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Africa-Europe Civil Society
Consultation and Conference

Taking Stock of Valletta

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MADE Africa



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MADE Migration and Development
Civil Society Network

The Migration and Development Civil Society Network (MADE) is an international, civil society-led platform that connects and supports civil society worldwide to promote policies and action for the well-being and protection of all migrants and communities.

MADE activities are currently coordinated by seven civil society organisations and networks in Asia (Migrant Forum in Asia), Africa (Caritas Senegal), the Americas (Fundación Scalabrini with assistance from the Scalabrini International Migration Network and International Network for Migration and Development) and Europe (AFFORD UK, Cordaid and ICMC Europe). The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) acts as the global Coordinating Office for MADE and for civil society activities in the process of the GFMD. Find out more on www.madenetwork.org

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This report, together with the resources mentioned in the text, is available on the MADE website: <http://www.madenetwork.org>



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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| A. Background | 4 |
| I Introduction to the Joint Valletta Action plan and the Role of Civil Society..... | 4 |
| II The Joint Valletta Action Plan: Implementation to Date | 6 |
| III Gathering the Views of Civil Society – Methodology | 10 |
| IV Purpose and Structure of the Consultation..... | 12 |
| B. Conference | 14 |
| Part I: Morning Sessions - African and European Civil Society Consultation Initiative | 14 |
| A. Opening Panel | 14 |
| B. Report from the Break Out Sessions | 16 |
| Part II - Afternoon Sessions – Panel I: Taking Stock of Valletta and the way forward – towards a structured Dialogue with Civil Society | 26 |
| A. Report from the Morning Sessions and Introduction to Policy Debate | 26 |
| B. Panel Debate I: Taking Stock of Valletta – where do we stand one year on and what are current developments? | 27 |
| C. Panel II: Moving on from the Senior Officials Meeting - establishing a structured dialogue with civil society | 30 |
| D. Closing Remarks Conclusion and recommendations | 34 |
| E. Conclusion and Recommendations..... | 34 |

I Introduction to the Joint Valletta Action plan and the Role of Civil Society

Prompted by the unprecedented number of migrants and asylum-seekers arriving in Europe in 2015, the Valletta Summit on Migration was held in November 2015 in Malta bringing 'EU and African countries together to work in a spirit of partnership and find common solutions to mutual challenges'.¹ It marked the beginning of an intensified partnership between Africa and the European Union in regard to migration management and was the first summit of such a scale to exclusively discuss migration.

The immediate outcome of the summit was two-fold, i.e. both political and operational, and produced a [political declaration](#) as well as the [Joint Valletta Action Plan \(JVAP\)](#). The JVAP, which the present report will focus on, is built around five domains, namely:

- 1. Development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement;**
- 2. Legal migration and mobility;**
- 3. Protection and asylum;**
- 4. Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings;**
- 5. Return, readmission and reintegration.**

Across its domains, the JVAP identifies 16 priority initiatives and 89 other actions to be implemented by the end of 2016. The JVAP is limited in its geographical scope and only includes some of those African countries with which the EU already has established partnerships, in particular via regional Dialogues, namely the Khartoum² and Rabat process,³ as well as the Joint EU-Africa strategy.⁴ Implementation of the JVAP is facilitated through a wide range of mechanisms and processes. Regional Dialogues such as the Rabat Process, the Khartoum Process and the Joint EU-Africa strategy are central avenues for political dialogue and have been tasked with monitoring the implementation of the actions to be implemented under the JVAP for the period 2016-2018.⁵

Both the Political Declaration and the JVAP highlight the need for better governance of migration as a response to increased movements of refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants. At the same time, the Declaration re-confirms the priority of saving lives of migrants, respect for international obligations and human rights, and a commitment to the principles of solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility. Across each of its five domains, the JVAP specifically names civil society

¹ European Commission, press release, November 2015 : http://www.consilium.europa.eu/press-releases-pdf/2015/11/40802204067_en.pdf

² Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia

³ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leon, Gambia, Togo, Tunisia

⁴ European Commission: *A Joint EU-Africa strategy* ; available under http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/eas2007_joint_strategy_en.pdf

⁵ The first reports on progress made by these dialogues were presented at the SOM in Malta; both reports can be accessed here: <http://www.madenetwork.org/latest-news/civil-societys-statement-senior-officials-meeting-valletta>

organisations as partners as well as beneficiaries in the implementation of the projects initiated under the JVAP.

Ahead of the Valletta Summit in November 2015, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Europe (in its role as MADE Europe coordinator) in cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Caritas Senegal (in its role as coordinator for MADE Africa), carried out consultations among African and European civil society platforms and organisations, organised a one day consultation in Brussels, gathering over 100 delegates from African and European countries and institutions, and issued an [African and European Civil Society Joint Statement](#), which provided recommendations to the JVAP. The joint statement calls upon African and European leaders to prioritise human rights, dignity, wellbeing and welcoming of people on the move and to strengthen civil society's contribution to the design, implementation and monitoring of the JVAP.

With the Joint Statement and the participation of one representative of African and European civil society each at the Valletta Summit, African and European civil society brought together African and European actors to speak with one voice to set out priorities for the discussions and outcomes of the Valletta Summit.

As set out in the Political Declaration, the progress of implementation of the JVAP would figure regularly on the agenda of the meetings organised in the framework of the Africa-EU Strategy as well as in bilateral political dialogues and a dedicated Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), which took place in Malta on 8-9 February 2017. The [Rabat](#) and [Khartoum Process](#) both provided Analysis Reports that set the foundation for the SOM. Based on the outcomes of the Analysis Reports and the discussions that took place during the SOM, a set of [joint conclusions](#) was adopted.

Ahead of the SOM, and in order to provide concrete inputs to the SOM, African and Civil Society took stock of the implementation of the JVAP one year after its introduction. ICMC Europe, via the MADE Europe Chapter and in cooperation with the MADE Africa Network, therefore conducted a series of activities in order to gather the voices and viewpoints of African and European CSOs, consisting of:

- A survey, distributed to over 80 CSOs located in Africa and Europe, on CSOs experiences and assessments of the implementation of the JVAP thus far
- A two-part Civil Society Consultation (CSC) and Conference in Brussels on 30 January 2017, which brought together over 40 members of African and European Civil Society, as well as representatives of relevant regional processes, the EU and its Member States, in order to present the
- Participation of four representatives of African and European civil society at the Senior Officials Meeting in Malta on 8 and 9 February 2017.

With these activities, ICMC Europe and the [MADE Network](#) intend to open further space for a structured and permanent dialogue between civil society and the governments and other stakeholders steering the implementation, monitoring and implementation of the Declaration, JVAP and associated processes.

The present report provides a summary of the civil society consultation that was organised on 30 January 2017 in the framework of the MADE Europe chapter, including conclusions and recommendations of civil society to ensure a structured and permanent engagement of civil society in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Valletta Action Plan.

II The Joint Valletta Action Plan: implementation to date

The modalities and current state of implementation of the JVAP as well as the use of different funds for the financing of its projects implemented under its purview, formed the basis for discussion for the CSC on 30 January 2017.

Implementation has been facilitated by the many ongoing initiatives already supported by Valletta signatories. The Valletta Summit galvanised actors and provided the necessary political prioritisation and created a renewed impetus allowing for a more focused approach on specific areas of migration. As will be seen below, implementation levels vary significantly across domains and priority actions. This variation may be explained by the complexity of objectives, multiplicity of responses required and the existence or otherwise of pre-existing engagement to which post-Valletta actions have been added.⁶

While the JVAP states that “Member States and associated countries will use their relevant (national) financial instruments available for cooperation with African partners in line with their legal and financing frameworks”,⁷ its main instrument of operationalisation is the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF).⁸ The creation of the fund was announced on 9 September 2015, when the President of the European Union, Jean-Claude Juncker, delivered his State of Union address.⁹ Its primary aim is to foster stability and contribute to better migration management. It will tackle the ‘causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration [...] by promoting resilience, economic and equal opportunities, security and development and addressing human rights abuses’.¹⁰

The EC has pooled together a large amount of money for the Trust Fund by drawing massively from the EDF, the European Neighbourhood Instrument, the Development Cooperation Instrument, a DG HOME budget line, from humanitarian aid and disaster preparedness and from the Instrument for Stability and Peace. The EC has strongly encouraged EU Member States to match the €1.8 billion in funding with an additional €1.8 billion.¹¹

Additional funds have also been made available under the European Investment Plan (EIP). The EIP, announced by the EU in September 2016, is intended to contribute to JVAP implementation by

⁶ ICMPPD, Draft Analysis of Mapping of the Implementation of the Joint Valletta Action Plan, December 2016

