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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration (EMWP)
Subject:	The role of regional processes in achieving the objectives of the external dimension of migration (Budapest, Prague, Khartoum, Rabat, C2CMMD, Niamey) - Presidency paper

Budapest Process

The Budapest Process is one of the oldest interregional dialogues on migration providing a platform for regional dialogue and operational cooperation on migration and mobility. The Budapest Process is funded by the European Union (DG HOME) under the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) and bilateral contributions from several participating countries. Chaired by Türkiye and co-chaired by Hungary, with ICMPD as the Secretariat, its geographical scope includes over 50 countries and 10 organisations from Europe, Central Asia, and the Silk Routes, with participation of observers in other regions, reflecting its broad and inclusive reach. Since 2013, the geographic focus of the Dialogue has been on the Silk Routes region, covering Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan. There has been a standing invitation from the BP Chair, Türkiye, since 2023 for Jordan and Lebanon to join the dialogue. Both countries have attended BP meetings periodically following the invitation. The BP Secretariat is following up with the two countries to facilitate their full participation in the dialogue.

In 2025, the dialogue discussed the situation in Syria on several occasions, in light of the relevance of developments in Syria to migration-related discussions. Syria joined the BP in 2010; however, its participation was abruptly interrupted due to the outbreak of the war. Future engagement with Syria is currently under consideration.

Thematically, the dialogue's current focus is on strengthening law enforcement cooperation, preventing irregular migration including combatting migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, fostering partnerships on legal migration pathways, and promoting cooperation on return and sustainable reintegration. The Budapest Process prides itself on not only serving as a trusted forum for effective dialogue on migration, but also as a network, knowledge hub, and catalyst for migration policy projects and innovative approaches.

Over time, the Budapest Process has mastered the political dialogue with operational action, with concrete projects supporting and delivering tangible outcomes aligned with agreed priority goals of Budapest Process countries building momentum. The dialogue's strategic direction is guided by Ministerial Declarations and Action Plans endorsed every five years at Ministerial Conferences, setting thematic priorities and implementation frameworks. Beyond these conferences, the Budapest Process operates through three meeting types: Senior Officials' Meetings (SOMs), which typically meet annually and form the backbone of the dialogue; Reference Group Meetings, where a smaller group of senior officials refine strategy and maintain continuity between SOMs; and the Working Group Meetings, bringing together policy experts and practitioners from Budapest Process countries of origin, transit, and destination for thematic discussions focussing on the following three areas: Law Enforcement Cooperation (supported by COLEP, the operational arm), Return and Reintegration, and Legal Pathways for Migration. In November 2024, the Budapest Process members adopted the new Ministerial Declaration and accompanying Call for Action (2025-2030), showing support for and a renewed commitment to the Process. The current and future focus of the Budapest Process will be on the implementation of the joint commitments and actions agreed upon.

Prague Process

The Prague Process is a targeted migration dialogue promoting migration partnerships among 47 participating countries of the European Union, Schengen area, Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans, Central Asia, and Türkiye. Participation of Russia and Belarus has been suspended since 2022.

Established in 2009, the Prague Process has evolved into a trusted framework for dialogue and joint action across a geographically and politically diverse region, driving policy alignments, strengthening mutual trust, and catalysing concrete cooperation across its region. Thematically, the Prague Process addresses the full spectrum of migration governance. Its current Action Plan 2023-2027, endorsed by the 4th Ministerial Conference in Prague in October 2022, focuses on six priority areas: preventing irregular migration; readmission, voluntary return, and sustainable reintegration; legal and labour migration; integration of legally residing migrants; migration, mobility, and development; and strengthening capacities in asylum and international protection. The dialogue operates through three mutually reinforcing pillars: Policy Dialogue, enabling high-level political exchange and strategic coordination; Migration Observatory, serving as a knowledge hub producing analytical and evidence-based outputs; and the Training Academy, delivering capacity-building and professional development. In addition, since 2023, four thematic components have supported targeted operational cooperation in priority areas identified by participating states.

