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Subject:	The external dimension of migration in the context of the Iran crisis: Meeting of MOCADDEM (Operational Coordination Mechanism for the External Dimension of Migration) on 26 March 2026
here:	Eastern Mediterranean route (including TUR, SYR, LBN, IRN, AFG, PAK), Libya, partnerships with EGY, MRT, TUN, JOR (LBN, SEN, MAR), AOB on proactive communication ahead of the implementation of the GEAS reform
Purpose:	For information
Author:	Döscher (.BRUEEU POL-EU1-5-EU)
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Enclosures:	1. ICMPD Presentation 2. Follow-up to DKOR MOCADDEM 260326

I. Summary and assessment

The MOCADDEM meeting on 26 March was, on the one hand, dominated by the impact of the current crisis in and around Iran (see in particular Agenda Item 1) and, on the other hand, marked on the sidelines and in the aftermath by the Member States' dissatisfaction with the format, which has led to increasingly lengthy monologues by the Commission.

Agenda Item 1 – Update on the Eastern Mediterranean route matrix. ICMPD gave a presentation on the ENHANCER project in TUR (see Attachment 1), which aims to improve the socio-economic integration of Syrian refugees by creating employment opportunities and livelihoods, whilst simultaneously supporting local communities. Member States raised questions here regarding statistics and the definition of target groups, the follow-up project ENHANCER PRO, and the current situation in Turkey with regard to Iran. We also received answers to our questions on monitoring and evaluation, coordination and sustainability.

The Commission and the EEAS reported on trends concerning the Eastern Mediterranean route, focusing on the current crisis in and around Iran. Member States who took the floor called for further

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They engaged primarily with TUR and acknowledged the 2016 EU-TUR Declaration as *the basis for cooperation*; they raised questions following the letter from COM Brunner to MS and focused their comments primarily on LBN and SYR, as well as on the connections of the other regional routes (WEB, eastern route). **The Commission (represented at Director-General/Secretary-General level by Nacira Boulehouat) stated in a response regarding SYR (the question came from BEL in the context of SYR and AFG) that the conditions for return were still not in place (“Developments put us in a difficult situation (...) we consider that conditions are not entirely ripe for returns. ‘We’ll have to see how things go’”). In this regard, the EAD reported on a discussion between the IRN representative in PAK and UNHCR, indicating that following a possible ceasefire in the region, the IRN might make further efforts to compel Afghan asylum-seekers to return to AFG – the EUMS should therefore prepare to provide further necessary assistance.**

Agenda Item 2 – Libya: Update on the implementation of the action plan. The Commission and the Secretary-General presented the programme framework. **The Commission and the EEAS called on Member States to increase their pledges for the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) via third countries (particularly the RWA), not least because the US is no longer a donor.** According to the EEAS’s assessment, the latter are more interested in medium-term stabilisation than in a sustainable resolution of the conflict. **Member States also called here for a more comprehensive use of the Pact for the Mediterranean and spoke in favour of technical dialogue.**

Agenda Item 3 – Comprehensive Partnerships – Egypt. The Commission and the Secretary-General provided updates on cooperation; **the EAD addressed in particular the issue of transit visas and the BGD.** The EUMS emphasised the situation in F/M on the ground and the new asylum legislation. **The EUAA does not have the draft by-laws to hand; UNHCR was only able to review them and provide comments, but the drafts were retained by the Egyptian side.**

The remaining partnerships – MRT, TUN, JOR (as well as LBN, SEN and MAR) – and all other business items were postponed to the forthcoming MOCADÉM meeting on 29 May due to an upcoming trilogue and the resulting time constraints.

A positive development and in our interest: the Commission has now confirmed that there will be an action fiche on SYR at the forthcoming MOCADÉM meeting.

Operational:

- Deadline: Member States may submit written contributions on the Action Files discussed by Wednesday 8 April.
- Next MOCADÉM: 29 May
- LBY, according to the RP, is also on the agenda for the upcoming EMWP (29 April)
- Note regarding the Global Alliance’s Senior Officials Meeting in Vienna in June

II. Recommendations for action

Following the meeting, there was clear dissatisfaction amongst Member State representatives regarding the conduct of the session (which was, in effect, almost exclusively a debrief by the Commission). This means we should continue our efforts, together with like-minded partners, to propose adjustments to the format through the available bodies and channels.