⁷ Joint Valletta Action Plan, November 2015: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/11/action_plan_en_pdf/

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/africa/eu-emergency-trust-fund-africa_en

⁹ European Commission, Juncker, J.-C. State of the Union 2015: Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity, September 2015 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-5614_en.htm

¹⁰ European Commission/European Union Agreement establishing the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa, and its internal rules. (‘Constitutive Agreement’), October 2015 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/constitutive-agreement-annexe-2015-7293-20151020_en.pdf

¹¹ Tusk, D., Bettel X. and J.-C. Juncker Letter to the Head of States and Government of the European Union. European Commission/European Council/Presidency of the Council, October 2015 (<http://www.statewatch.org/news/2015/nov/eu-refugees-letter-Tusk-Bettel-Juncker.pdf>)

addressing structural and long term challenges, through mobilising investments in partner countries, stepping up technical assistance to develop financially attractive and mature projects, and finally by improving economic governance, the business environment and engaging with the private sector.¹² The EIP uses EUR 3.35 billion from the EU budget and that of the European Development Fund (EDF) to support innovative guarantees and similar instruments in support of private investment, enabling the EIP to mobilise up to EUR 44 billion of investments. If Member States and other partners match the EU's contribution, the total amount could reach EUR 88 billion.¹³

The following provides an overview of the state of implementation of the JVAP overall and projects implemented under the EUTF in particular.

In December 2016, it was reported that overall, over 600 separate initiatives that respond to JVAP's 16 priority initiatives had been approved or were in the process of being implemented. The approximate financial value attributed to these initiatives is in excess of EUR 6.5 Billion.¹⁴ Funds for these projects originate from the two investment funds mentioned above, as well as other, partly pre-existing, financial allocations.

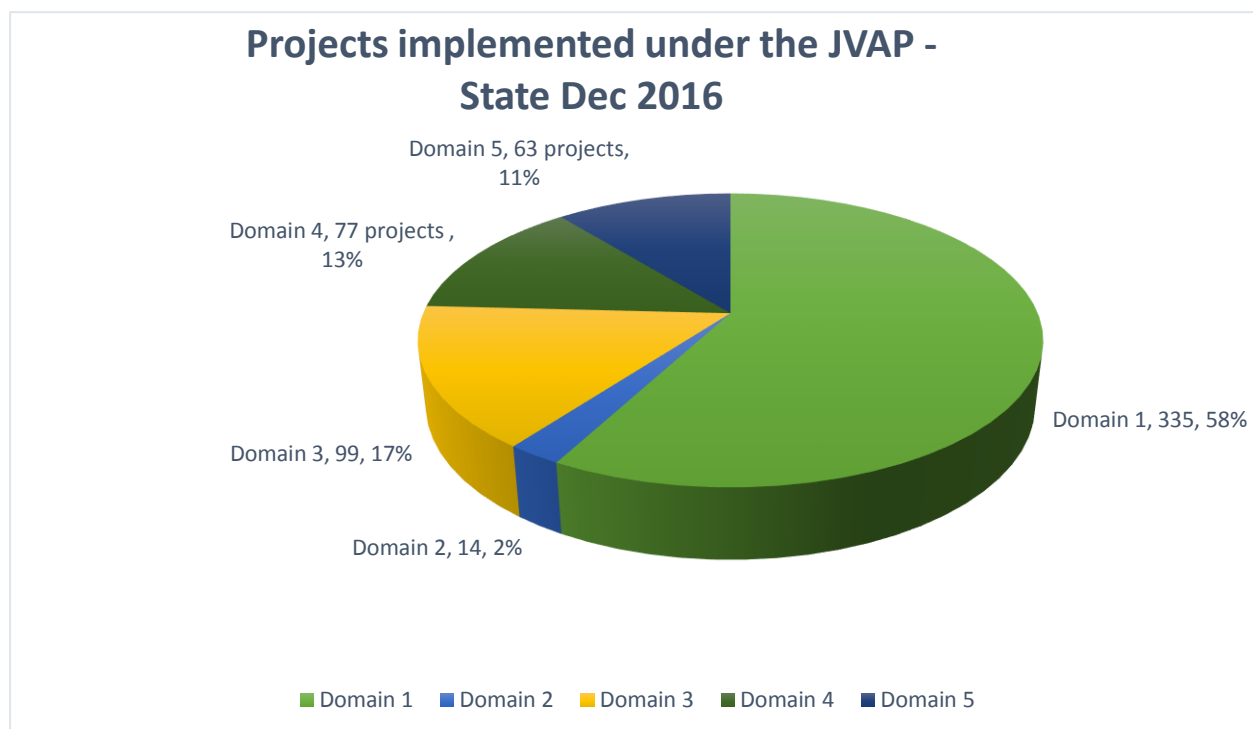


Figure 1 State of Implementation JVAP - Dec 2016; Source: ICMPD

In the first year of the JVAP, *Domain 1*, which focuses on the development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, has seen the largest number of projects has been adopted: 58 percent of the actions commenced under the JVAP and nearly 60 percent of the overall funding fall within this domain. Projects implemented cover areas such as enhancing employment opportunities and revenue-generating activities, improve remittances

¹² European Commission, Factsheet External Investment Plan: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/state_of_the_union_2016_external_investment_plan_factsheet.pdf

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ ICMPD, Draft Analysis of Mapping of the Implementation of the Joint Valletta Action Plan, December 2016

provisions, as well as the facilitation of responsible private investment in African agriculture, agri-business and agro industries.

Domain 2 - Legal migration and mobility accounts for only 14 actions, i.e. two percent of the entire volume in terms of projects implemented and roughly one percent of the overall budget dedicated to the implementation of the JVAP's 16 priority actions. Projects have focused largely on the mobility of students and researchers, for example under the ERASMUS+ programme, as well as other scholarship initiatives.

Domain 3 - Protection and asylum accounts for 99 actions, i.e. roughly 17 percent of the overall number of projects and roughly 13 percent of the overall budget. Actions under this domain include capacity building with governments, humanitarian assistance and Regional Development and Protection Programmes (RDPPs).

Domain 4, Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human being, saw progress largely in terms of new or adapted legislation and capacity-building. Under this domain, 77 projects have been initiated, constituting 13 percent of the total number of projects implemented using roughly 7.1 percent of the total budget of 6.5 billion Euros.

Domain 5 - Return, readmission and reintegration, has seen a substantial increase in the past year in cooperation between countries on return and readmission. It has also been an important area of investment by the EUTF. Under this domain, 63 projects, i.e. eleven percent of the overall actions constituting 16 percent of the budget, have been implemented, largely in areas such as strengthening logistical and operational capacity of authorities of countries of origin, and enhancing the dialogue between countries of origin and destination on returns, readmission and reintegration.

A slightly different picture emerges when looking at projects implemented under the EUTF. The EUTF was designed as an Emergency Trust Fund. Projects financed under its auspices are thus supposed to bring quick results rather than addressing complex interrelated areas requiring longer term policies and interventions. For the period 2016- 2020 the EUTF foresees projects in 26 countries across three operational windows – for **North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Lake Chad and Sahel region** - aiming to respond to the most pressing challenges, which differ across the regions covered.¹⁵ Objectives of the EUTF address the crises in the respective regions and support all aspects of stability and contribute to better migration management as well as addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration, in particular by promoting resilience, economic and equal opportunities, security and development and addressing human rights abuses.

Four types of broad activities will be funded under the EUTF:

1. Programmes for creating employment opportunities, especially for young people and women in local communities, some of which contribute to the reintegration of returnees;
2. Activities supporting resilience in terms of food security and the wider economy, including services for local communities and refugees;

¹⁵ European Commission, Fact sheet Emergency Trust Fund for Africa:
https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eutf_general_ve_dig_21-02.pdf

3. Improving migration management (including the fight against irregular migration and smuggling, return, readmission, international protection as well as legal migration);
4. Programmes to support improvement of overall governance, rule of law, security and development (including border management) and conflict-prevention systems.

The table below provides an overview of the activities funded under the EUTF for Africa in 2016, which are implemented through a range of operating partners, including EU Member States cooperation agencies, NGOs and international organisations. Several implementation modalities are envisaged: delegated cooperation, calls for proposals, budget support and blending, and direct awards in particular situations.