The Process' strategic direction is defined by Ministerial Declarations and multiannual Action Plans endorsed at Ministerial Conferences. The implementation is guided by annual Senior Officials' Meetings, being the decision-making body of the Prague Process, and supported by the Strategic Group composed of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, the European Commission, the ongoing EU Council Presidency, and the Secretariat at ICMPD. The Prague Process is currently funded by the European Union (European Commission / DG HOME) under the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) and chaired by the Czech Republic.

Following a positive external evaluation in 2025, which commended its adaptability and demand-driven character, the Process is now preparing its next mandate, as specified in the Road Map towards the Ministerial Conference. Extensive state consultations in 2026 will define strategic priorities in the buildup to the 5th Prague Process Ministerial Conference, planned under the Lithuanian EU Presidency on 28 January 2027. The next cycle of cooperation shall place particular emphasis on strengthening measurable impact and reinforcing collective ownership among its 47 participating states. Timely planning for the mandate for the years 2028-2032 will allow for identification of funds for the implementation of the actions and objectives that the 5th Ministerial Conference will endorse.

Khartoum Process

The Khartoum Process is a platform for enhanced political cooperation amongst the countries along the migration route between the Horn of Africa and Europe. Also known as the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, the inter-continental consultation was established in 2014 and follows an annual rotating chairmanship. The Secretariat is jointly managed by the African Union Commission and the European Commission and is supported by ICMPD with EU funding (NDICI – Global Europe/DG INTPA). The Khartoum Process aims at establishing a continuous dialogue on migration and mobility. Initially intended to focus on tackling migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings as per the Rome Declaration (November 2014), due to the ever-changing nature of migration realities and challenges, the dialogue has expanded its scope to address concerns within the five domains of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) and beyond. These areas include: the development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement; legal migration and mobility; protection and asylum; the prevention of irregular migration and trafficking in human beings; and return, readmission, and reintegration. Building on the five JVAP domains, the Khartoum Process members adopted the [Cairo Ministerial Declaration](#) and the [Cairo Action Plan](#) at the Ministerial Conference held in April 2025 in Cairo. These documents reaffirm the Khartoum Process as a valuable and dynamic platform, well positioned to address future migration challenges through unity and a shared vision.

Additionally, the Khartoum Process gives a new impetus to the regional collaboration between participating countries of origin, transit and destination, together with further opportunities and incentives for information exchange. The Process seeks to create opportunities for balanced partnerships, within the main pillars of JVAP, and a spirit of shared responsibility. At the political level, the Khartoum Process's activities include regular Senior Officials' Meetings and Steering Committee Meetings. At the technical level, the dialogue holds Thematic Meetings, Workshops and Trainings. Currently the Khartoum Process is chaired by France, followed by Uganda as of April 2026. As of 2025, the Khartoum and Rabat processes have organised joint thematic meetings, facilitating participation and exchanges between both processes. This is very important to mitigate meeting fatigue, enhance inter-regional cooperation, and optimize available resources.

Rabat Process

The Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development, known as the Rabat Process, is an intergovernmental migration dialogue established in 2006. It provides a platform for consultation on technical and political issues related to migration and development, connecting countries of origin, transit, and destination along the migration routes linking Central, West, and Northern Africa with Europe. The dialogue promotes solidarity, partnership, and shared responsibility, aiming for collaborative management of migration issues while respecting human rights. Aligned with the five domains of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP), the Rabat Process is guided by a flexible strategic framework (currently the Cadiz Action Plan 2023-2027), structured around the development benefits of migration and the root causes of irregular migration; regular migration and mobility; protection and asylum; irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings; and return, readmission and reintegration.