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We should also continue our efforts to engage in proactive communication regarding the external migration components of the forthcoming implementation of the GEAS reform in the run-up to the next MOCADDEM.

III. In detail

Agenda Item 1 – Update on the Eastern Mediterranean route matrix.

ENHANCER/ICMPD project

Tamer KILIÇ (K.) from **ICMPD** used the attached presentation to explain the organisation's objectives within and in collaboration with **TUR**, and presented the **ENHANCER project** as well as its follow-up project, **ENHANCER PRO**. We asked **ICMPD** 1.) about the target groups (selection criteria for Syrian refugees and host communities), 2.) sustainability criteria (particularly regarding employment opportunities after the end of the project), 3.) coordination with other initiatives, and 4.) monitoring and evaluation (indicators for measuring success in terms of socio-economic integration and community support). According to **K.**, regarding point 1, all Syrian asylum seekers with temporary protection status as well as Turkish asylum seekers in the provinces are included, with particular attention being paid to women and young people. 2.) Sustainability is ensured, amongst other things, through grant mechanisms, mentoring programmes, youth facilities and so-called 'technology parks' – in the latter, for example in Gaziantep, sustainable support is provided, including via the university and through the (free) provision of equipment, for the footwear industry, amongst others. Re 3. Coordination with **EUDEL**, the Turkish Ministry of Labour and industry representatives; re 4.) Discussion of progress and impacts at a systemic level in accordance with the internal mechanism and via **EUDEL** (see presentation).

CZE raised questions following the **ER** regarding possible migration flows to/via **TUR** to the **EU**. **K.** conceded that current developments were putting pressure on **TUR**; there are a total of three official border crossings, where approximately 4,000–5,000 people cross the border each day, which represents no increase in volume compared to pre-war levels. Possible scenarios: the establishment of a so-called 'buffer zone' (on the Iranian side); otherwise, the accommodation of up to 90,000 refugees along the border. It is more likely that **TUR** will not be able to act as generously towards **IRN** as it did towards **SYR** in 2015/16, possibly because the scale is (significantly) greater, but in any case also in view of the upcoming elections, which are a factor. "Turkey will resist letting them in until the very last minute." At the same time, there are fewer returns of Syrian nationals to Syria due to the more unstable situation in the region. **FRA** asked about figures, including those relating to jobs created by the project. **K.** referred to the 2.3 million Syrian nationals currently in Turkey (out of an original total of over 4 million), some of whom could return to Syria. Turkey has not stated this officially, but it is estimated that at least 1 million will remain in Turkey. Through **ENHANCER**, 1,050 people have benefited from employment, and a further 2,500 through **ENHANCER PRO**; however, this is only one aspect – in the case of **ENHANCER PRO**, investment also plays a major role. In response to a question from **GRC**: **Enhancer** ends in June 2026; **Enhancer Pro** has been running since June 2025 for four years via **DG ENEST**. **RP** asked whether Syrian refugees who returned to **TUR** from or via **GRC** (this part of the agreement is not currently being implemented by **TUR**) would be eligible for support – **K.** confirmed this, provided they are individuals with temporary protection status.

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Route ÖMM

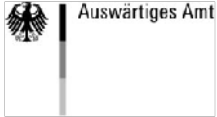
RP noted that the figures were showing a significant downward trend on the Eastern Mediterranean route, referred to the Action File and expressed the hope that the measures and instruments would continue to have an effect and that the trend would persist.

