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NOTE

From:	Commission services
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Operationalization of the Pact – Action plans for strengthening comprehensive migration partnerships with priority countries of origin and transit Draft Action Plan: Morocco

Delegations will find attached a draft action plan for Morocco prepared by the Commission Services.

The Commission would very much appreciate that the text of the draft action plan be handled with discretion.

Action Plan: Morocco

Overall EU Objectives – Lines to Take • Morocco is a major partner in the Southern Neighbourhood with which the EU has solid and long-standing cooperation which should be maintained in a partnership of equals through dialogue, responsibility sharing, mutual trust and respect. • The EU-Morocco Joint Declaration of June 2019 aims to deepen the relationship between the EU and Morocco across a number of areas. The EU will continue supporting Morocco on a wide array of issues including on migration and mobility, fostering green and climate action, digital agenda, investment, development, social cohesion, governance, fundamental rights, trade relations, and youth cooperation. • The EU is committed to further supporting Morocco according to jointly agreed priorities, through EU funding in the 2021-2027 period. • Morocco is a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, with which it is important to maintain the success and credibility of past cooperation on migration. The EU considers Morocco a key partner in migration. This comprehensive migration partnership should encompass protection, addressing the most direct root causes, tackling irregular migration, countering migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings thereby saving lives, migration governance, border management, return and reintegration, and legal migration and mobility. Progress in implementation of the relevant strategic and legislative agenda remains key.
Goals for managing migration and addressing forced displacement – Lines to Take Protection and support to host countries • Morocco is increasingly a destination country. The EU encourages Morocco to put in place the relevant legislation and strengthen the national asylum system with a view to improving the reception and protection system, including integration of refugees. The EU intends to support the Moroccan authorities in this area, including by continuing to provide financial support under the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) North Africa and through capacity building support by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). Morocco's <i>Bureau des Réfugiés et Apatrides</i> (BRA) is encouraged to intensify its work regarding the regularisation of refugees. Root causes of irregular migration • Many of the proposed focal areas of EU-Morocco cooperation are relevant, especially when it comes to creating socio-economic opportunities for young Moroccans, including a resilient and sustainable post-crisis economic recovery, developing entrepreneurship, social and territorial cohesion, job creation, education, improving social protection, child protection, good governance and better access to public services. Support to the reduction of socio-economic regional disparities should help reduce rural exodus and migratory pressures. • The EU encourages Moroccan efforts on increased engagement of the diaspora in particular with regards to facilitation of knowledge, skills transfers, and productive investments in Morocco. Opportunities should be sought to strengthen positive development effects of migration. Migration governance and management • While the EU intends to continue supporting, in line with Morocco's interest, the implementation of Morocco's National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum through capacity building, sharing of expertise, operational cooperation and funding, Morocco's reinforced commitment to implementation of the strategy is key. Progress on the two outstanding laws on migration and asylum is central to the success of the Strategy, as well as collecting and sharing of data and improving transparency about implementation. • The EU counts on Morocco's enhanced and sustained efforts in preventing irregular departures, including by Moroccan citizens, in strengthening land and sea border

management and controls, search and rescue capacities and operations, and dismantling migrant smuggling networks. The EU will aim to support these efforts through funding, operational cooperation, capacity building and through regional support to improve the cooperation of law enforcement institutions of North African countries. The EU looks forward to collaboration through a tailor-made Operational Partnership under the renewed EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling 2021-2025.

- The EU recognises that Morocco is increasingly a destination country and counts on Morocco to reinforce its efforts regarding the social and economic integration of refugees and migrants, the protection of vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking, and reinforcing the child protection system. This would strengthen synergies with EU-financed programmes.
- The EU strongly supports Morocco's efforts to reinvigorate the fight against trafficking in human beings and the operationalization of a national commission to prevent and fight it.
- The EU intends to continue supporting information campaigns on the risks of irregular migration.

Cooperation with EU Agencies

- The EU appreciates Morocco as a leading partner in the region, providing a model others may follow concerning deeper co-operation with JHA Agencies, and is keen to develop these relations further:
 - The EU welcomes the strategic dialogue with **Frontex** and looks forward to discussing next steps for structured cooperation between the agency and the Moroccan authorities on issues such as situational awareness, risk analysis, training, operational cooperation. The EU invites Morocco to further strengthen cooperation with this agency, including by signing a working arrangement and at a later stage, considering the potential benefits of a status agreement with the European Union.
 - The EU also welcomes the strategic dialogue with **Europol** and looks forward to a high level visit of Moroccan officials to Europol in 2022, accompanied by technical discussions. Future goals include the signing of a working arrangement in the short-term and an international agreement in the longer term, as well as the involvement of Morocco in operational activities under EMPACT.
 - **EUAA** stands ready to provide capacity building support in strengthening the Moroccan national asylum system. In the short term, EUAA will pursue cooperation at technical level with Morocco under the regional pilot project for North Africa. The EU encourages a structured cooperation between EUAA and Morocco.