As many countries of the Rabat Process are origin, transit and destination countries of the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean routes and the Central Mediterranean route, this dialogue has been key in building Euro-African networks at both technical and political levels, fostering knowledge sharing on projects, policies, and good practices among countries and key stakeholders. It also attempts to monitor the implementation of commitments within the JVAP and periodically, a new multiannual cooperation programme is adopted at the ministerial level. Supported by EU funding (NDICI – Global Europe /DG INTPA), the dialogue is driven by its Steering Committee and an annual alternating chairmanship – currently held by Switzerland, succeeding Nigeria - in collaboration with 57 state partners, 2 regional organisations (the European Union and the Economic Community of West African States - ECOWAS), and 4 permanent observer organisations (ICRC, IOM, UNODC, UNHCR), with ICMPD serving as the Rabat Process Secretariat. In addition, the Rabat Process is cooperating and coordinating with other regional processes, such as the Khartoum Process.

AU-EU Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD)

The African Union (AU) - European Union (EU) Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD) provides a platform for enhancing cooperation on migration and mobility issues between the African Union Commission (AUC) and the EU. Established within the broader Africa-EU Partnership, the Nairobi Action Points from 2019 have served as a foundation for related cooperation and joint actions in areas such as remittances, diaspora engagement, intelligence sharing in the field of combatting smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, free movement of people, return, readmission and reintegration, as well as migration governance. The C2CMMD aligns with the Joint Africa-EU Strategy adopted in 2007 and contributes to AU-EU efforts in translating political commitments into operational cooperation, reinforcing the strategic value of migration governance within the overall Africa-EU Partnership, which was most recently reaffirmed at the 3rd EU-AU Ministerial Meeting in May 2025 and the 7th AU-EU Summit in November 2025.

Supported by EU funding (NDICI – Global Europe), the C2CMMD is co-chaired by the Directorate for Health, Humanitarian Affairs & Social Development (HHS) of the AUC and the European External Action Service (EEAS), with ICMPD serving as the Secretariat. To date, two Senior Officials Meetings took place (2019, 2024) and C2CMMD stakeholders from EU and AU meet annually during Strategic Update Meetings to coordinate and monitor progress. To address emerging priorities and strengthen the strategic partnership among C2CMMD stakeholders, the C2CMMD Co-Chairs were mandated to review the Nairobi Action Points and develop an updated cooperation framework aligned with the Joint Vision for 2030, adopted at the 6th EU-AU Summit in February 2022.

Niamey Process

Niamey Process is a regional cooperation framework launched in 2015 in Niamey, the capital of Niger, in response to growing concerns over irregular migration, migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and cross-border crime along the main migration routes linking African countries and Europe. The initiative aims to strengthen migration governance, enhance border management capacities, improve regional information-sharing, and foster coordinated action among countries of origin, transit, and destination countries.

In a meeting organised by Niger on 16 March, 2018, a joint declaration (Niamey Declaration) was adopted where the Ministers of West African and European countries expressed their full commitment to combat smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and to protect the rights of migrants and victims of trafficking. The Declaration aims at improving coordination and operational effectiveness of responses to these crimes, among others by further supporting the efforts of origin and transit countries and strengthening the data collection, international judicial cooperation and cooperation between various law enforcement entities. A permanent follow-up mechanism, supported by the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), ensures that the commitments made in the 2018 Niamey Declaration are implemented.

Overall assessment

The regional processes and migration dialogues, described in this paper, are funded by the EU, in addition to bilateral contributions in the case of the Budapest Process only. Funding, support and engagement of the EU aim to ensure that EU's priorities in the area of migration management benefit from the targeted and regional work of the processes and migration dialogues and feed into and ensure coherence with global and thematic initiatives such as the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling. So far, the regional processes have contributed to building trust and facilitated contacts and exchanges of best practices among the origin, transit and destination countries. They are valuable platforms to discuss and agree on regional priorities in migration management and common approaches that should be followed by the implementation of concrete joint activities. As highlighted in the Joint Declaration of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling of 10 December 2025 supported by many countries that are parties to the different processes, they are frameworks which can support peer to peer cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building to address EU priorities and contribute to its "whole of route" approach. To ensure that those objectives are achieved, the involvement of the EU Member States is instrumental.