GS/COM (Director Nacira Boulehouat/GS) reported on trends on the Eastern Mediterranean route, stating that this was the right time to address the issue in light of the crisis in the Near and Middle East. **A 25 per cent decline in illegal border crossings in 2025; main nationalities: AFG, SDN, EGY, BGD, SYR. Arrivals in Crete have seen dramatic increases in some cases (20,000 out of a total of 42,000 on the Aegean islands); arrivals in CYP down by 60 per cent compared with 2024. AFG is the top nationality on the route; displacement continues in AFG as well, with 3 million from PAK and IRN in 2025. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East poses direct and indirect risks to the EU; whilst there are currently no large-scale movements, monitoring continues to safeguard the security and unity of the EU, in cooperation with partners in the region, utilising the diplomatic toolkit in the field of migration, and through contingency planning – the conclusions of the European Council also provide the mandate to make adjustments in this regard.**

Of particular concern at present are Afghan workers and asylum-seekers in Iran. According to estimates, there were 4.4 million such individuals in August 2025; the worsening situation in Afghanistan is also a cause for concern, where basic needs are being addressed, with a focus on livelihoods, women, vulnerable groups and returnees (the latter via a stand-alone reintegration project). In 2025, an €83 million package to tackle the root causes of migration, plus €38.1 million via a regional project (“migration support”) through the IOM, as well as support for the UNHCR regional programme (with links to PAK/IRN). Reference to the “Team Europe” initiative on Afghanistan to counter displacement (2.2 billion spent, primarily on protection and the provision of services). Regarding **Lebanon**: humanitarian aid, but also support through non-humanitarian programmes; a very high number of internally displaced persons; **rising numbers of Syrian and Lebanese refugees across the border into Lebanon. Aid totalling 80 million euros via the EU’s Cross-Border Programme, of which 40 million euros is earmarked for Syria. The Iran–Turkey border is currently calm, with fewer crossings than usual. The Commission is in contact with the Turkish authorities; for the time being, the situation is under control. The longer the conflict lasts, the more serious the consequences will be.**

Continued in the annex.

signed
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Diplomatic correspondence

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ANNEX

Registry

BRUE*ZREG

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Follow-up to DKOR MOCADDEM 26 March 26

Further measures/COM: Dialogue with countries of origin and transit, in Africa and Asia, as well as with LBY and EGY, plus cooperation with PAK and BGD via the Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD), most recently in autumn 2025, next meeting in autumn 2026; this also involves strengthening cooperation against human smuggling (PAK and BGD nationals rank among the top non-EU national groups smuggled into the EU; there are also active networks originating from these countries, including those aimed at smuggling non-EU nationals). Reference to ongoing projects with PAK and BGD (including on integrated border management), Eastteams with PAK (last meeting in Feb '26, further cooperation until Sep '26). Global Alliance for cooperation against migrant smuggling; the 2026–28 work plan is available, prioritising the legal framework, 'follow the money' and irregular migration via international aviation. Upcoming meeting in Vienna – Member States should nominate their delegates. Review of the AU–EU Summit in Luanda in this context; awareness-raising campaigns to be implemented in April/May; 'Rapid Response Initiatives', primarily implemented by ICMPD in PAK, BGD, SDN and EGY. Reference to the Talent Partnerships.

Turkey remains the key country on the route; the Commission remains in contact with Turkey in accordance with the 2016 EU-Turkey Agreement; the Commission calls for the return mechanism to be fully reactivated. The Commission supports Turkey's integrated border strategy, including passenger screenings at airports, as well as six projects aimed at combating migrant smuggling; Europol has been providing support to the Turkish Gendarmerie since December. Since 2021, €1.1 billion in aid has been provided for migration and border management, and there are regular exchanges.

Finally, reference was made to the importance of resettlement, which should form part of a comprehensive approach.