Return, Readmission, Visa facilitation

- The high number of irregular arrivals to the EU and of return decisions issued by Member States, together with the Commission's assessment of cooperation on readmission, show that it is crucial for Morocco to improve results in this area by extending good cooperation on readmission to all Member States, reducing timeframes for identification and issuing of travel documents, and accepting charter flights. With a view to ensuring effective readmission for all Member States, one option – alongside strengthened EU engagement on readmission with Morocco – is that the EU seeks to relaunch negotiations on a readmission agreement and on a visa facilitation agreement. The main issues reported by the Member States should be conveyed to Moroccan counterparts at political level with the view of improving readmission cooperation.
- The EU is ready to discuss Moroccan needs on return and actions to address them and to support Morocco in strengthening readmission capacity and the sustainable reintegration of migrants returning from the EU, paying particular attention to minors. The possibility to establish a Return Case Management System could be explored.
- The EU stands ready to continue supporting voluntary returns from Morocco to the countries of origin, as the preferred option of return, as well as the capacity of Moroccan institutions to sustainably reintegrate its own citizens after they have returned. To this end, technical assistance could be provided to allow for the establishment of respective

government structures.

Legal migration and mobility

- The EU is committed to doing more on legal migration, identifying sectors of mutual interest with a view to developing a Talent Partnership, with projects designed to avoid brain drain and linking mobility initiatives with Morocco's socio-economic development strategies. There is a clear "win win" potential in cooperation building on existing projects on legal migration with Morocco supporting mobility schemes, traineeships, internships in various sectors through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and the Migration Partnership Facility. The recognition of qualifications and skills and increased job opportunities will be of particular importance in fostering legal migration.
- The EU will step up efforts to implement mutually beneficial mobility activities which promote circular migration, notably for higher education students, but also for staff and researchers and for workers equipped with different levels of skills and qualifications. The Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programmes are key tools that can be deployed by the EU.

Regional cooperation/whole of route approach

- Morocco is an important partner within the regional dialogue on migration – the Rabat process, which it will chair as of December 2022 – and in the framework of EU-Africa relations. The EU recognises and supports Morocco's contribution to shaping the global and continental migration agenda in international fora.
- The EU encourages south-south cooperation on migration management, building on existing EU-supported initiatives on border management and risk analysis. The EU further supports Morocco's broader dialogue with Sub-Saharan partners on the recognition of diplomas as well as rights for regular migrants, and encourages the implementation of memoranda of understanding between Morocco and Sub-Saharan partners.

Measures

- **Political engagement** under the EU-Morocco Association Agreement (2000), EU-Morocco Mobility Partnership (2013), and EU-Morocco Joint declaration (2019) which defines the partnership priorities and covers mobility and migration (an addendum is being prepared to update the Joint Declaration), and an informal dialogue on migration and security.
- **Deploying a wide range of policy tools**, including activities concerning development cooperation, post-COVID 19 relaunch of the economy, social and territorial cohesion, security, visa, trade, agriculture, investment and employment, energy, environment and climate change, and education, which are adjustable over time and handled as part of a comprehensive and tailor-made approach.
- **Close local coordination and cooperation** between the EU Delegation and EU Member States should be ensured, including on joint programming.
- **Cooperation with JHA agencies**: next meeting of the **Frontex-Morocco** Comité Mixte to discuss further areas of cooperation - Q4 2022; discussions on strengthening cooperation with **Europol** are ongoing, including preparations for a high level visit of Moroccan officials to Europol in 2022. Possibilities for a more structured cooperation between **EUAA** and Morocco are being explored.
- **Funding activities from EU budget under Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020**: EU funding portfolio on migration stands at approximately €360 million of which €234 million are drawn from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: around 80% is allocated for institutional support and border management, around 11% for protection, and around 7.5% for socio-economic integration.
- **Future funding from EU budget under Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027**: The draft **bilateral** Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Morocco (MIP) is under preparation and will contribute to addressing root causes of irregular migration, protection, sustainable reintegration of Moroccan returnees and developing a Talent Partnership, in the broader context of a possible focus on post-crisis economic recovery,

climate, energy, environment, green economy, social and territorial cohesion, education, governance, rule of law and fundamental rights.

The draft **Multi-Country** Migration Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood includes Morocco and provides a flexible source of funding to respond to changing needs and routes.

For 2021 and 2022 the EU intends to continue supporting migration governance and management in Morocco, potentially through a new Budget Support programme (budget to be determined). Morocco will also benefit (sums to be determined) from **multi-country actions** worth €60 million in the area of protection, return and reintegration, €15-20 million in the area of legal migration and €12-20 million for the fight against migrant smuggling. Depending on the need of Member States, Morocco may also benefit from the €5 million multi-country action “Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa” (THAMM III).

Other EU instruments, notably the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI), and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) may under strict conditions provide complementary funding opportunities for the external dimension of migration.

