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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	MOCADÉM Roundtable
Subject:	Coordination of actions in the external dimension of migration at local level - Presidency discussion paper

Delegations will find in annex a Presidency discussion paper on "Coordination of actions in the external dimension of migration at local level" for the Mocadem RT on 20 June 2024.

Discussion paper

Coordination of actions in the external dimension of migration at local level

The issue of operational coordination is at the very heart of the functioning of MOCADDEM. Since its inception, this mechanism has demonstrated its added value by providing a flexible platform where all EU stakeholders (Member States, Commission, EEAS, Agencies) can exchange information and coordinate their actions. The working methodology, centred on the development of action files and monitoring of their implementation, has gradually structured the operational discussions and reflections of the stakeholders.

While the process of operational coordination on migration related issues within the Council now seems to be well established, optimising coordination on the ground is just as important. As part of the evaluation of MOCADDEM carried out after its first year of existence, COREPER made the following recommendation with a view to deepening MOCADDEM's work:

“Ensure local coordination and closer involvement of EU delegations and Member States’ representations in concerned third countries of origin and transit in the development and implementation of action files at local level.”¹

Coordination at local level is indeed key in many respects and complements the work of MOCADDEM. First of all, the gathering and sharing of information by those closest to the ground is essential to enable MOCADDEM to identify and calibrate operational actions as effectively as possible. In addition, local coordination is also one of the key mechanisms for ensuring that the actions identified in the action files are translated into operational implementation and that their impact is felt.

Local coordination in the area of migration varies according to the location and may follow different approaches. The efficiency of coordination depends on factors linked to the diversity of local contexts, the strength of Member States’ presence in a third country or migration expertise locally. Furthermore, the degree of remoteness (from Brussels, from the capitals) on the one hand and, on the other hand, the proximity to the field of implementation and to other stakeholders present on the ground are important factors. Coordination in third countries benefiting from structured cooperation with the EU on migration (e.g. Migration dialogues,

¹ WK 38/2023 INIT, approved by COREPER on 11 January 2023.

Mobility Partnerships or Common Agendas on Migration and Mobility) also stimulates coordination locally.

In addition, local coordination should also facilitate the channels of communication linking the Brussels and local level. This is mainly ensured via consultation with Commission and EEAS services in Brussels, as well as the link via member state delegates in Brussels, via capitals, to their own embassies.

The importance of local coordination appears in several action files such as the one relating to the Central Mediterranean Route² or the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean Route³. On the ground, local coordination initiatives have been developed according to different models reflecting the various needs and situations in third countries.

Under Article 3 of the Samoa Agreement, the Partnership Dialogue is identified as a valuable mechanism for coordination between EU Member States and the European Union Delegation at the local level. This platform can be used to facilitate collaboration on various areas addressed by the Samoa Agreement, including migration.

Local coordination on migration-related issues also takes place in enlargement countries, for example in Bosnia Herzegovina in the context of ‘Rule of Law Breakfasts’ which cover anti-smuggling, and in which the EU Delegation is fully involved.

EU Delegations and national diplomatic representations play a central role in the coordination efforts on the ground. Although the scope and format may vary from one situation to another, the following local coordination initiatives can be mentioned as examples:

- **Morocco:** EU DEL created a coordination group in the context of TEIs;
- **Egypt:** EU DEL and MS co-chair migration roundtables organised every two months to discuss the latest bilateral and European developments in the field of migration cooperation;
- **Iraq:** EU DEL chairs MOCADDEM-inspired meeting at local level with MS to exchange information on developments in cooperation with Iraq and recent visits;
- **Libya:** EU DEL in Tripoli launched a series of debates with Tripoli-based EU MS to discuss different aspects of migration, following the priorities set in the MOCADDEM action file on Libya and the strategic discussion organised in the EMWP;

² WK 8588/2023 INIT – Action 1.

³ WK 12705/2023 INIT – Action 2.

- **Niger:** a ‘migration cluster’ was set up between MS in Niamey and met regularly. Although discontinued following the coup, this forum aimed to establish a consistent exchange of information on ongoing activities, identify common priorities, and prepare the ground for the political dialogue with Niger on migration issues.

In addition, other networks of local stakeholders are also mobilised on the ground, such as the immigration liaison officers (ILOs) deployed by Member States, the Commission (European Migration Liaison Officers – EMLOs) and EU agencies (i.e. Frontex). In third countries where EMLOs are present⁴, they play an important role as facilitators of the local liaison officers network, maintaining regular contacts and organising coordination meetings with migration experts from Member States’ missions. Examples of the abovementioned networks facilitated by the EMLOs include:

- **Morocco:** The EMLO has been organising quarterly meetings on migration at the EU DEL with ILOs since September 2022;
- **Nigeria:** The EMLO has established a similar practice on a monthly basis.

As previously discussed, notably at the IMEX-Expulsion on 8 February and the EMWP on 14 March, closer coordination between liaison officers as well as with other EU stakeholders could have a substantial positive impact.

Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) can also play a part. In the context of the two regional TEIs to address Migration challenges along the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean and Central Mediterranean Routes, TEI country level committees have been created in 16 countries in Africa (Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Senegal, The Gambia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia). These committees meet regularly at the initiative of the EU delegations and local representation of all TEIs members are participating. In some countries all EU Member States’ representations are taking part in the work done by these committees which is used as general coordination with EU member States on Migration.

⁴ Bangladesh, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Serbia, Sudan, Tunisia, Türkiye (posts in Morocco, Niger, Pakistan and The Gambia are currently vacant)

In this regard, these TEI committees have mapped the actions of EU and TEIs members related to Migration in each partner countries and agreed on a TEI implementation plan that identified gaps in programming and agreed on areas of focus for the future. Seven TEIs implementation plans have been designed for Tunisia, Nigeria, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, Senegal, and Ethiopia to serve as a basis for engagement with national authorities. In Mauritania the EU Delegation regularly coordinates with the EU MS present in the country for the engagement with the government, while in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Eritrea, the political situation makes it difficult to conduct a dialogue with national authorities for the proper operationalization of the TEIs.

On the basis of these considerations, delegations are invited to answer to the following questions:

1. How can exchanges between Member States and EU stakeholders at local level be strengthened to improve cooperation and operational coordination on the basis of the action files developed in MOCADDEM? Are there best practices to consider linking the work of representations in Brussels with capitals and embassies in partner countries?
 2. How can the engagement of Member States present in a given location in the meetings/initiatives launched by the EU Delegations be facilitated?
 3. Would the implementation of some action files in particular benefit from enhanced local coordination?
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