



European Union

**Third informal thematic session on
International co-operation and governance of migration in all its dimensions,
including at borders, transit, entry, return, readmission, integration and reintegration
for the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

(19-20 June 2017, Geneva)

Statement by

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EU Statement

Panel 1: International cooperation and governance of migration in all its dimensions

Chair, I have the honor to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

This thematic session covers international cooperation and migration governance in all its dimensions. In our view, the key principles we need to build upon and reinforce are the **principles of solidarity and shared responsibility** in managing large movements of migrants. We also need to ensure that human rights are at the center of all policies addressing large movements of migrants. We should pay particular attention to addressing the specific needs of migrants in vulnerable situations, including women at risk, children, persons with disabilities, persons who are discriminated against, victims of violence, and victims of trafficking in human beings.

We need to promote better global, regional and bilateral migration management and **co-operation among countries of origin, transit and destination**. This needs to be based on a comprehensive approach encompassing legal obligations, mutual commitments, as well as the recognition of migration as both a challenge and a development opportunity for all countries concerned.

In this respect, we can - practically speaking - build on the experience under the **EU's Partnership Framework Approach**, which is aimed at a coherent and tailored engagement with third countries where the European Union and its Member States act in a coordinated manner putting together instruments and tools and identifying all the interests, incentives and leverages to reach comprehensive partnerships with third countries to better manage migration in full respect of humanitarian and human rights obligations. We trust that this approach will help bring benefits for all: migrants, partner countries and our citizens. It is a **truly holistic approach fully embedding migration in the EU's foreign policy**. We are ready to share experience and promote exchange of best practices in this regard.

We reaffirm that **increasing coherence between migration and development policy** is important to ensure that development assistance helps partner countries harness the development effects of migration and manage migration more effectively, in full respect of the human rights of migrants. Likewise, migration policy must not have a negative impact on the development in partner countries. The EU supports better global cooperation on migration also through **recognising International Organisation for Migration as the lead agency on migration within the UN system**, underlining its important role in servicing the negotiations leading to the adoption of the global compact.

Panel 2: International cooperation and governance of migration in transit, on entry and at borders

The EU and its Member States welcome that this session is looking into transit migration, entry of migrants and border management.

We need to acknowledge that **States have rights and responsibilities to manage and control their borders**, as an important element of security for States. They need to ensure that border control procedures are carried out in accordance with applicable obligations under international law, including international human rights and international refugee law and in particular the principle of non-refoulement.

In this regard we should:

- a. **strengthen international border management and control cooperation** with the aim to promote capacity building in improved regional and national level management,
- b. promote development of national and regional strategies on **integrated border management** with the objective of preventing and stemming irregular migration flows,
- c. also prevent and fight against trafficking in human beings, against all forms of exploitation and migrant smuggling. This should be done through operational co-operation, joint training, information campaigns and the exchange of best practices.

In this context, on the **internal** EU front, for the first time ever, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency is establishing a strategy for European integrated border management (IBM) to which all our Member States will align their national strategies.

On the **external front**, the EU provides financial and technical support to our partners to enhance their capacities and foster cooperation on border management. For example, we are engaged in the "Seahorse Med network" aiming at improving the exchange of information and strengthening coordination between border authorities in the Mediterranean. In **Libya** we assist on many fronts: we provide (1) support and training to the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy, (2) assistance to put in place necessary maritime rescue infrastructures and (3) help to enhance control over Libya's southern borders by engaging with border authorities from Libya's neighbors - through the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya and the EU Civilian mission Sahel. To **disrupt the business model of migrant smugglers** and prevent exploitation by human traffickers, we have carried out information campaigns in key third countries in Africa, for instance in Niger and Ethiopia. Furthermore, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency is reinforcing its presence in third countries through deployed liaison officers, e.g. in Turkey and - by July - in Niger and Serbia.

Finally, we would like to recall the **sovereign right of States to determine whom to admit to their territories** and integrate into their societies and under what conditions, subject to that State's international obligations.

Panel 3: International cooperation and governance of migration on return, readmission, integration and reintegration

The EU and its Member States welcome that this session is looking into the issues of return, readmission, integration and reintegration.

It is the obligation of all States as enshrined in international law **to accept without condition the return and readmission of their nationals**. We call upon States to cooperate effectively towards that end and **facilitate the return of their nationals** who do not have the right to stay on other States' territory, as established through fair procedures respecting human rights of the individuals concerned and the principle of non-refoulement. We call upon all States to cooperate notably by **swiftly identifying their nationals and issuing travel documents**. Returns and readmissions need to be carried out safely and effectively, in full compliance with international law, including international human rights and international refugee law and in particular the principle of non-refoulement. This includes the respect of the right to effective remedy as well as access to information about rights and obligations, including access to legal support, translation, interpretation and counselling services.

The EU and its MS support and promote **assisted voluntary return** in safety and dignity as well as effective and sustainable reintegration assistance for returnees as an important complementary element of return management. Under the European Reintegration Network the EU implements sustainable return and reintegration of persons in their countries of origin. The EU has developed a close partnership with IOM on assisted voluntary returns and sustainable reintegration of migrants.

Further, we underline that **deprivation of liberty** must be used only when less coercive measures are not sufficient to achieve the legitimate objective. We should promote the use of alternatives to administrative detention.

We need to recognize the negative effects that the administrative detention has on children. The deprivation of the liberty of migrant children should be a measure of last resort, for the shortest possible period of time, in a manner that **takes into account the best interests of the child**.

Recognizing that integration is a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by all migrants and residents of Member States, we should promote the **social and economic inclusion of migrants** who are legally staying in host societies. We also need to promote inclusion and support of legally staying migrants in transit countries.

The European Commission adopted in June 2016 an Action Plan on the **integration of third-country nationals**, which includes fifty concrete actions that the Commission is putting in place to support Member States and other actors in their integration efforts. Labour market integration and social inclusion are two of the five priority areas of the Action Plan.

The **EU supports social inclusion** also through various European structural and investment funds.

Panel 4: Summary panel

Again, **thanks** for a rich, inspiring debate on yet another important aspect of global migration governance.

Indeed: **international cooperation** between all actors and on all levels in the global migration framework is a "condition sine qua non". Proper migration governance is key. It is our common goal to achieve better migration governance as the result of the Global Compact on Migration process, something we all committed to. **IOM as the lead agency** for migration is our key partner and facilitator for this. We encourage all states and regions to engage in this exercise.

Recalling the discussion and our interventions over the last two days, I would like to sum up and stress three points under the **overarching principle of partnership** and cooperation we presented earlier during this meeting:

One - Border Management is a sovereign right. Readmission of citizens is an obligation.

Two - Return and reintegration need facilitation: We are ready and already actively engaged with a high number of states to work on this issue, together with our key partner IOM.

Three - Integration and inclusion for those entitled to stay in countries of destination or transit requires our full attention to successfully contribute to society. The EU has strategies, tools, and funds in place for that.