- **Member States’ bilateral engagement [see Annex II].**
- Morocco will be included in the **Team Europe Initiative on the Western Mediterranean/Atlantic migration route** proposed by Spain. The concept note encompassing the five Valletta action plan priorities was finalised with EU Member States in August 2021. It was validated at the meeting of Development DGs on 4 October 2021. Coordination with other relevant TEIs including Morocco will be ensured.

Timelines for action

A. Next Steps for engagement by EU and by Member States

- **Visit by President von der Leyen**, 8 February 2022, to be followed by a visit of **Commissioner Várhelyi** in March 2022.
- **Visit by HRVP Borrell** [TBC]
- **Informal Migration Dialogue** planned in March 2022 to strengthen further cooperation in all aspects of migration, including discussions on the development of a Talent Partnership and potentially relaunch the negotiations on the visa facilitation and the readmission agreement, cooperation on countering migrant smuggling and discussions on a possible Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership, promote cooperation in the fight against organised crime, and cooperation with the JHA Agencies.
- **Social Affairs and Migration Subcommittee** to take place in the wake of the above mentioned migration dialogue.
- **Association Council** (TBC).
- **Visit of Moroccan delegation to Europol** (2022 TBC).
- Discussions between **EUAA and the relevant Moroccan authorities/MFA** on establishing a more structured cooperation (December 2021/January 2022). As a follow-up to the Regional Conference of 12-13 October 2021 in the framework of the EUAA regional pilot for North Africa (under the umbrella of the Regional Development and Protection Programme), a study visit for officials of countries in the region, including Morocco on asylum systems and treatment of vulnerable people (Belgium: June 2022).
- **Deployment of a new European Migration Liaison Officer (EMLO)** expected in Q1 2022; making full use of the **ILO network** according to Regulation EU 2019/124.
- **Euro-African Regional Dialogue on Migration and Development – Rabat Process and Joint Valletta Action Plan:** A Ministerial Conference in 2022 has the potential to serve as a bridge between the Spanish and Moroccan Presidency of the Rabat Process (Morocco Presidency as of December 2022).
- **Erasmus+:** the 2022 call for proposals has been published. Under the “International Credit Mobility” strand of the programme, 3-year mobility projects will be selected, involving exchanges of higher education students and staff between Morocco and the EU, which will start their activities in the academic year 2022-2023.

B. Next steps for funding measures

The NDICI-GE regulation envisages a flexible source of funding to support comprehensive, balanced and tailor-made partnerships with relevant countries of origin or transit and host countries, and respond to changing needs and routes. The Multi-Country Migration Programme (MCMP) for the Southern Neighbourhood allows for country specific-actions that complement actions under the national MIP and offer to selected countries an incentive to go beyond what their country MIP offers, in line with a flexible incitative approach. Funds in the draft MIP for the MCMP are programmed for 2021-2024. The initial planning will be complemented by its built-in flexibility, as the budget period progresses, in order to cater for changing circumstances and migration patterns. Programming of funds for 2025-27 will follow a mid-term review in 2024, taking into account the needs and performance of the partner countries, as well as developments in their relations with the Union and on the ground.

– Actions adopted in 2021 under the new MFF

- Under the Individual Measure for the **Multi-country Migration Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood**, the following actions related to Morocco were adopted:
 - “**Supporting Sustainable Protection, Return and Reintegration in North Africa**” contributes to the safe return of vulnerable and stranded migrants from North Africa and to the sustainable reintegration of North African returnees into countries of origin. The amount of the Moroccan component out of the total amount of €60 million will be determined.
 - “**Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM III)**” aims to expand labour mobility schemes between North African countries and Member States. This €5 million programme may cover also Morocco, depending on the needs of Member States.
- The Commission plans to continue the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) in North Africa, following the adoption of the AMIF Thematic Facility Work Programme 2021-22 on 25 November 2021.

– Actions to be adopted or proposed in 2022

- Actions related to Morocco within the draft **Multi-country Migration Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood** to be presented to the NDICI committee:
 - Continued support to Migration Governance and Management, potentially through a new Budget Support Programme for Morocco (budget to be determined);
 - Regional action on legal migration and labour mobility schemes (regional budget: €15-20 million, amount for Morocco to be determined);
 - Two regional actions on fighting the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, with a focus on international police cooperation and cross-border cooperation (total regional budget for the two actions: €12-20 million, amount for Morocco to be determined).
- **Team Europe Initiative on the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean migration route**, next steps: finalization of the joint intervention logic, the governance structure and the information package for Embassies.
- **Common Operational Partnership (COP) in Africa**: further involvement of Moroccan authorities to be supported, i.e. the German-led activity on Nigerian organised crime groups active in trafficking in human beings (THB), involving Morocco (DGSN) as a transit country for victims and perpetrators (expert meetings and trainings). Timeframe 01/01/2020 – 31/12/2022, estimated contribution from the EU budget is €850 000.