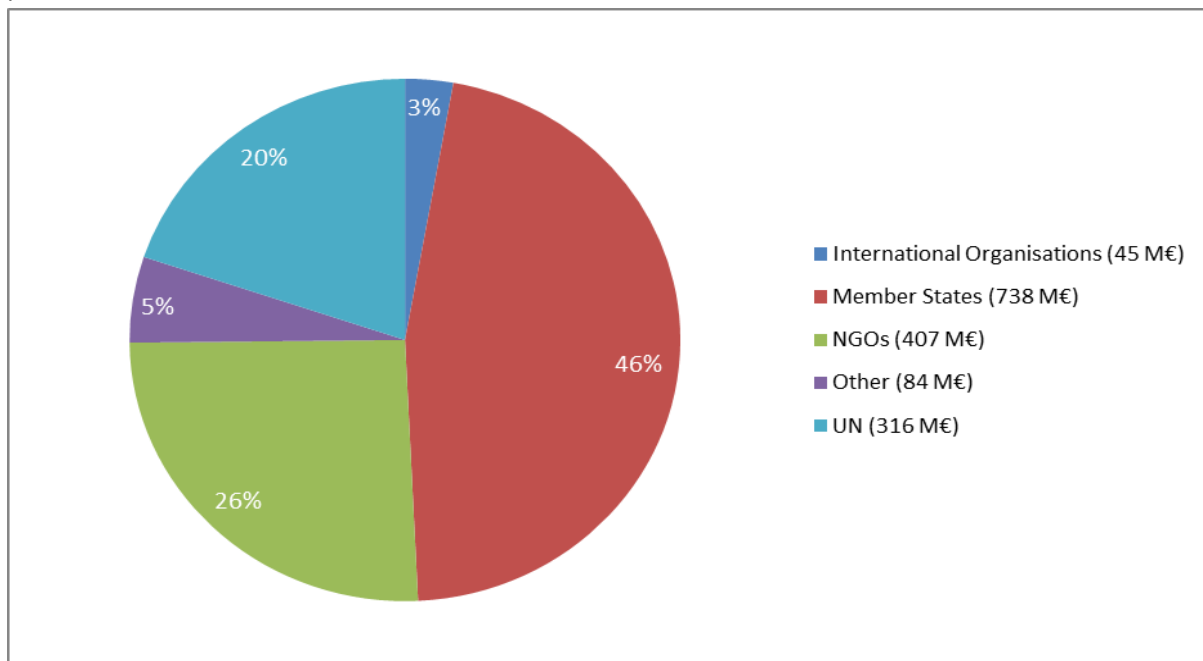


Figure 2 Breakdown of committed programmes by implementer (source: European Commission)

Indeed, the majority of funding has been contracted to Member States (46%), who mostly employed their own development agencies, such as the GIZ, AFD and MAECI DGCS. Funding to international NGOs accounts for around 26% and the UN for approximately 20%.

Sahel and Lake Chad Window

As of January 2017, 39 projects had been implemented in total in Burkina Faso (2), Cameroon (2), the Gambia (1), Mali (7), Mauritania (2), Niger (7), Nigeria (4), Senegal (9), and Chad (1), as well as three transnational and one regional project. Most of the projects fall within Domain 1 and are aimed at poverty reduction, addressing youth unemployment and creating economic opportunities.

Horn of Africa Window

The main challenges identified under the Horn of Africa window are migration and forced displacement, conflict and instability, economic development, poor governance and climate change. As of January 2017, ten projects had been implemented for a total value of 153 Million Euros in Ethiopia (2), Somalia (1), Uganda (2) and South Sudan (3), as well as two regional projects. Project mainly fall in the domains 1, 3 and 5.

North Africa Window

Projects in this area focus mainly on issues of migration governance, ensuring protection for those in need, promote mutually-beneficial legal migration and mobility, tackling irregular migration and support to sustainable return and reintegration policies, and improve information and the protection of vulnerable migrants along the migratory route. The domains covered by these actions include 2,3 and 4.

Implementation of the Valletta Action Plan is further influenced by the EU Migration Partnership Framework (PFW) adopted in June 2016, partly funded under the EUTF.¹⁶ Like previous EU migration policies, the PFW falls under the broader umbrella of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), an overarching framework of the EU on external migration and asylum policy since 2005. At its core, the PFW relies on specific agreements between the EU and individual countries, known as 'Compacts', which, in a first phase, have focused on a small set of priority countries including, in Africa: Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. These Compacts focus cooperation between the EU and the respective country "to address the challenge of irregular migration and its root causes as part of the broader cooperation with third countries" with a view to "stemming the flows and improving return rates".¹⁷ The JVAP, implemented largely via the EUTF, as well as the PFW are at the core of current EU-Africa cooperation in the area of migration. While it is clear that the Valletta Summit, as well as the Rabat and Khartoum processes are intergovernmental in nature, the lack of consultations prior to Summit and the largely per forma role of civil society in the JVAP's implementation and monitoring give cause for concern.

III Gathering the Views of Civil Society – Methodology

The civil society consultation conducted in November 2015 showed the wide range of issues at stake with respect to the Valletta Summit, and the considerable concern on how these would be addressed under the JVAP. The [Joint Civil Society Statement](#) identified nine priority areas of concern for African and European civil society and urged those signing the Valletta declaration and Action Plan to consider them.¹⁸

One year after the launch of the Valletta Action Plan, and building on these findings, ICMC Europe via the MADE Europe Chapter, and with the MADE Africa Network, initiated a number of activities in order to assess CSOs' experiences with the implementation of the JVAP thus far. They pursued a three-pronged approach to influence discussions and decision-making processes at the Senior Officials Meeting in Malta and in an effort to engage with stakeholders and those steering and implementing the Valletta Action Plan.

¹⁶ European Commission - Press release: *Commission announces New Migration Partnership Framework: reinforced cooperation with third countries to better manage migration*, 7 June 2016: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2072_en.htm

¹⁷ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/com_2017_205_f1_report_from_commission_en_v8_p1_880005_0.pdf

¹⁸ These included (1) tackling the root causes that force people to migrate, while respecting rights to mobility, (2) Ensuring safe and regular migration routes to Europe, to prevent migrants and refugees' deaths and suffering (3) Ensuring effective implementation of anti-trafficking legislation and plans - with a focus on victim centred and gender-sensitive provisions (4) Strengthening international protection to ensure that refugees' rights are respected and that their needs are met (5) Ensuring that the protection of human rights in all return operations and in the negotiations of any migration cooperation agreements, including readmission agreements (6) Support African countries to develop coherent migration and asylum policies and improve migration/asylum governance at the national and regional levels (7) Facilitate and support migrants' and diaspora's contributions to development (8) Include a Partnership principle to ensure that funding priorities match the needs in the region and that civil society contributes to the programming process of the EU Emergency Trust Fund (9) Support citizen mobilization to change perceptions on migrants and refugees in host countries

This approach consisted of:

1. Develop and distribute a [survey](#) among **over 80 African and European civil society organisations** to gather a representative sample of the views and recommendations regarding the implementation and future of the Valletta Action Plan and EU Africa Trust Fund.
2. Organising a **Civil Society Consultation (CSC) in Brussels on 30 January 2017** bringing together **over 40 members of African and European Civil Society** at director level, as well as representatives of **relevant regional processes, the EU and its Member States**. Building on the findings of the consultation in November 2015, as well as the above survey, the discussions during the CSC refined these with the aim of issuing concrete recommendations on how to achieve a structured engagement with civil society.
3. Facilitating the **participation of four representatives of European and African Civil Society**, respectively, at the **Senior Officials Meeting in Malta on 8 and 9 February 2017**. A Summary Paper of the **Civil Society Consultation with recommendations** was presented to participants at the Senior Officials Meetings in February in Malta by one African and one European Senior Civil Society Representative.

The civil society survey was developed in early December 2016, consisting of 17 questions based on the thematic findings of the consultation in November 2015, as well as ongoing discussions relating to the JVAP's method of information sharing, implementation and monitoring, its financing tools, and consultations with civil society. In preparation for the consultation, the MADE Europe Chapter consultant attended the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) in Bangladesh in December 2016 and distributed the survey to over 40 Africa-based civil society organisations participating in the GFMD.

Several in-depth interviews were also conducted during the GFMD in order to deepen on specific issues and gain a more nuanced picture of the respondents' assessment of the JVAP. In addition, the survey was sent out to African and European civil society organisations via the MADE Network's database. Building additionally on the interest raised through its previous consultation in late 2015, the MADE Europe Chapter was able to engage a broad range of civil society actors in a variety of countries and thematic areas across the two continents building on the strong network created throughout West, North and East Africa, as well as between the two continents by the activities pursued by the MADE Network since 2014.