The EAD confirmed that there are currently no migration flows across the IRN/TUR border, and that the numbers are decreasing rather than increasing. Border controls are significantly stricter; Turkey does not wish to be perceived as a transit country. The Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan indicated in a discussion with the UNHCR that, should hostilities cease – as they did following the 12-Day War – there might be a further large-scale deportation of Afghan StA in IRN ("might have to get ready for another push") and appealed to EUMS that humanitarian aid and funding would then be required. EUDEL BGD assessed that, should the conflict persist and affect the economies of the Gulf states, many 'migrant workers' would see fewer employment opportunities, might face deportation, and could then find the Eastern MM route an attractive route to Europe. As regards TUR, the current situation cannot be compared to that of 2015, if only because there are extensive fortified borders ("concrete borders") with IRN and SYR, and LBN now has significantly greater control over its maritime borders; much has also changed in the region with regard to maritime borders. TUR remains a key partner; telephone calls by Commissioner Brunner with the Turkish Ministry of the Interior (TUR AM) and (forthcoming) with the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) are therefore very much in the interest of the EU. SYR has not been directly affected to date, but is already experiencing 'spill-over' effects from LBN, as SYR is not necessarily in a position to accommodate the large number of people (including returnees).

From the discussion:

We enquired about the status of the High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Security with TUR (upcoming meeting and agenda). Regarding Action File/Action 22, we emphasised the importance of 'operational grants' to the PMM for the management of so-called 'removal centres' and called for full

access to the facilities should be a key topic of the upcoming dialogue to enable monitoring, in particular compliance with European standards.

NLD emphasised the importance of cooperation with TUR to manage migration flows (as did **SWE**). Enquiry regarding TUR's willingness to cooperate and impressions following a telephone call with Commissioner Brunner. **SWE** underlined the need for precautionary measures due to the uncertain situation in the Middle East and in reference to Commissioner Brunner's letter of 25 March. High-level contact remains important, as do political and technical exchanges. **SWE** had sent a technical mission to TUR the previous week; further support for the PMM is being considered, **with reference to discussions in the RAG MaMa on the Action Plan for the Mediterranean – it is important that this also addresses migration aspects**. This requires the Action File on Syria. Sweden visited Syria at ministerial level at the end of 2025; a visit by the State Secretary took place in February; visits at technical level and with governors are now planned for the coming weeks.

ITA noted that, regarding Action 2, a meeting had taken place in Cairo concerning transit visas, so an adjustment could be made here. p. 19/Annex I: deletion of "mostly Syrians" as this is currently not possible, given that the procedure has been suspended. Question to the Commission regarding cooperation with the Gulf States, in particular the EU-ARE. **HRV** highlighted the importance of the link to the WEB route, as 50 per cent of migrants ended up there after entering illegally via the ÖMM route. Question regarding follow-up on technical workshops between the Commission and Turkey (most recently in February 2025). Regarding Action 11, emphasis was placed on the need for systematic recording of registrations in all databases, regardless of whether entry was legal or illegal. **ROU** provided information on the ROU-TUR meeting, noting that ROU is one of the few Member States to facilitate resettlement (see Action 6), with a plan for 2026/27 to resettle 300 Syrian or Somali, Egyptian or Kenyan nationals.

GRC emphasised the general importance of the Action File for the route, where pressure remains high. **GRC also expressed concern about the tactics of smugglers, who are now employing quite aggressive behaviour, are well-armed and have even attacked the coastguard, thereby endangering both the coastguard and the migrants on board**. Concerns regarding the rising number of SDN and AFG asylum seekers. TUR remains the key partner; the 2016 'Joint Statement' remains the basis for cooperation on migration – 'this cannot be emphasised enough'. **Bilateral cooperation is improving, with the resumption of talks between the coastguards, alongside trilateral cooperation with TUR and the BGR, as well as meetings at political and technical levels**. Overall, **cooperation with TUR is good – with the exception of returnees**. A key factor remains TUR's visa policy, which poses migration risks; on this issue and regarding the acceptance of returnees, a unified message from the EUMS is required. **EGY** is a good partner, as many migrant communities reside there, and "they do a good job of keeping them on their shores". More should therefore be done in this regard under the SGP programmes, both at EU level and bilaterally; the GRC expects more capacity-building and projects to combat smugglers, even though EGY is now a safe country of origin.