ANNEX I

Existing EU cooperation and areas of engagement under the New Pact

I. Asylum/ international protection

- Morocco is increasingly a destination country and two rounds of regularisations of refugees have taken place (2013 and 2017).
- Developing the national asylum legislation and asylum system under Morocco's National Strategy of Migration and Asylum (SNIA) is subject to a €35 million "*Appui aux politiques migratoires au Maroc*" budget support programme under MFF 2014-2020. It has however seen little progress in recent years (framework laws have not yet been adopted by the government). Cooperation with UNHCR, allowing it to process asylum cases is exemplary for the region.
- Under the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) North Africa (protection pillar), projects to strengthen international protection for migrants and child protection with contribution from EU budget of around €3.5 million to Morocco in the financial period 2015-2020. The last two projects were launched in January 2021. Implementation was led by the Italian Ministry of Interior, mainly with UNHCR and UNICEF as implementing partners.
- Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for North Africa – phase II (development pillar) to strengthen resilience of displaced people in Morocco and provide protection and direct assistance to migrants, implemented by IOM, budget of €1.8 million.
- Protection of migrants in vulnerable situations, €6.5 million implemented by civil society organizations, from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.
- Enhancing self-reliance and access to rights for refugees in North Africa, implemented by UNHCR, €2.2 million from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020, including €0.6 million for Morocco under the regional action "Emergency response to COVID-19 in North African countries", implemented by IOM, UNHCR and WHO.
- Empowerment juridique des personnes migrantes (EJPM). Duration: 01.11.18 – 01.11.21 – budget: €4.6 million, funded from EU Trust Fund for Africa
- Vivre ensemble sans discriminations. Duration 24.08 2017- 23.08.2022 budget €5.5 million, funded from EU Trust Fund for Africa.

II. Addressing root causes of irregular migration

- Support to the migration legislative and institutional framework to promote social inclusion at the local level through enhancing employability of both the Moroccan diaspora and the migrants living in Morocco, DEPOMI project implemented by ENABEL, €8 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (2018-2022).
- Development pillar of the Regional Development and Protection Programme North Africa, Phase III. Self-sufficiency of target groups and host communities is enhanced, support to civil society €2 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, implemented by civil society organisations (2019-2022).

- Support to the Moroccan diaspora for the creation of economic activities and employment opportunities in Morocco, MEET – Africa Phase II, implemented by Expertise France with funding from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (2019-2023) of approximately €2 million for Morocco.
- Supporting South-South cooperation between Morocco, Mali, Senegal and Ivory Coast on migration and development, protection, and diaspora development implemented by GIZ and Expertise France - €8.6 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (2019-2022).

III. Migration governance and management

- €35 million budget support programme “*Appui aux politiques migratoires au Maroc*”, to implement the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum, including with the adoption of the legislation on human trafficking, asylum and migration. It has supported amongst others the adoption of legislation on human trafficking, the operationalisation of the national commission on human trafficking and the efforts of the prosecutor's office to tackle it.
- €101.5 million budget support programme covering the period 2019-2021 to support the Ministry of Interior in managing irregular migration, respectful of human rights, including through border management, international cooperation and awareness raising. This includes strengthening of cooperation with Frontex and Europol, human rights training of its staff, reinforced deployments along the borders, development of standard operating procedures for the identification of vulnerable populations, the awareness raising of minors on the risks of irregular migration. There has been a positive impact on Morocco's ability to intercept irregular border crossings as well as political dialogue with the EU. In December 2021, a €1.75 million have been contracted in the form of (1) a project in support of the national commission and (2) a grant to civil society to provide direct coordinated support to the victims.
- €144 million border management package (€70 million budget support completed for equipment in 2019, €44 million programme managed by FIAPP, the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies and €30.4 million programme managed by ICMPD, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, funded from EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa under MFF 2014-2020).
- A network of Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Profiles and Dialogue, implemented by ICMPD, funded from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020 (specific budget for Morocco cannot be calculated at this stage).
- Morocco is also part of the:
 - Euromed Migration V regional project, €5 million implemented by ICMPD (specific budget for Morocco cannot be calculated at this stage)
 - Fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, including, protection of victims and children, implemented by UNODC €3.4 million, EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
 - The Common operational partnership North Africa against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings (COP), funded until 2022 from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.

Awareness-raising Campaigns

- Two recently launched projects ongoing until 2022 funded from EU budget: Safe Journey (ProgettoMondo – €966 240, Timeframe 01/12/2020 – 31/05/2022); Objectives: Safe Journey aims to contrast irregular migration with an informative Campaign about alternatives to it); Shababuna (Generalitat de Catalunya & others – €645 070, Timeframe: 18/01/2021 – 17/01/2023; Objectives: engaging and empowering the voice of diaspora communities within the EU to provide information and raise awareness to counter migrant smugglers' narratives for prospective migrants in Morocco.