The MADE Network, and in particular its Europe Chapter and MADE Africa, coordinated by Caritas Senegal, has been a central actor in connecting an array of civil society actors across a variety of African regions and countries, and bringing thus together organisations working on issue ranging from migration and development, to diaspora concerns and refugee focused organisations. Through its targeted activities, the MADE Network has contributed to a constant exchange, capacity building and formulation of strategic goals among African Civil Society Organisations as well as connect individual actors on an inter-personal level. Its strength lies particularly in its network approach, and the connecting of actors who themselves form part of regional or national networks, thus reaching a broad range of stakeholders on different levels of governance, from the grass roots to the more established

and well-connected organisations, who engage with the EU and national governments on the high policy level.

The MADE Europe Chapter was therefore able to directly link the strong connections and cooperative partnerships created through the consultation in November 2015, the direct engagement and interest raised during the GFMD in December 2016, as well as the survey allowing it to pursue the above-mentioned three-pronged approach to strategically influence discussions and decision-making processes at the Senior Officials Meeting in Malta. Furthermore, these activities were directly linked to the broad range of speakers and participants, the MADE Europe Chapter was able to engage for the Consultation on 30 January 2017 in Brussels.

Civil Society Survey

The [survey](#), carried out by an external expert contracted by the MADE programme, brought together a wide variety of CSOs across Africa and Europe, which are working in the thematic areas and regions covered by the JVAP, including local and grassroots CSOs, international organisations, and a number represent diaspora groups established in Europe, as well as universities, faith groups and migrant rights organisations. Some organisations implement livelihoods or migrant assistance programmes, while others are focused on policy, governance, climate change and human rights. Some organisations focused on particular vulnerable groups, such as refugees, children, women and victims of trafficking and smuggling.

The results of the survey showed that while CSOs recognise the value of the priorities that have been laid out in the JVAP, and are eager to provide support and guidance to their implementation, substantial concerns persist both with regards to the focus of its actions as well its method of implementation, among others. The full recommendations resulting from the survey have been included in the final recommendations of this report. The full results of the survey and as well as a contextualisation of its findings can be accessed [here](#).

B. Purpose and Structure of Consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to ensure that the experiences, viewpoints and recommendations of African and European Civil Society are incorporated throughout the implementation as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the Valletta Action Plan and EU Trust Fund for Africa. Building on the results of the consultation carried out in November 2015, civil society organisations from both Africa and present at this consultation aimed to speak with one voice on the issues that most concern them and make them heard by the decision makers of the Valletta processes. This links to an effort at global level to take into account local realities and priorities in the shaping of decisions and policies around migration and development, as exemplified by the negotiations surrounding the UN Global Compact on Migration, and inclusive fora such as the GFMD.

In order to allow for and reflect the purpose and stated aim of the consultation, the meeting was structured in two parts:

- During the morning sessions, civil society representatives from both African and European NGOs shared their views and experiences with the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan and the political processes thus far, and discussed their concerns. Based on the outcomes of the above-mentioned survey, three thematic breakout sessions were organized, which outlined concrete recommendations to policy makers and officials at the SOM, as well as panellists of the afternoon sessions.
- During the afternoon sessions, the panel was opened up to include representatives of the AU, the European Commission, Germany, as well as the government of Mali. The chair of the afternoon sessions, Gibril Fall of the diaspora organization ADEPT, took the recommendations produced during the breakout sessions forward to these attendees to introduce and shape the subsequent discussions.

The recommendations issued by civil society participants during the meeting were subsequently contextualised with the findings of the survey as well as further interviews with selected stakeholders and collated in a report. This report which was presented to participants of the SOM by four representatives of both African and European civil society, outlined concrete demands by civil society to those implementing the JVAP and related processes. The report as well as a short civil society statement can be accessed [here](#) and [here](#).

These efforts are aimed at increasing commitment to reflect and engage with all parties in the process of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the JVAP at different levels. The MADE consultation ensured that the concerns, issues and recommendations of civil society are represented in a comprehensive manner, thereby providing a solid basis for discussion. It directly links the voices of civil society, gathered via the survey, to the agenda of policy and decision makers of the Valletta Action Plan through participation at the SOM in Malta in February 2017.

Through these mechanisms, Civil Society will increasingly become a genuine partner in the shaping of thematic priorities and the implementation of people-centred, needs-first and rights-based policies in both migration and development. The MADE Europe Chapter hopes to further open up dialogue spaces and opportunities for constructive exchange between Civil Society, governments, regional organisations and institutions and to set a precedent for a more systematic consultation of Civil Society by stakeholders of the Valletta Action Plan and EU Africa Trust Fund.

II. Conference

Part I: Morning Sessions - African and European Civil Society Consultation Initiative

A. Opening Panel

The conference was opened by **Petra Hueck, Director of ICMC Europe**, and **Alphonse Seck from Caritas Senegal**, the coordinator of the MADE Network in West Africa. Panellists and keynote speakers provided a snapshot of the state of implementation of the JVAP, the results of the civil society survey, as well as some of the main issues foregrounded that are at stake for European and African civil society with regards to the implementation of the JVAP, the review process at the SOM in Malta a week later and other processes of EU-Africa cooperation.

In her opening words, **Petra Hueck** expressed solidarity with those affected by the then just issued executive order by the Trump Administration to ban nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the US, emphasising that the role of civil society is more important now than ever, to stand against such targeted attacks. She therefore emphasised the need for civil society to clearly formulate its demands and stand with one voice. In order to set the basis for the discussions of the day ahead and remind participants of the issues considered to be central a year earlier, Mrs. Hueck restated the demands made by civil society at the Valletta Summit in November 2015.¹⁹



In his subsequent address, **Alphonse Seck** recalled the efforts made by the coordinating organisations in November 2015 to bring together African and European civil society with *Petra Hueck (ICMC Europe) addressing the audience* a view to issue concrete recommendations to leaders ahead of the Valletta Summit. He noted that it was urgently time to evaluate and assess progress made, and call leaders by their commitments. He welcomed the opportunity of the consultation to share thoughts, exchange and strategise in a constructive and unique environment. Moreover, he re-emphasised the need to adopt a thoroughly rights-based approach to migration governance.

¹⁹ Respect and implement the “principle of non-refoulement”; Ensure that return policies prioritise assisted voluntary return and reintegration. When forced return takes place after due consideration of an asylum claim in fair procedures, ensure that it is carried out in a safe and dignified manner in line with international human rights obligations; Ensure that future negotiations on readmission agreements do not cover third country nationals as a rule, and in accordance with the European Commission’s evaluation of EU Readmission Agreements; Stop linking readmission to other areas of cooperation with third countries; Make all agreements on migration control, including readmission agreements, public and transparent.

Subsequently, **Lea von Martius, MADE consultant**, gave a snapshot of the state of implementation of the Valletta Action Plan and the EU Trust Fund for Africa and of the mechanisms through which the VAP is implemented, namely the Rabat and Khartoum processes. Ms von Martius proceeded to present a breakdown of the projects implemented thus far under the Valletta Action Plan,²⁰ as well as the programmes and regional priorities of projects financed through the EUTF and the external investment plan. As main criticism of the JVAP, she mentioned the sole inclusion of countries along the migratory route towards Europe, the priority given to short-term over long-term objectives, exemplified by the “emergency” nature of the EUTF, as well as the challenge of measuring the success of the implementation of the JVAP, which is owed to the complexity and breadth of the areas covered by the JVAP.

Clea Kahn, who had evaluated the civil society survey, gave the next presentation, outlining its structure, scope and main results: 53 entities had responded to the call, of which 30 were organisations headquartered in African countries, 14 INGOs, five diaspora groups, and four universities. Points of criticism included the lack of official consultations with CSOs, both prior to and after the Valletta Summit, and in particular on the EUTF, compacts and partnership framework. The main recommendations derived from the survey included (1) prioritise the well-being of migrants, potential migrants and communities, (2) prioritise protection, in particular for the most vulnerable, (3) efforts to reduce irregular migration must not interfere with the right to asylum, (4) address with diplomatic measures the humanitarian causes of forced displacements, (5) create a structured approach to CS engagement, (6) establish a two-way dialogue with civil society, (7) involve CSOs in monitoring and evaluation, and (8) make funding available to CSOs.

Tabitha Kentaro, Policy and Advocacy Officer at the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, highlighted the general situation and decisive factors shaping migration on the African continent, noting that 87 percent of migratory movements – most of which are mixed migration movements – stay in a South-South context, i.e. between African countries. She emphasised that the EU and Africa should work towards ensuring more channels for regular migration and adopt a solution oriented approach. Social stresses such as youth unemployment can lead to unrest and Mrs Kentaro therefore called for the creation of more meaningful employment in Africa and the inclusion of African youth in political dialogues. With regards to the implementation of the JVAP, Ms. Kentaro noted that the monitoring role of the Khartoum and Rabat processes, their own internal divisions and geographic priorities had significant implications for EU-Africa and civil society cooperation. Instead, a single body covering all countries included under the JVAP should be tasked with monitoring. Concluding her remarks, Ms Kentaro urged African and European civil society participants to speak with one voice at the SOM.