The questions below will help steer the discussion and understand how to further improve and capitalise on the well-established regional processes and past migration dialogues as well as consider needs and options to modernise these platforms to make them more fit for purpose, in support of the EU policy goals.

Questions for Member States:

1. How do Member States assess the strategic added value of the Regional Migration Dialogues? To what extent do these frameworks effectively support the EU's broader interest and external migration objectives? To what extent are they fit to support Strategic Comprehensive Partnerships with key countries of transit and origin? Should regional dialogues be reformed, including in terms of geographic coverage to focus on priority countries for migration and forced displacement?

2. To what extent do Regional Migration Dialogues effectively support a *whole-of-route approach*, ensuring coherence across countries of origin, transit and destination, and how can they better translate political exchanges into coordinated operational action — including through stronger alignment with Team Europe Initiatives on key migration routes?
3. After more than a decade of implementation, what remains the added value of Regional Migration Dialogues compared to bilateral partnerships and Strategic Comprehensive Partnerships? Is there sufficient political ownership and partner-country appetite to sustain them, or should the EU consider streamlining or re-prioritising existing formats to enhance impact, visibility and results?
4. What concrete actions, initiatives or forms of engagement are Member States currently undertaking within these Processes (political, operational, financial or technical)? How do Member States assess their political and operational impact so far?
5. In view of enhancing coherence, efficiency and transparency, what further steps could be taken — at EU and/or national level — to ensure more tangible, measurable and results-oriented outcomes within these Dialogues?

DIALOGUE PARTICIPATION

Budapest Process

Participating States: *Afghanistan**, Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, *Belarus**, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, *Russian Federation**, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.

Observer States: Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, India, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, United States of America.

NB: Cooperation with Afghanistan, as well as with the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus have been halted in 2021 and early 2022, respectively.

Prague Process

Participating states: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kosovo*¹, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Participating Organisations: European Commission, EUAA, Frontex, ICMPD, IOM, JCP, MARRI, UNHCR.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

NB: Cooperation with the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus has been suspended following the war of aggression against Ukraine in February 2022.

Khartoum Process

Participating states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Sudan, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, and Uganda.

Participating Organisations: European Union, African Union Commission, ICMPD, IOM, UNHCR and UNODC.

Rabat Process

Partner countries: Algeria (observer), Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liberia, Libya (observer), Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Cyprus, Romania, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, and Tunisia.

Partner organisations: The European Union and the Economic Community of West African States

Permanent observer organisations: ICRC, IOM, UNODC, UNHCR.

AU-EU Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD)

Partner countries: Algeria (observer) / Angola / Austria / Belgium / Benin / Bulgaria / Burkina Faso / Burundi / Cabo Verde / Cameroon / Central African Republic / Chad / Congo (Republic of) / Comoros / Croatia / Congo (Democratic Republic of) / Cyprus / Czechia / Denmark / Djibouti / Egypt / Eritrea / Estonia / Ethiopia / Equatorial Guinea / Finland / France / Gabon / Gambia / Ghana / Germany / Greece / Guinea / Guinea-Bissau / Hungary / Ireland / Italy / Kenya / Côte d'Ivoire / Latvia / Liberia / Libya (observer) / Lithuania / Luxembourg / Mali / Madagascar / Malta / Mauritania / Morocco / Netherlands / Niger / Nigeria / Norway / Poland / Portugal / Romania / Sao Tome and Principe / Senegal / Sierra Leone / Slovakia / Slovenia / Somalia / South Sudan / South Africa / Spain / Sudan / Sweden / Switzerland / Togo / Tanzania (United Republic of) / Tunisia / Uganda.

Niamey Process

Partner countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal, with cooperation and support from EU Member States (France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain).

Participating Organisations: European Union, African Union Commission, FRONTEX, EUROPOL, IOM, UNODC.