IV. Returns, readmission, reintegration

- The Commission has a mandate to negotiate an EU readmission agreement with Morocco since 2000. The last negotiation round took place in 2015 when negotiations were suspended. A reinforced dialogue and enhanced cooperation on readmission is needed, including potentially the relaunch of parallel negotiations on readmission and visa facilitation agreements.
- Work with Member States and the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) on reintegration assistance to returnees. Through Caritas International Belgium a total of 269 Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration schemes have been granted since June 2016.
- EUTF funds for Morocco under EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration amount to approximately €5.5 million. As of 30 March 2021, 1 939 people were assisted in returning from Morocco and 80 were assisted with post-arrival reception/reintegration in Morocco.
- Under the €35 million budget support programme, the return of thousands of migrants to their countries of origin in line with IOM standards has been facilitated.
- ERMES III project, pre-departure assistance, return counselling, reintegration, implemented by CEFA ONLUS €0.6 million, supported by the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.
- ONE project, €0.3 million, supported by the EU budget under the MFF 2014-2020.

V. Legal migration and mobility

- The Commission has a mandate to negotiate a visa facilitation agreement (2013). Only one negotiation round took place in 2015 when negotiations were suspended.

Ongoing projects in support of mobility schemes, traineeships and internships for Moroccans in various sectors:

- THAMM multi-country programme (Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa), fostering mutually beneficial legal migration and labour mobility, €7.5 million under the EUTF, implemented by ILO / IOM, GiZ and Enabel;

Funded by AMIF:

- PALIM (Pilot Project Addressing Labour Shortages through Innovative Labour Migration Models Belgium), recently finished;
- HOMERE multi-country programme (High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment, France), funded under the Migration Partnership Facility, recently finished;
- YGCA (Young Generations as Change Agents, Spain);
- Mentor II multi-country programme (Mediterranean Network for Training Orientation to Regular migration, Italy);
- MOVE GREEN - Co-development for innovation and employment in green and circular economy between Andalucía and Morocco, Spain);
- WAFIRA (Women as Financially Independent Rural Actors", Spain).

VI. Regional approach

- The project "South-South cooperation on Migration", mentioned in the section on addressing root causes, has a regional dimension as it fosters cooperation among Morocco, Mali, Senegal and Ivory Coast.

ANNEX II

Member States' bilateral engagement

Austria – Austria supports voluntary returnees via the national return assistance scheme as well as by providing reintegration support as part of the ERRIN program, which includes cash assistance in the amount of €200 plus in-kind assistance in the amount of €2 800.

Belgium – migration is one of the key sectors of intervention in development cooperation. Through its development agency Enabel, Belgium is currently working on several bilateral projects aiming at supporting Moroccan institutions in implementing their National Strategies on Asylum and Migration (SNIA) and on the Mobilization of the Moroccans residing abroad (SNMRE). These projects focus more specifically on reception conditions and integration of third country nationals in a South-South cooperation framework, on mobilization of the diaspora for development or on legal migration/work related mobility ((1) Amuddu: Appui de la mise en oeuvre de SNIA, Gouvernance migratoire, création d'emplois et promotion de l'entrepreneuriat, €4.6 million (2) Appui à la mise en œuvre de la stratégie nationale en faveur des Marocains résidant en Belgique – MBI (2018 – 2022), €1.5 million.

Projects:

AMADDU (bilateral – technical and financial partnership). Objective: to make the labor market more accessible to migrants and to provide socio-economic opportunities for people from West Africa or from other parts of Morocco; Duration: 15.03.18 – 16.03.23 – budget: €4.6 million.

Maghreb Belgium Impulse (bilateral – technical and financial partnership). Objective: mobilization, activation and support of the Moroccan diaspora in BE to start productive investments in Morocco and thus contribute to development in Morocco. Duration: 15.03.18 – 16.03.23 – budget: €1.25 million.

Czech Republic – Morocco is one of the North African priority countries of the Permanent Health and Humanitarian Program MEDEVAC coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic. In 2020, the Czech Republic approved financially conditioned participation in the Joint Migration project of the Visegrad Four countries and Germany in Morocco. The project focuses on two pillars – (1) border protection (migration) and (2) economic growth (development). The Czech Republic will contribute with the total amount of €3.75 million. The border pillar focuses on migration monitoring and management in Morocco. ICMPD acts as an implementing partner. The objective of the development pillar is to address root causes and prevent irregular migration from Morocco by strengthening national capacities, improving the labour market participation of the most at-risk populations and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises.

Morocco is also one of the priority countries of a programme for support to countries of origin and transit in Africa for the period 2020-2022. The program aims to address root causes of irregular migration and targets North Africa, as well as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The Czech government approved annual contribution of CZK 100 million (approx. €4 million) over a period of three years. In 2020, part of the funds were used to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this, a Tied Aid Financial Donation amounting to €0.26 million in the form of medical equipment supply to a Hospital in Marrakesh was made.

Denmark – currently has one bilateral project in Morocco concerning migration and mobility, entitled "The Assistance and Protection of Unaccompanied and Separated Migrant Children in Morocco Phase II" which aims to contribute to improve their assistance and protection. The International Organization for Migration is the implementing partner. The project period is 1 September 2019 to 28 February 2022 for a total of DKK 22.379.195.

