights and human dignity, and of the principle of non-refoulement, with preference being given to voluntary return.

- Develop practical cooperation arrangements and bilateral dialogues on implementation of returns, with regard, in particular, to identification and the issuance of travel documents*
- Pay special attention to **unaccompanied minors**, taking into account the principle of the best interest of the child. Child protection systems in countries of origin and transit should be supported so as to offer a safe environment for vulnerable children, including unaccompanied minors, upon their return
- Support return projects between the EU, associated countries, and African countries
  - Provide comprehensive developmental packages for safe return and reintegration, whereby a partner country commits to cooperate closely with the EU on return and readmission, notably on identification and issuance of travel documentation, and receives support for the individual reintegration of its own nationals, facilitation of visas, and a tailor-made package of support, including on other policy areas.*



- *Further promote programmes on assisted voluntary return and reintegration and ensure sustainability of local and national reintegration actions by involving all relevant stakeholders*
- *Strengthen the capacity of authorities and civil society organisations of countries of origin and transit in their field of competence to manage voluntary returns and support the reintegration of all returnees, including through support to the development of policy frameworks and community-based reintegration measures, in cooperation with IOM*
- Cooperate with countries of origin on addressing the absence of identification documents and civil registries as one of the main difficulties in the application of return and readmission policies
  - *Strengthen the capacity of authorities of countries of origin to respond in a timely manner to readmission applications, including through support to modernise and secure civil registry systems and biometric identification*

*We commit to give priority to the following actions:*

- *Strengthen the logistical and operational capacity of authorities of countries of origin to respond in a timely manner to readmission applications, including through missions by immigration officials from African countries to European countries in order to verify and identify nationalities of irregular migrants who are not in need of international protection with a view to being returned*
- *Launch capacity building projects for authorities and civil society organisations involved in the return and reintegration processes in their field of competence in countries of origin to support the reintegration of returnees into their communities, labour market and social system*