BGR commended the cooperation with TUR, including trilateral cooperation and, most recently, the ministerial meeting in April, which included an action plan providing new funding for TUR for its eastern and southern borders. Question to the Commission regarding a further planned meeting on the implementation of measures. What might these be, particularly with regard to strengthening the border between TUR and IRN? **HUN** emphasised the importance of the discussion at this juncture, noting that the WEB route begins at the TUR-EU border. Caution must be exercised with regard to the IRN conflict; **HUN** is pessimistic on this point. TUR will not be able to play the same role as a host country as it did with SYR; at the same time, it is not expected that Syrian refugees will return to SYR in large numbers, as the situation there does not allow for this. It is therefore important to support TUR, and this must also be taken into account in MFR discussions. **AUT** emphasised the general importance of the route, which has increased further due to the challenges in NMO

, and commended Action 5, in particular PARIM (PAK) and MIRAMI (IRQ), not least because an AUT partner is involved in the information campaigns there. A query was raised regarding the Global Alliance Meeting and whether invitations had already been sent out.

FRA highlighted the EU–TUR Joint Declaration as a framework for cooperation, the full implementation of which is important for effectively managing migration flows. The “Global Compact on Migration and Asylum”, which comes into force in June, was a response to the events of 2015–16 and will enable us to apply asylum procedures and other instruments in cases of force majeure. It is important to apply these in full. Question regarding the Action File on TUR. Regarding Action 1: full support, including maintaining dialogue with PAK and BGD on safe return. Regarding EGY: a question about the 168 million euros and whether project implementation is progressing. **It is important to remind EGY that financial commitments must lead to measurable results** in order to identify the next steps within the framework of this cooperation. On Action 2: support for the EU- and ITA-led dialogue; on Action 3: like ROU, TUR has enjoyed very good cooperation with the TUR police (since '24), which enables the TUR police to uncover new smuggling networks; on Action 5: enquiry regarding GARRI and how it differs from PARIM in relation to PAK. Regarding 14: a general question on the next steps in cooperation between TUR and Frontex. Regarding 16: questions about a new round of technical talks and a point raised that TUR does not readmit third-country nationals; the EU should adopt a united stance on this and press for the ‘Joint Readmission Committee’ in accordance with Article 19 of the Joint Statement.

CZE raised a question regarding a new ‘envelope’ and a letter from Brunner, as well as how this relates to the allocation of funds for the region. **POL** highlighted the connection between this route and the eastern route, as countries on the Eastern Mediterranean route are often transit countries for migrants coming from RUS/BLR, in particular EGY, LBN, TUR; POL has good bilateral cooperation with these countries (most recently at a high level with TUR in November '25; a return visit is pending). In addition, efforts are being made in East Africa (as ETH, ERI and SOM are primarily countries of origin), where assessments are being carried out regarding involvement in “Team Europe” initiatives. **BEL** referred to a senior-level visit to SYR at the end of February, involving political dialogue with a focus on the migration context. **SVK**: TUR remains an important partner on the route, which also has implications for the WEB route. High-level meetings, including the Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, are scheduled for summer '25. A question was raised regarding financial aspects and meetings of the Steering Committee.

FRONTEx added, with regard to Action 12, that further cooperation with LBN has been in place since February '26. In PAK, in addition to EULO, a Frontex liaison officer has also been present since May '25.

EUAA provides updates on Actions 6 and 22. Regarding Action 6 – Member States would continue to receive support for resettlement operations via the facility (EUAA Resettlement Support Facility) in Istanbul; by 2026, 35 missions are planned for EU Member States and associated countries. 22: EUAA cooperation with TUR: Fifth roadmap adopted in July 2025, implementation began in September '25; 3 projects have been implemented, 8 remain outstanding – reference to positive developments regarding PMM responsiveness.

COM's replies:

- (to us) High-Level dialogue with TUR: the next High-Level meeting is scheduled for the summer (as is the EEAS Ministerial meeting; no specific agenda as yet). The dialogue is ongoing, monitoring continues, discussions are taking place with the IOM, international partners and the UNHCR, and contingency plans have been activated.
- SYR/or returnees to SYR and AFG: These developments are placing us in a difficult situation; although, as with BEL, there is outreach and discussions with SYR, the Commission considers that conditions are not yet ripe for this: “Consider conditions aren’t entirely ripe for returns. Have to see how things go.”