Samir Abi, Permanent Secretary of the West African Migration Observatory, Togo, addressed the lack of representation of African civil society in processes such as those mandated with the implementation and monitoring of the JVAP. This, he noted, is exacerbated by the side-lining of the African Union in negotiations leading up to the Valletta Summit in November 2015. Moreover, Mr. Abi

²⁰ As of Dec 2016, almost 2/3 of the projects were in the domain 1 (addressing root causes of migration and forced displacements), then come domain 3 (protection and asylum, most of these projects in Horn of Africa), domain 4 (Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings), domain 5 (return, readmission) and only some projects for domain 2 (legal migration and mobility). S. above for further details; ICMPD, Draft Analysis of Mapping of the Implementation of the Joint Valletta Action Plan, December 2016

claimed that the basic hypothesis of the JVAP – i.e. that more development via increased development aid will ultimately deter migration from Africa to Europe – is a false one. To the contrary, development encourages mobility, he asserted. Mr. Abi criticised the processes surrounding the Valletta Summit and the JVAP as being overly politicised and called on African states to develop their own, needs-based, inclusive and forward looking migration policy agendas.

Jan Pronk, Professor at the International Centre of Social Science Education and Research in The Hague, analysed the current EU response to migratory pressures at its borders as being myopic, driven by short-term interests and lacking an evidence base. He claimed that the EU's external migration policies were aimed more at addressing European concerns than supporting genuine development in African countries. Processes linked to the implementation of the JVAP were inadequate to effectively address the structural root causes and resulting dynamics propelling people to migrate, namely corruption, war, oppression, unemployment and the consequences of climate change. He added that global and regional economic, demographic and political dynamics meant that migration will only increase. He called on European States to respect the dignity and human rights of every person on the move. Finally, Mr. Pronk questioned whether civil society should continue to work together with EU Member States and the European Commission in the implementation of the Valetta Action Plan or develop its own alternative fora.

B. Report from the Break Out Sessions

Introduction

Three parallel thematic breakout sessions took place in the morning. The topics were chosen based on the outcomes of the above mentioned [survey](#):

- **Session 1:** Civil society engagement in the Valletta Action Plan and related processes: how to work towards a structured approach
- **Session 2:** Strengthening community resilience: developing partnerships with host and receiving communities
- **Session 3:** Balancing priority domains in the Valletta Action Plan: addressing intra-regional mobility, diaspora engagement and legal pathways of migration

Supported by a background document and a set of guiding questions for each breakout session, participants refined the outcomes of the survey, issuing concrete recommendations to both the afternoon panellists and attendees of the SOM on how to achieve a structured, inclusive and permanent engagement with civil society in the implementation and monitoring of the JVAP and related instruments.

Session 1: Civil society engagement in the Valletta Action Plan and related processes: how to work towards a structured approach

Emeka Obiezu from the Augustinians International in Nigeria acted as chair, and Lea von Martius as rapporteur. Interventions were given by Kiya Lemessa from the Eshet Children and Youth Development Organization in Ethiopia and Samir Abi from the Togo-based West African Migration

Observatory. The focus of this session was to discuss and refine the key recommendations of the survey responses.

The JVAP only includes a few references to civil society, albeit across all of its five domains. Under its first domain,²¹ the JVAP references the importance of including CSOs in enhancing youth participation in the public sphere. Also under its domain 1, and with respect to addressing instability and crises, notably in the regions of the Sahel, Lake Chad and the Horn of Africa, the plan calls to support of civil society organisations to foster community cohesion and address human rights violations that contribute to instability. Civil society's role is further recognised in the area of developing national and regional strategies for comprehensive strategies for migration and mobility, as acting as an advocate to promote the rights of migrants (domain 2). Civil society is referenced in providing protection, support and/or assistance to vulnerable migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking, including in the framework of returns (Domains 3, 4 and 5). With respect to monitoring of the Valletta Action Plan, there is no structured or institutionalised approach that would allow for a consistent participation of civil society in the processes related to the Valletta Action Plan.

However, African and European civil society organisations have a wealth of expertise and decades of field-based experiences in developing approaches and programmes to address crises in Africa: providing humanitarian assistance, supporting resilience and recovery, livelihood opportunities and development. Local and national CSOs offer protection and support to refugees and people on the move, providing social and economic inclusion and infusing policy processes with contextualised knowledge of local, national and sub-regional contexts.

The **guiding questions** the participants of this breakout session sought to answer, therefore included:

1. How can civil society engage more consistently in the Valletta process? Are CSOs meant to be service providers or partners in dialogue? What avenues for participation exist in the processes related to the implementation and monitoring of the Valletta Action Plan? What role can EU and AU delegations play?
2. How can the concerns of local communities be better recognized and incorporated at the higher policy levels? How should civil society organize themselves in this respect?
3. Would there be a need to further strengthen the capacity of civil society and if so: through what mechanisms. How can civil society play a role in the monitoring and evaluation of implementation?

Interventions

The first presentation was given by **Samir Abi** from the West African Migration Observatory, based in Togo, a network omnipresent in small communities. It connects its members, generating interest and dialogue on migration in West Africa among them. This model is key to creating a strong, intra-regional civil society and one of the Observatory's key demands is to open up spaces for dialogue with civil society. The often insincere and pro forma nature of engagement by government officials in West African countries and lack of support to civil society, prompts Mr. Abi to remain sceptical vis-à-vis the

²¹ Development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, JVAP;

success of past initiatives. He favours a strategic organization of civil society across West Africa, creating their own permanent space, so that they can come up with common advocacy products.

Mr. Abi considers the Valletta process to lack legitimacy and criticized that such high level processes did not openly share information. Given the opaqueness and non-participatory nature of these platforms and processes, all of them implemented on the initiative of the EU, which itself has very high standards to adhere to, he wonders, why these principles are not implemented in cross-continental dialogues.

The second intervention was given by ***Kiya Tsegaye Lemessa*** of the Eshet Children and Youth Development Organization based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Kiya gave a brief overview of the situation in the Horn of Africa and outlined the main challenges, which include forced displacement, smuggling, trafficking and violent conflict, as well as climate change, which leads to a shortage of land and depletion of basis of livelihood. This leads to a lack of economic opportunities, lack of perspectives for young people, which forced them out of country through smugglers.

A key concern of this organisation is the role that can be played by civil society in order to remedy some of the negative consequences the conditions in the Horn of Africa have on communities. Programs were being developed to support the resilience of communities, enhance the collaboration with international organisations to provide trainings of youth, and to work on reintegration of returnees. Kiya therefore advocated for an institutionalized role of civil society in taking part in consultative meetings with government institutions working on migration. He strengthened his case for a solid partnership with civil society by pointing to governments' ineffectiveness and inability to properly represent the will of their people, primarily since they lack grassroots knowledge and do not engage properly with communities. A key obstacle to a more structured engagement of civil society remained, however: countries in the Horn of Africa, he argued, considered civil society organizations mainly as a threat, which further debilitates the position of civil society. Actors therefore needed to figure out a way on how to change this relationship.

In the ensuing discussion among participants, which was moderated by the chair Mr. Obiezu, some called for the blocking of the Valletta process because of its deficit of democratic representation and in order to avoid validation of harmful practices. Others argued that structured engagement can only be achieved, if civil society educated itself on policy, political structures and processes to engage civil society. The upcoming SOM would offer precisely one such opportunity. Instead of blocking the process, civil society should find or develop dynamics outside of the official structures, in addition to targeted advocacy efforts, which would allow for more consistent CS engagement. In particular European NGOs argued that strategic advocacy efforts towards EU Member States, as the main wirepuller of the EU policy towards Africa, should focus on conveying red lines, while making sure that civil society organizations are engaged in a trans-continental and multi-level (national, regional) manner.

During the discussions following key points emerged:

- **Quality of Engagement:** participants agreed that it was not about participation for the sake of it, but rather seeking a strategic, quality engagement, where an active role is afforded to civil society. A potential mechanism for consultation should work in a bottom up approach, with the aim of establishing CSOs not merely as service providers, but as dialogue partners.
- **Capacity building:** civil society needs to constructively and strategically build its own capacity to add weight to and strengthen their impact, create follow-up mechanisms and strong networks. The aim must be to reach a two dimensional dialogue: between CSOs themselves, and dialogue between CSOs as a block with governments.
- **Innovative advocacy strategies:** civil society should not only focus on funding instruments and existing strategies, but rather focus efforts on policies. The engagement sought by CSOs must be strategic both in a South-South and a North-South context.