France – France holds, since 1997, a high-level meeting between heads of state every two years, notably to address migration topics. A specific dialogue on migration was set up in May 2018, which takes place yearly.

Germany – provides support for a number of programmes:

Border management:

- Providing Trainings and Equipment with the focus on detecting Document Frauds;
- Air Security (Providing Trainings and Equipment mainly at the international Airport Mohamed V in Casablanca).
- Germany also intends to provide support under the Operational Mediterranean Initiative, an Initiative to strengthen a coordinated and more structured cooperation between the EU and five selected countries (Tunisia, Mauretania, Libya, Algeria, Morocco) at an operational level in the areas of border management and counter-smuggling, next steps would be a joint workshop between the EU, interested MS and Morocco.

Return and readmission:

- Advice and return counselling in Germany; e.g. reintegration scouts provide individual support measures for potential returnees (Programme Migration for Development, Returning to New Opportunities).
- Advice and return / reintegration counselling via the migration advice centers in Casablanca and in three other cities (Programme Migration for Development, Returning to New Opportunities).
- Vocational training, entrepreneurship and employment promotion to support to reintegration of returning migrants (Programme Migration for Development, Cooperation with other ongoing technical assistance programmes in Morocco).
- Full Funding of IOM's assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) project "FORAS II", which is part of IOM's regional program „Enhancing Migrant Community Stabilization and Cohesion in Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Countries of Return". FORAS II aims at strengthening the motivation, technical and personal capacities of migrants through a comprehensive pre-departure training package, counselling and orientation sessions. AVRR target countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Togo.
- Returning and potential (irregular) migrants are part of the target group of a variety of projects to create employment opportunities particularly for young and/or disadvantaged Moroccans as a contribution to preventing irregular (re-) migration to Europe, e.g. by fostering employment opportunities in the water- and waste water sector with a focus und rural and peri-urban populations liable to migrate.
- „Your Life Matters: Raising Awareness on the Risks of Irregular Migration in Morocco" by IOM, the project addresses itself to Moroccan citizens as well as to migrants from other countries being currently in Morocco. Project activities also include professional training for members of NGO's and employees of governmental organizations. Voluntary Return Program REAG/GARP:
- Travel costs of voluntary returnees are covered and they receive further a financial travel assistance and one-time financial start-up assistance. Reintegration Program StarthilfePlus (Supplementary Reintegration Support):
- Since 2017, the REAG/GARP program has been supplemented by the StarthilfePlus program, which provides reintegration assistance. Thus, returnees to Morocco receive a second financial start-up assistance 6-8 months after their arrival. The Return Preparation Measures (RkVM) prepare Moroccan returnees to start their own business.

Diaspora cooperation:

- Facilitation of knowledge and skill transfer by supporting projects of diaspora organisations within the framework of ongoing technical cooperation across sectors as well as facilitation of employment placements of highly qualified experts who wish to return to Morocco;
- Support to diaspora entrepreneurs wishing to found start-ups contributing to economic development in Morocco (Programme Migration and Diaspora).

Economic integration of youth:

- Returning and potential (irregular) migrants are part of the target group of a variety of projects to create employment opportunities particularly for young and/or disadvantaged Moroccans as a contribution to preventing irregular (re-) migration to Europe, e.g. by fostering employment opportunities in the water- and waste water sector with a focus on rural and peri-urban populations liable to migration.

Migration governance in Morocco:

- Developing Moroccan authorities and communities capacities, especially at sub-national and municipal levels, to implement national migration policies and thus welcome and integrate migrants (RECOSA);
- Strategic communication: “Your Life Matters”: Raising awareness on the risks of irregular Migration in Morocco” by IOM, the project addresses Moroccan citizens as well as migrants from other countries in Morocco.

Hungary – The V4-Germany partnership is currently implementing a €30 million programme in order to ease the migration pressure on Morocco. The program will contribute (1) to improving border protection in Morocco and (2) Morocco’s economic development efforts. The pillar of border protection aims to increase Morocco's capacity to fight cross-border migration-related crimes, in particular illegal migration and human smuggling. The pillar contains mainly asset acquisition and capacity development elements. Under the second pillar, economic development, the intention is to create jobs in the local water sector through technology and knowledge transfer. The project is stalled currently. At technical level, the V4+DE will continue its work on Pillar 1, and is in the process of securing the necessary resources for 2022 and will continue to rely on the ICMPD's contribution to Pillar 1.

Italy – The entry into force of the bilateral Agreement on readmission – signed in 1998 and yet to be ratified by the Moroccan party – would help improve the work of the respective competent authorities.