- Regarding an Action File on TUR, reference was made to RP (who did not, however, address the matter).
- GARRI was established as a key initiative within the Global Alliance; the aim here is to take cooperation to the next level, making it more targeted and focused.
- Regarding funding, reference was made to, amongst others, LBN, where the new Cash Assistance Programme helps with immediate needs
- TUR was once again emphasised as a partner for cooperation; aid totalling 1.1 billion has been provided for border management and migration. TUR is ready to play its part; ministerial-level meetings are being planned for the end of the summer; UNHCR is ready to accommodate people on the Iranian side of the border: “we are on it!”.
- Senior Officials’ Meeting of the Global Alliance in Vienna, likely focusing on aviation and irregular migration; preparations are underway, and Member States have been asked who will be attending.

Agenda Item 2 – Libya: Update on the Implementation of the Action File

RP began by highlighting Libya’s significant role as a transit country and its consequent influence on the ÖMM and ZMM routes, noting a 63% increase in registrations. Reference was made to discussions on this matter in SCIFA and the JI Council; there was agreement to expand cooperation with Tripoli and Benghazi at a technical level; Member States emphasised the importance of human rights standards being upheld. Regarding the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM), it is important that Member States increase their pledges in order to continue applying it.

GS/COM emphasised its role as a main transit and destination country; departures are mainly towards ITA and GRC, with recent data from IOM showing a significant reduction in ITA (down 43%, although 71% of all arrivals in Italy are from Libya), whilst in Greece there was a decrease in January 2026 (with a total of 14% of all arrivals there from Libya) following a recent sharp rise at the end of the previous year. Further EU engagement is therefore needed there; the political situation is fragmented and the context is correspondingly sensitive; discussions are particularly challenging with regard to eastern Libya, and thanks are due to Member States for their initiatives in this regard. On the Commission’s part, a technical dialogue has been ongoing since early 2024, with eight ‘technical missions’, five of which were in Libya and three in the EU (one of them via FRONTEX), see briefing at the last MOCADDEM meeting. The protection of human rights is the guiding principle for cooperation; it is important to have good access to UN actors on the ground and to support their work, particularly with regard to reception centres and detention centres for deportation. The Migration Pact: This emphasises the need for a comprehensive approach, involving the IOM and UNHCR. The long-term strategy involves equipping LBYS with a border management system based on a human rights-based approach, cooperation in combating migrant and human smuggling – a new programme to this end, amounting to 25 million euros, has been in place since January, including SAR – and capacity-building, particularly for desert regions. A project with EUROPOL worth 5 million euros; the LBYS delegation will visit EUROPOL in April. Efforts are being made to involve LBYS in central MMR as well; thanks to ITA for its support. 15 vessels have been deployed since 2023 (programme costs totalling 59 million euros), including support for institutional capacity-building in management and support for the LBYS Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) – implemented by UNODC; progress has been made there towards making the MRCC operational. Reference was made to IRINI and projects in Benghazi (totalling 3 million euros) aimed at improving the situation of migrants on the ground. Cooperation with the IOM, UNHCR and humanitarian actors. Reference was made to the extension of the mandate of EUBAM (European Union Border Assistance Mission in Libya) until the end of 2027. The phenomenon of third-country nationals departing via the eastern LBYS persists. The Commission also reminded Member States of further pledges for the resettlement mechanism; 187 had been made in 2025: “I hope more can be done”; there were also cases of voluntary return by Syrian nationals to Syria. Support for the IOM regarding voluntary return: over 16,000 migrants had returned in this way; the new national Libyan is being analysed, including whether there might be opportunities for support here. Reference was also made to a pilot project on labour migration and advice on humanitarian voluntary return.

The EAD referred to the latest exchange at a technical level on the EU side (DGs HOME and MENA, EAD); this would remain the main channel of communication with LBY. The priority remained increasing the number of voluntary returnees to their home countries. Such a discussion with OST-LBY has not yet been possible; alternative data is being sought in this regard. There is also interest in the protection of stateless persons in LBY, with reference to the allocation of funds amounting to 3 million euros in 2025 and a further 2 million euros in 2026 for assistance. The EAD also referred to the urgent need for pledges for the ETM, particularly in light of the US's role as a donor and participant – it is important here to demonstrate to third countries, particularly the RWA, that the EU and its Member States are serious about this. On the ground, the US's involvement of a Senior Advisor suggests it is more concerned with medium-term stability than with a sustainable resolution of the conflict.