Recommendations

As required by the structure of the breakout session, participants of this session suggested a few key priority messages and concrete recommendations to be taken to the participants of the afternoon sessions.

1. While participation of civil society is a key demand, it should not happen for the sake of it; rather, the quality, depth and sustainability of participation need to be cardinal concerns;
2. CS needs longer term capacity building and support to better organize itself and engage in a more structured manner with governments and regional processes: it must be in the interest particularly of EU governments to strengthen CS's ability to do so
3. Increased attention needs to be paid to the grassroots migration experiences in local communities and efforts made to bring these experiences and lessons learned to the higher policy level

Session 2. Strengthening community resilience: developing partnerships with host and receiving communities and the role of civil society in dealing with returns.

This session, was chaired by Edouard Rodier from the NRC in Brussels and saw interventions by Anne Dussart from Caritas International and Mamadou Goita from the Mali-based Institut de Recherche et de Promotion des Alternatives en Développement. Gustavo Domato from the EU Red Cross Office acted as rapporteur.

Background

Returns, readmission and reintegration is a critical component of the European Union's approach to migration and mobility, and constitutes the fifth domain of the Valletta Action Plan. It is also a key component of the EU Partnership Framework, and an increased rate of returns is highlighted as one

of the primary objectives of the compacts established under that Framework.²² Furthermore, concern over forced returns and readmission of nationals and non-nationals to certain African countries came out as one of the central issues in the survey.

Therefore, the recognition that receiving communities are disproportionately affected by the impact of migratory movements and their potential effect on local communities' social cohesion is pivotal. In particular, communities receiving returned migrants are confronted with the challenge of socially and economically reintegrating the returnees into their societies, while safeguarding social cohesion and preventing potential conflicts.

While the JVAP, under its domain 1, highlights the need to support host communities' resilience, this is mainly linked to economic development in those areas affected by forced displacement and instability. In its fifth domain, however, focused on returns and readmission, emphasis is placed on strong inter-state cooperation in returning migrants to their countries of origin. The role of civil society in reintegration is referenced only marginally. This appears to be in contradiction to Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement²³, which emphasises the need to respect returnees' dignity and human rights without discrimination. In order for reintegration to be successful and sustainable, in respect of human rights and the dignity of those returned, a web of support between governments, local governments, national and local CSOs, resilient and robust institutions, and targeted support to returnees, are fundamental. Special support is need for particularly vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors and survivors of trafficking.

However, CSOs have reported that returnees often find themselves in harsh conditions, abandoned at the airport, without structured assistance being provided. CSOs are often side-lined, and no investment is made into establishing a well-working partnership and coordination frameworks between governments and CSOs.

Therefore, the following **guiding questions** were formulated to guide discussions in this session:

1. Which challenges do communities and different groups of return migrants face? What are the critical components of effective community programming for return and reintegration and which partnerships should be supported and pursued?
2. What do Senior Officials of the Valletta Action Plan need to consider in order to ensure that the process of return fulfils obligations in terms of protection and human rights, and leads to sustainable reintegration? Which parameters are relevant and what does monitoring and evaluation look like in this area?
3. How can lessons learned from return and reintegration be extrapolated to other areas of work with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees?

²² European Commission, press release, June 2016: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2072_en.htm

²³ Partnership Agreement 2000/483/EC between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part, and the EU, of the other part; available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3Ar12101>

Interventions

Anne Dussart, Head of the Asylum and Migration Working Group at Caritas, contributed the expertise of the European Reintegration Support Organisations (ERSO) network, which gathers non-governmental return counselling and reintegration support organisations working and closely cooperating in the field of migration and development. She noted a strong shift in narrative, policy and legislation increasingly labelling a larger number of migrants as “irregular”. Mrs. Dussart highlighted the relevance of the procedures set forth by the EU Return Directive as the guiding legal document,²⁴ explaining that the EU Return Directive²⁵ promoted voluntary return by stipulating that migrants should first get a chance to return ‘voluntarily’ before Member States have the possibility to resort to confinement of migrants awaiting removal from the territory. The Directive thus implicitly admits that the opposite, i.e. non-voluntary return, also takes place under certain circumstances, which implies that return is mostly a negative rather than a positive decision.

For returnees, the return action is often perceived as another kind of migration. It is therefore important that support is available to invest in the process, including financial and social support. The situation in Europe and that of the countries of return differed greatly, Mrs. Dussart said, and policies and practices therefore needed to be aligned to the particular circumstances i.e. if the potential return takes place to a country in conflict or not, if the individual in question has stayed in Europe for a long or a short period, etc. Mrs. Dussart thus argued for a case-by-case decision making, which recognised that the individual circumstances of each situation necessitates a tailored approach.

Panellist, **Mamadou Goita**, from the Mali-based Institut de Recherche et de Promotion des Alternatives en Développement, also calls for returns to be analysed from the standpoint of the potential returnee. Based on his experience with returnees in his home community in Mali, he observes that returnees – whether voluntary or forced – are perceived as a failure by the receiving community. Therefore, for the person in question, the return is often more of a social than an economic challenge. He suggests that the negative effect on the individual could be mitigated by creating stronger links between returnees and the diaspora, which would ease the socio-economic integration of those returned. Mr. Goita points to the economic situation of local communities which produce large amounts of migrants, like the former mining regions in Mali. The local economy in these communities had been destabilized by the activities of multi-national corporations which are destroying the local entrepreneurs. When talking about the issue of root causes, returns cannot be dissociated from the socio-economic situation of the receiving communities and those of origin.

In the ensuing discussions, there was general agreement that there must be more recognition that return is both an economic and a social issue. The person’s larger community, family and social status are crucially affected by the artificial return of a failed asylum seekers or former migrants. Current EU policies on return do not take into account these highly complex social aspects. Current policy and practice appear to favour a pragmatic approach, focusing on expedited returns through bilateral agreements with third countries, arranging laissez-passer travel documents and charter flights for returnees, etc. Often, the only involvement of civil society requested is to increase the numbers of

²⁴ Council of the European Union, *Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals*, 16 December 2008, OJ L 348/98-348/107; 16.12.2008, 2008/115/EC, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/496c641098.html>; hereinafter: “Return Directive”

²⁵ Ibid.

returnees and to make the process “smoother” for those officials involved instead of investing in making the return process a sustainable one. Naturally, Mrs Dussart asserted, this puts CSOs in a dilemma.

Recommendations

The group brings the following three key messages to the participants of the afternoon sessions.

- For a returnee, coming back to his community of origin is not just an economic challenge. The challenge is also humanitarian, social and political. The migrant needs to be supported and accompanied. S/he will need to be able to reconnect to the various realities of the country of origin. States lack the specific local knowledge to recreate that link. Working with local civil society and diaspora organisations in this regard is indispensable.
- A strong gap between the public discourse on returns and the reality persists. Resources used to arrest and send back migrants may be better used to integrate them into their host countries.
- Accepting a return does not necessarily mean that the return is voluntary. Indeed, many returnees consider the return to be just another form of migration: the returnee is forced to re-settle again. To reduce the trauma of return, providing good information is paramount. To work on this and link the situation of the migrant between host country and country of origin, CSO from Europe and from Africa need to work more closely together. In that process, the involvement of local communities is essential.

3: Balancing priority domains in the Valletta Action Plan: addressing intra-regional mobility, diaspora engagement and legal pathways of migration

This session was chaired by Onyekachi Wambu of the UK-based organisation AFFORD and saw interventions by Khady Sakho Niang of Paris-based FORIM, Philippe Nanga of Un Monde Avenir in Cameroon, as well as Michele LeVoy of Brussels-based organisation PICUM. Adeline Mazier of FORIM acted as rapporteur.

Background

The causal link between migration, development and mobility has received increasing attention and recognition over the past few decades. As such, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development,²⁶ the SDGs (and in particular goal 10.7 to facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people)²⁷ and the forthcoming Global Compact on Migration. Domain 1 of the Valletta Action Plan emphasises the role of diaspora as an important driver of economic development and stresses the need to strengthen the development benefits of migration. Furthermore, Domain 2 – legal migration and mobility – promotes an increase in regular migration channels.

²⁶ Para. 29, UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world : the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57b6e3e44.html>

²⁷ Indicators and a Monitoring Framework: Launching a data revolution for the Sustainable Development Goals: <http://indicators.report/targets/10-7/>

The EU Trust Fund objectives (1) creating greater economic and employment opportunities through promoting the progressive establishment of a free movement regime within the region; (2) strengthening resilience of communities and in particular the most vulnerable – in this specific case, pastoralists; and (3) improving improved migration management, by laying the ground for a better system of legal migration are aligned with these objectives. However, the priority actions in these domains remain relatively vague as compared to other domains, such as cooperation in smuggling, trafficking and preventing irregular migration. Furthermore, emphasis is put on enabling mobility mainly for highly skilled migrants, such as students, researchers and entrepreneurs. Its commitments therefore provide opportunities to relatively small numbers of people, and there is little assessment available of the impact of policy changes in providing opportunity for Africans.