Projects:

- The Project “Je suis migrant” implemented by ProgettoMondo MLAL was completed in September 2020. It promoted the integration into education, culture and economic spheres of returning migrants, sub-Saharan migrants and young people from the suburbs in Morocco.
- Concerning legal migration, pursuant to the Joint Italo-Moroccan Declaration for the Establishment of a Multidimensional Strategic Partnership (PSM) and having regard to the high quality of Moroccan Universities, priority sectors (such as energy, maritime, industrial and infrastructure, culture, education, training, research and sustainable development) have been recognized as target for the strengthening of economic relations.
- A regional project – “AMEM ”– Appui à la Migration Equitable pour le Maghreb – financed by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and led by ILO aims at improving workers’ rights and enhancing labour management. Another regional project - Y-MED - second phase 2019/2021 - aims at facilitating the training and job-placement of young people from the Mediterranean through a traineeship and circular migration programs, financed by Contributo Volontario Italiano and implemented by IOM. The project facilitates the circulation of knowledge and competencies among enterprises and triggers innovation and internationalization processes, it is a good opportunity to encourage circulation of competence. The Project includes 45 internships in Italian Enterprises for the youth coming from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.

The Netherlands – Strengthening Protection and Assistance to Vulnerable and Stranded Migrants in and transiting through North Africa (PROTECT II) funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by IOM (€9.3 million 2019-2021). PROTECT II strengthens mechanisms for protection and assistance to vulnerable, stranded and transiting migrants within mixed migration flows across North Africa. To this end, the project implements Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programming in a flexible, efficient rights- and need-based manner. This regional programme (Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Egypt) facilitates the voluntary return of more than 2 500 migrants in vulnerable situation currently stranded in Morocco and allows the organization of international capacity building and exchange activities between the different actors involved.

Combating Money Laundering from TIP and SOM via UNODC (€2 million 2019-2021). The project focuses on strengthening the national capacities of Egypt, Morocco and Algeria to detect, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate crimes of human trafficking, migrants smuggling and money laundering via a series of training sessions for law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges. It also provides hands-on experience and best practices to improve the countries' responses to these crimes.

Portugal – Has an intense and broad bilateral engagement with the Kingdom of Morocco in several areas, and holds regular high-level meetings within the framework of the treaty of good neighbourhood, friendship and cooperation signed in 1994. The search for the promotion and consolidation of friendly relations and bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Portugal and the Kingdom of Morocco, given the geographical proximity between North Africa and South West Europe, has always been a priority.

Determined to tackle the increase of the criminal phenomena in the region, with the aim of consolidating institutional support actions to reinforce the exchange of good practices, the Portuguese Republic and the Kingdom of Morocco are working on concluding several agreements, in particular in the field of Information cooperation, concerning the Fight against Terrorism and Organized Crime, on Border Control and Migration Flows, in the field of Internal Security and in the field of Legal Migration/labour mobility. The Portuguese National Republican Guard and the Moroccan Gendarmerie Royale are also working on signing a MoU on Internal Security and on the fight against crime, illicit trafficking, and road and environment safety.

Portuguese Ministry for Home Affairs has a seconded officer as a Liaison Officer in Rabat.

Poland and Slovakia – are stakeholder in the project 'Partnering with Morocco for development' together with V4 Member States and Germany.

Romania – works with IOM on assisted voluntary return of Moroccans. Regarding the financial support, in the last 2 years Romania provided Official Development Assistance (ODA) for Morocco in the amount of €317 400, the main field being education, through scholarships granted by the Ministry of Education. In 2020, through the Annual Plan for International Cooperation for Development and Humanitarian Assistance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs / RoAid Agency granted €50 000 for the implementation of the project "Combating radicalization and violent extremism through democratic involvement of young people in Morocco".

Spain – highlights in the framework of operational collaboration between the security forces of both countries in the fight against irregular immigration:

- cooperation in the sealing of the border perimeters of Ceuta and Melilla both at the operational level with the deployment of Moroccan Security Forces and in the surveillance of the perimeter areas where Spain is carrying out infrastructure reforms;

- mixed maritime, land and air patrols, between the Guardia Civil and the Royal Gendarmerie. Thanks to the close cooperation between both countries, rescues have been carried out in the Moroccan SAR zone and landings in Moroccan ports. This has reduced rescue times and, consequently, the risk of loss of human lives;
- the exchange of information and police collaboration to dismantle human trafficking networks (in Spain and Morocco) has been strengthened;
- the participation and cooperation of the Spanish and Moroccan Security Forces, on an annual basis, in Frontex's Operation Indalo;
- the Police Cooperation Centres of Tangier and Algeciras.

In 2017-2019, the Ministry of the Interior allocated economic assistance to Morocco in order to co-finance the expenses generated by the operational deployments of the Moroccan security forces for border surveillance and the fight against irregular immigration to Spain, the reinforcement of their operational capacities and the maintenance of the material used in the aforementioned deployments. Since October 2013, the Ministry of Interior has been participating in the Assisted Voluntary Return with Reintegration Program (AVRR) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Morocco. At the end of 2020, the Ministry of Interior and IOM-Spain signed an International Administrative Agreement, under which IOM presented a new project within the AVRR program in Morocco. For 2021, a financial aid of €30 million has been approved for Morocco, aimed at combating irregular immigration. Moreover, Spain will also continue its collaboration with the IOMs' project for assisted voluntary return with reintegration in Morocco.