From the debate:

Italy emphasised the importance of Libya for the Central Mediterranean route, with 80 per cent of all arrivals in Italy coming from there. This must be addressed and managed at EU level. Reference was made to resettlement and humanitarian programmes under the MoU (extended until 2025), along with current figures on registration and turnbacks. Support for border management and assisted voluntary return remained important; the work of the IOM in this area should continue to be supported – in 2025, over 16,000 people had returned to their countries of origin, and synergies needed to be identified between this and the national LBY system. In 2025, Italy contributed to voluntary return through two projects (11.5 plus 4.5 million euros, funded via the AM). Furthermore, support should continue to be provided for border management along the border with Egypt; in this context, reference was also made to the connection between the southern Central Mediterranean region and other routes. The Pact for the Mediterranean should be utilised, including in relation to legal migration.

ROU on Action 7/ETM for recent years: 1,539 refugees, of whom 236 in 2025, were evacuated from LBY to ROU, and from there resettled to NOR, SWE, US, FRA and DEU.

MLT expressed general appreciation for the attention given to LBY, noting that both the western and eastern parts of the country are key partners in migration management.

We made our points regarding the 'One LBY policy' and the Common Approach (Action 2), and acknowledged the progress made in cooperation against human trafficking, criminal and smuggling networks as one of the key components in combating irregular migration to LBY and into the EU (Action 3). Re 4 & 5: We emphasised the acute situation regarding MR, particularly in relation to SAR/landings, and that standard operating procedures for the Libyan Coast Guard, further monitoring and accountability mechanisms were required in this regard. We asked whether and how the report had been used by OHCHR/UNSMIL to address the shortcomings on the part of Libyan authorities, and how the report had led to an increase in MR monitoring within EU institutions. We enquired about progress regarding efforts to integrate UNHCR into UNSMIL. 7 & 8: We commended the Libyan efforts to establish its own return system, whilst emphasising the need to bring this into line with international standards. We therefore made it clear that support here would be appropriate in strengthening the Libyan authorities, preferably via the IOM, without, however, duplicating structures or undermining existing programmes. We acknowledged the UN's efforts regarding Sudanese asylum seekers and their return, but emphasised that many Sudanese asylum seekers are currently leaving their home country, and a comprehensive return therefore does not appear feasible. We called for an EU-wide coordinated approach to be adopted in this regard, to be taken up with the Libyan authorities.

With regard to Action 1, **the FRA** called for the identification of trustworthy partners in Libya, on both the western and eastern sides. Enquiry regarding the DG MENA delegation's visit to Cairo in March. FRA's position has not changed: cooperation at this level must not pre-empt political cooperation; cooperation at a technical level is acceptable and should be pursued as part of a pragmatic approach. Reference was made to the VTC with DG Home on the afternoon of

26 March to an exclusive group of Member States (including us) – MOCADÉM should be the appropriate forum for these debriefings. With regard to capacity building, it is important to monitor what equipment the Libyan side receives. Regarding Action 2, concrete and verifiable assurances are required from the Commission, 3: Strengthening EUBAM in Tripoli and Cyrenaica; strengthening the Rules of Engagement (ROE) is important; regarding 4, further details in writing (to be provided later) on the COM/ITA initiative and the new project amounting to 25 million in 2026; regarding 6, enquiries as to whether the COM/Brunner initiative has received feedback from ARE. General support for all initiatives against human trafficking.

GRC highlighted a rise of over 300 per cent in arrivals from LBY to Crete, hence the call for further updates and enhanced EU-LBY dialogue, “to encourage all actors involved”. Re 2: It is important that LBY continues to be encouraged to pursue dialogue with EGY on more effective border management. Furthermore, efforts should be made to persuade EGY to take action to protect stateless persons, even though this is a very sensitive issue for EGY. Reference was made to bilateral cooperation with LBY, including the deployment of 83 agents in SAR operations.