Similar tensions are visible in the way that the JVAP and other processes address the role of diaspora. It is by now undisputed that the diaspora play an important role as a development actor through sending remittances, investing in small and medium-sized enterprises and contributing to donor trust funds. The influence of Mali as chair of the Rabat process in this context plays certainly an important role. Furthermore, the nexus between migration, mobility and diaspora engagement need not only be seen in the context of North-South, but importantly in the context of South-South migration. While the importance of remittances finds mentioning in the priority actions of the JVAP, this is mainly in a North-South context. Yet, contributions by diaspora in a South-South context are becoming increasingly more important. It is yet to be seen, to what extent EU policies aimed at migration management undermine an at times dysfunctional pan- African approach to migration, and are at times contrary to African efforts to guarantee and promote intra-regional mobility as an important driver of economic activity.

The important role of diaspora is too often only recognised in economic terms, leaving aside the communities' valuable experience in the understanding of forced migration, and possible role as a bridge builder between continents, and in supporting migrants and potential migrants in countries of origin, transit and destination.

Therefore, the **guiding questions** the group sought to answer were:

1. Does the approach taken in the Valletta Action Plan to mobility, support the tackling of the root causes of migration, especially in the context of youth employment? What role can civil society have in promoting the gains of intra-regional mobility?
2. How can diaspora groups better support safe migration, reducing risks to people seeking a better life? Is there a role to play for diaspora communities, and if so, what would a genuine partnership between host and countries of origin look like?
3. How can the Rabat and Khartoum processes support the goal of greater mobility, both intra-regional and north-south, as an important driver of economic growth/activity? Which complementarity between existing and new programmers can be sought?

Interventions

The first panellist, **Khady Sakho Niang** of the diaspora organisation FORIM, opened her intervention by identifying a lack of movement and forward-looking policy initiatives, despite the decade-long conversation surrounding the link between migration and development – as evidenced by the existence of the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD), for instance. The EU's migratory policies, it was argued, moved back and forth without finding a proper direction, in a context of non-binding agreements. She strongly criticized the governments of the countries south of the Mediterranean, for so easily agreeing on mobility partnerships and other initiatives with the EU in exchange for financial support.

Given FORIM's more than 15 years of experience in the area of diaspora engagement and global network, Mrs. Sakho spoke of the considerable contributions made by diaspora communities to their host countries, as well as their countries of origin, that go beyond remittances. Beyond financial transfers, these benefits included governance, skills, know-how and implementing development projects. These contributions, are often not taken into account in development practice nor the strategic dialogue. The EU's focus on making migration 'illegal' threatens these vibrant communities and contributions, and reflected the general disinclination of European governments to engage diaspora actors and acknowledge their initiatives beyond merely paying lip-service to more engagement of diaspora organisations. As an example she highlighted France, where, despite collaboration with civil society and trade unions on migrants' opportunities, no coherent or committed position of government towards France's diaspora communities exists. Acknowledging these shortcomings, Mrs. Sakho called on civil society and diaspora in particular to strengthen mutual collaboration to balance shifting power relationships, such as for example addressing the reduced influence of the African Union in migration policies and frameworks.



Reporting back from the Breakout Sessions

Philippe Nanga of the Cameroon-based organisation Un Monde Avenir, revisited the positive results of the survey on the implementation of the JVAP, concluding that stakeholders demanded domestic solutions and a re-focusing of efforts on the local context. International commitments, he argued, demanded from states to involve people in their communities, and globalisation had provided an open space for mobility in Africa to increase links between people in the areas of work, study, travel, family, health, research, etc. This open space created by globalization, he identified, faces a major challenge since security-oriented principles of state sovereignty stand vis-à-vis international commitments by states to protect people on the move. Against this backdrop, he highlighted the need for safeguarding the right of intra-regional movement of peoples and goods.

In addition, there is a specific challenge for Africa: the low popular participation in policies (no stable environment, no good governance). He said that African countries could only move forward and get

ahead, if they allowed for more South-South migration, as well as reduce obstacles for economic growth within their own countries. Entrepreneurs and those with visas, Mr. Nanga argued, should be allowed to enter countries on a regional level without obstacles. Lack of good governance and corruption at national level further impede economic growth and hamper innovation and creative entrepreneurship.

The fast demographic growth the African continent (640 million in the late 90s to currently around 1.2 billion people), represents an enormous economic opportunity, but must be accompanied by sustainable politics, such as the promotion of intra-African mobility. African countries now must move forward to make migration safe and secure and protect the right to move. The current political climate gives African countries sufficient arguments for encouraging intra-regional mobility. The African Union, which has initiated a process to advance visa free travel among its Member States, should use all of its weight to forge common positions among its Member States as well as influence the international community.

As the last of the panellists, **Michèle Levoy**, director of PICUM, addressed the issue of labour migration and training possibilities of migrants. Current EU labour migration policies, she argued, are largely disconnected from the reality of people on the move and their training needs. Different economic sectors in Europe depended crucially on low and medium-skilled migrant workers. Contrary to this reality, there is only one labour migration tool in the EU context that applies to lower skilled migration and it only looks at seasonal work. This discrepancy between policies and realities on the ground have real and severe consequences: nearly 40 percent of people who apply for asylum don't get a status. Many of those failed asylum seekers go on to pursue undocumented work and become irregular.

Mrs. Levoy stressed the issue of access to rights and services for asylum seekers, which is closely linked to questions of regularisation of irregular migrants. The REGINE research project on regularisation practices in Europe²⁸, carried out by ICMPD, shows that regularisation both as a subject of policy and practice in a number of EU Member States is not a taboo although approaches to regularisation vary vastly. Regularisation should therefore be discussed more broadly. Closing her remarks, Mrs. Levoy noted that the JVAP provided some pathways to find solutions to the set of problems she had outlined. Regular channels for workers at all levels of training, and not only the most highly-skilled, must be opened up in line with paragraph 57 of New York Declaration, which asks for mobility for workers of all skills levels, and adherence to ILO standards. A good practice can be found in the Swedish Migration Scheme where work permits can be obtained for all levels of training. She furthermore called for the strengthening of the working rights of undocumented migrants. Finally, Mrs Levoy highlighted the importance of more rigorous research on the issue of regularisation, similar to the longitudinal research under the REGINE research project.

In the ensuing discussion, participants agreed that African countries should and could make more efforts to structure and strengthen themselves in order to be able to properly weigh in on the dialogue on migration policies. In particular, the need to address EU policies interfering with political efforts at migration governance on the African continent, was stressed. The focus on good governance was seen as a key issue, as well as a collective, non-isolationist and inclusive attempt at migration governance

²⁸ http://research.icmpd.org/fileadmin/Research-Website/Project_material/REGINE/Regine_report_january_2009_en.pdf

on a regional level, involving politicians and civil society, which would allow Africa to formulate its own political priorities and strategic objectives in the area of migration.

Furthermore, different best practices regarding the treatment of undocumented migrants, such as a model in Sweden, where undocumented migrants have the same healthcare options as asylum seekers – and better than EU citizens, were highlighted. Finally, participants agreed that both mobility and activities to engage diaspora communities should not solely be seen under aspects of development aid as a tool to deter migration. More development does not deter migration. Migratory policies should therefore factor migration and mobility as a continuous and transcontinental process and govern it as such.

Recommendations

The group agreed to issue the following recommendations both to the panellists of the afternoon sessions:

1. The recognitions that migration is a global rather than a regional or even national issue;
2. Governments should increase their commitments towards diaspora communities, taking into account that engaging diaspora communities means recognizing and supporting their initiatives as part of a global civil society.
3. States in the South should act in solidarity and overcome their political division. Greater efforts should therefore be made to find a Common African Position on migration, which reflects the voice and viewpoints of African Civil Society.

Part II - Afternoon Sessions - Policy Debate: Taking Stock of Valletta and the way forward – towards a structured Dialogue with Civil Society

In the afternoon's policy debate «Taking Stock of Valletta and the way forward – towards a structured Dialogue with Civil Society», chaired by **Gibril Faal of the Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform (ADEPT)**, the panel included representatives of the African Union, the European Commission and EU Member States, whose presentations to specific policy questions were subsequently commented on by representatives of civil society.