On legal migration, Spain will continue to implement its flagship circular migration scheme of hiring in origin – GECCO, through which thousands of Moroccan women migrate every year to Spain to take part in the strawberry harvest. Starting in October 2021, a complementary project has been launched with EU funding (see annex I), WAFIRA (Women As Financially Independent Rural Actors), that will provide many of the women participating in GECCO with the necessary skills and financial means to launch their own income generating activities (IGAs) and/or cooperatives upon return to their rural communities of origin in Morocco. Other initiative to be launched in 2022 with EU funding aims at supporting the promotion of and information on legal pathways both to the institutional stakeholders (Embassies, Consulates and local authorities), but also to the civil society organizations acting as informal sources of information to potential (low and medium-qualified) migrants. The project will be implemented in seven African countries: Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria and Ethiopia. These initiatives complement others targeting highly qualified employees, namely post-graduate students (through the EU financed project "Young Generations As Change Agents" YGCA, 2019-2021) and researchers (under preparation, coming in 2022 or 2023).

Morocco is "priority country" for the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation (AECID) and develops cooperation programmes financed from the national budget. Some of these programmes target migration goals directly since others include migration as a horizontal approach mainly in programmes dealing with youth, minors, gender and rural areas.

Process to reinforced existing projects and identify new ones within these three lines of action with Morocco are currently under way in the framework of the TEI Atlantic and Western Mediterranean routes.

ANNEX III

Key figures and trends	
Irregular migration	
- Illegal border crossing of Moroccan nationals to the EU: 15 176 in 2021 (end November), of which 11 794¹ to Spain via Western Mediterranean and Western African route (17 121 in the whole of 2020, of which 3 705 to Spain via Western Mediterranean and Western African route). In 2019, the total number of Moroccans arriving to the EU was 8 020. - Irregular arrivals from Morocco: In 2021, 21 774 arrivals from Morocco were registered in mainland Spain and Canary Islands, compared to 14 856 in 2020². - Illegal stay of Moroccan nationals in the EU: 41 220 in 2020 (41 535 in 2019), of which 18 175 in Spain, 8 710 in France, 3 340 in Italy.	
Return	
- Moroccan nationals ordered to leave the EU: 33 645 in 2020 (34 750 in 2019) of which 11 980 in Spain, 8 510 in France, 3 463 in Belgium. In 2021 (end of September), around 15 630 Moroccan nationals were order to leave the EU, of which 7 195 in France, 2 590 in Belgium, 1 840 in Spain. - Return rate: 8% in 2020 (29% in 2019). 6% provisionally in 2021 (end Sept). - Highest return rate in 2020: 100% in Romania, 26% in Sweden, 24% in the Netherlands - Lowest return rate in 2020: 0% in Hungary, Slovenia, Malta.	
Asylum	
- First time asylum applications by Moroccan nationals: 6 775 in 2020 (8 950 in 2019) of which 1 215 in Slovenia, 945 in Spain, 900 in Germany. Based on provisional data from EUAA, in 2021, 14 402 Moroccans lodged asylum applications in the EU+, of which 32% were lodged in Spain, 20% in Italy, and 12% in Austria. - First instance asylum decisions: 5 465 in 2020 (7 550 in 2019). 4 035 in 2021 (end Sept). - EU recognition rate: 8% in 2020 (8% in 2019). 11% in 2021 (end Sept). - EU recognition rate incl. humanitarian protection: 10% in 2020 (9% in 2019). 13% in 2021 (end Sept).	
International Protection in Morocco	
Registered refugees and asylum seekers hosted in Morocco: according to UNHCR, 15 755 people of concern as of 30 September 2021 (13 516 at the end of 2020), were present in Morocco (6 920 refugees and 8 023 asylum seekers) - mostly Syrians (4 914), followed by Guineans (2 134) and Ivoirians (1 297).	
Legal migration	
- First time residence permits: 123 445 in 2020 (133 009 in 2019) of which 69 454 in Spain, 30 145 in France and 10 239 in Italy. - Total valid residence permits: 1 938 040 at the end of 2020 (1 960 323 at the end of 2019), of which 818 649 in Spain, 536 456 in France and 397 887 in Italy.	
Visas	
- Short stay visa applications to the EU: 180 443 in 2020 (705 293 in 2019) of which 84 627 handled by France, 68 971 by Spain, 7 985 by the Netherlands. - Share of Multiple Entry Visas (MEVs): 50.6% in 2020 (42.9% in 2019). - Visa refusal rate : 23.6% in 2020 (20.5% in 2019)	

¹ This data does not include the estimated 7 000 – 9 500 arrivals in Ceuta between 17 and 18 May 2021.

² Data from REME 2020 December report and REME 2021 December report, produced by NCC-Spain Eurosur. While the data for December 2021 expressly refers to arrivals from Morocco to mainland Spain and the Canary Islands, the data for December 2020 does not specify the area of arrival.