COM’s responses:

The UN reports have certainly been noted and taken seriously. MR, protection and safeguards are guiding principles in our work with Libya and international organisations (“must be taken into account in EU-funded projects”); this is also part of the dialogue with Libya. Regarding the return system: This is being monitored and assessed for compliance with MR standards; discussions are taking place with UNHCR to ensure that standard operating procedures (SOPs) are applied in line with our own standards. On UNHCR/UNSMIL: There has still been no integration to date, which is very good news – this is high on the agenda for our own work; it is important to protect the work of the UN organisation in this regard. No response yet from ARE to Commissioner Brunner’s outreach.

Agenda Item 3 – Comprehensive Partnerships – Egypt

COM/GS with reference to deepening the CPS, the first EU-Egypt Summit in October 2025 including a joint statement, followed by programmes worth 200 million euros to be implemented between 2024 and 2027, comprehensive border management, readmission, protection and asylum, and support for legal migration (labour mobility). Programming visit in October 2025; border programme worth 110 million euros, focusing on strengthening the navy and coastguard. A technical mission in March 2026 dealt with, amongst other things, with restrictions on transit from the GCC; it is important to improve cooperation with Egypt on returns. Regarding smuggling, Egypt ranks relatively high on the EU’s list. A package concerning the national asylum law is reportedly awaiting the President’s approval. UNHCR is involved in the consultations. Reference was made to regional programmes and talent partnerships. EUROJUST’s work will continue; furthermore, there is interest on the part of Egypt in an exchange with FRONTEX.

EEAS on the visit to Egypt: The issue of transit visas from Bangladesh en route to Libya was raised there. The situation for refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt has deteriorated dramatically (see EUDEL report of 20 February). There appears to be reluctance on the part of Egypt regarding returns and readmission; the EEAS will keep this on the agenda.

From the discussion: It is important for **FRA** to remind EGY that financial support from the EU must lead to concrete results in terms of returns; FRA is working on finalising the bilateral agreements, including cooperation in the consular field. The EGY delegation will visit FRA in early April; progress is expected on the bilateral readmission agreement. Furthermore: “We need full ownership of equipment”, particularly with regard to civil-military operations.

We emphasised our concern regarding the situation of F/M and called for a follow-up by the EUAA regarding the so-called “by-laws”, not least because, according to Egypt’s announcement, their adoption is imminent. We acknowledged the

EU's efforts regarding protective measures, whilst at the same time pointing out the limited added value given Egypt's lack of commitment to its international and national obligations; we asked how the role of the UNHCR could be strengthened in the legislative process. We highlighted the need for precautionary measures in light of rising figures from ERI on the Central MMR and other indicators suggesting a continuing trend in population movements.

The Netherlands supported the EEAS regarding concerns about the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers in the country, against the backdrop of arbitrary arrests and heavy-handed tactics – noting that this also has implications for bilateral cooperation. Support was given to the point we raised regarding a follow-up question on the financial package, with an update since the programming mission in September 2025.

The EUAA provided an update on progress with capacity building and the implementation of the roadmap, which is proceeding well (six projects have already been implemented or are currently being implemented, with five further projects planned for this year, starting in April). Final confirmation of the work plan for 2026 is still pending. Regarding our question on 'by-laws', there was merely confirmation that these had been submitted to the Prime Minister; UNHCR had been invited to review them and provide comments, but no copies of the drafts had been provided to UNHCR. The EUAA has not yet had access to the draft legislation.

KOM referred in general terms to the importance of the work on the legislation, which it is monitoring closely; ultimately, the aim is the transition from a UNHCR-led asylum process to one managed by the Egyptian authorities. There was agreement that programming, cooperation and the disbursement of funds must be made more efficient; this is the aim of the Commission's work, with reference to programming missions and ongoing work. The Commission fully understood the need to highlight this in the various strands of work with regard to the protection of F/M.