Overall, the following key issues were to be addressed by panellists during the debate:

- Effectiveness of the Valletta Priority Actions and implementation methods
- Tools of monitoring and evaluation
- Context of recent developments in EU-Africa relations
- Future of civil society engagement in the processes related to the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan

A. Report from the Morning Sessions and Introduction to Policy Debate

Gibril Faal introduced the first part of the policy debate, entitled “Taking Stock of Valletta – where do we stand one year on and what are current developments?”, by reporting back from the morning

sessions and presenting the recommendations and comments issued by participants of the three breakout sessions.

In order to set the scene for the ensuing discussions, Mr. Faal gave a detailed overview of the beneficiaries of EUTF funds allocated to projects under the JVAP. He noted that under Sahel and Lake Chad window, **328 million Euro** had thus far been allocated under the EUTF to 39 projects, and spent in three different ways: **(1) budget support, (2) services, and (3) grants and delegation agreements**. He proceeded to detail the different kind of agreements used for the implementation of the projects, highlighting in particular that 78 percent of funds had been designated to delegation agreements, meaning that funds are distributed to EU Member State governments and international organizations (among those are ITC, ILO, IOM, the Red Cross, AFD, GIZ and LuxDef). He thereby confirmed what had been raised during the morning sessions: the vast majority of beneficiaries are European development agencies, EU Member States and international organisations.

The second speaker was **Ralph Genetzke, the Head of Mission of ICMPD's Brussels Mission**. He briefly outlined the role his organisations has had in supporting the Rabat and Khartoum processes. He noted that since the inception of the Dialogue in 2006, there had been a considerable change in focus and scope of topics, e.g. that asylum was not an issue high on the agenda back then, nor were root causes of migration. The significant increase in resources brought about by the EUTF has meant greater manoeuvring abilities for the states involved. He acknowledged that the rotating presidencies of the Khartoum and Rabat processes had led to a certain degree of politicisation of the process since the Valletta Summit. In an attempt at stocktaking, Mr. Genetzke remained critical of assessing the quality of implementation of the JVAP solely in monetary terms, arguing that some initiatives, such as improvement of the rule of law of legislative change were difficult to assess in terms of input.

B. Panel Debate I: Taking Stock of Valletta – where do we stand one year on and what are current developments?

The first panellist, **Ian Galea, Senior Policy Officer in the Justice and Home Affairs Unit, Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU**, spoke on the Maltese Presidency's policy focus for the following six months (maritime policy, the Mediterranean, and migration) in the light of broader European migration policy. Mr. Galea called the Valletta Summit a game changer in the EU's approach to the external dimension of its migration policies, in that it allowed participating states to deepen on specific topics by bringing together countries that experience migration in a very different way – countries of origin, transit and destination. He recounted the challenging political circumstances under which the JVAP was conceived, and noted a number of successes (170 actions implemented, all 16 areas covered), while acknowledging that not all domains had been given the same attention. Mr. Galea proceeded to briefly outline the migration-related policy priorities for the Maltese government in the six months of its presidency, namely in the areas of the External Investment Plan, the legal migration framework (revision of the Blue Card Directive), asylum (upcoming negotiations in February on the Asylum Agency Regulation), Eurodac, and border protection (establishment of a comprehensive Entry Exit System by end of June).

The chair, Mr. Faal, critically mentioned the lack of policy coherence among the EU's migration policies, before introducing the next panellist, **Cheikh Oumar Coulibaly, second Counsellor at the Embassy of Mali to the EU.** Mr. Coulibaly called the current climate an important moment of political and diplomatic dialogue, pointing out that Valletta was a political challenge for stakeholders involved in migration management. While he acknowledged the difficulty to report concrete deliverables only one year after the inception of the JVAP, he also mentioned that the programmes financed thus far under the JVAP and the EUTF gave evidence to the clear priority of the partners concerned to fight the so-called root causes of migration, with the majority of actions implemented under *Domain 1* of the JVAP. With regards to the structure of the EUTF, Mr. Coulibaly stressed the importance of collective responsibility sharing between the North and the South and called for greater "funds and ambitions". With regards to the structure of the EUTF, he pointed out the need for greater national ownership, and policy coherence, calling for a larger space to be given to recipient states and their local communities. The place of civil society in fora such as Valletta was very important, he emphasised, especially that of diaspora organisations and must be addressed during the SOM in February.

The next panellist, **Robert Rybicki, Policy Officer for International Cooperation at DG Home,** spoke on the five domains of the JVAP, reflecting on a balanced approach versus a special focus in their implementation. He mentioned that there are limitations and shortcomings in the implementation of the JVAP. All needs cannot be addressed in a small period of time and quick fixes don't last for very long. Mr. Rybicki said that migration as an object of policy had been an issue high on the EU's policy agenda for many years, which lead him to highlight a "cruel fact": the EU is unable to accept all those that want to come to Europe. The need for selecting the five priority areas of the VAP were not irrational and everyone agreed to those terms. Still, he noted that not all parties concerned had the same understanding with regards to five domains nor of the importance to be given to each of those domains.

As the first of the three civil society respondents, **Mr. Seck** criticised the stocktaking thus far as being flawed from the outset, identifying two central shortcomings of the process thus far: (1) a transparent and two-way communication strategy, and (2) a comprehensive, transparent and long-term monitoring tool that takes into account the priorities of all counterparts. Migration governance has been reduced to a political, not a human, question, he warned.

Mr. Emeka Obiezu, from the Augustinians International in Nigeria, noted that not much had changed since the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan, given that a large number of people were fleeing conflict and insecurity, which were root causes not adequately addressed by the focus areas of the VAP. He reported that among the main criticisms voiced during the morning's civil society sessions were (1) the gap between rhetoric and action, (2) the non-discussion of the externalization of border controls, (3) the imbalanced nature of funding arrangements and (4) the lack of a true partnership in how issues are being responded to. He encouraged participants to collectively revisit ideas for development; openness, trust, mutual learning, coming together, and emphasised that any future process must rely on the quality of partnership.

The next civil society respondent, **Edouard Rodier, head of the NRC Europe,** noted the peculiar direction the discussions surrounding the Valletta processes had taken during the day, i.e. from a positive assessment during the opening session to a more critical and urgent standpoint later in the

day. Mr. Rodier insisted that a more rigorous sharing of experiences from the ground could be a step towards making the JVAP more successful. Mr. Rodier went on to criticise the overall process as being too EU-centred and questioned the overall ambition of the EU to engage in activities under the JVAP. As a final point, Mr. Rodier highlighted that while it is important to create spaces for dialogue at the upcoming SOM and related processes, the spaces created beforehand, afterwards and throughout the processes are far more important: these spaces must crucially evolve around questions on how to engage diaspora, how to ensure that aid is focused on the most vulnerable, etc.

In the ensuing Q&A session, participants criticised the elusive communication around the selection and implementation of programmes under the JVAP, the unclear determination of parameters according to which monitoring and evaluation would be conducted, and the complicated web of policies surrounding EU-Africa relations in general. Furthermore, the over-



Panel I of the Afternoon Sessions

proportionate focus on tackling root causes as a purely economic rather than a political and structural problem was alluded to, as well as the focus on quantitative indicators rather than qualitative successes in the assessment of the EUTF. Both of these foci, it was argued, represent a significant deviation from EU humanitarian policy principles. Instead, current policies appear to be mainly focused on deterring migration from Africa to Europe.

A further concern of some of the participants was the increasing complexity of EU migration policy. In particular, the question of how the MPF fit within the objectives under the JVAP raised serious concerns. Other issues raised included; the question of ownership by local authorities and communities alike – keeping in mind that the possibility of participation for each of these differs significantly from one country to the other – and the lack of inclusion of- and coordination with the AU in pertinent discussions, especially when it comes to security concerns, which are central for the EU. Participants not only called on the EU, but also African states, to live up to their principles and priorities.

Mr. Coulibaly reiterated that implementation was not yet very advanced, which made evaluation difficult. Referring to the specific situation in Mali, Mr. Coulibaly warned that in future processes, migration should not be considered a merely political issue to address in diplomatic or intergovernmental dialogues, but importantly a multidimensional issue which required the involvement of a multitude of stakeholders and multiple levels of governance. He furthermore criticized that many of the numbers and statistics frequently cited were no longer up to date and emphasised the need for a more evidence based approach to policy making in the EU-Africa dialogue. **Mr. Rybicki**, as representative of DG Home,

agreed with Mr. Coulibaly on the need to create a comprehensive policy response, which encompasses the political and economic situation as well as social dynamics. He reiterated his previous point about the high number of migrants attempting to reach the EU, as well as the incessantly high number of casualties, and the need for the EU to find appropriate responses to reduce these. Finally, **Mr. Galea** defended the Valletta Action Plan and associated processes as an imperfect but necessary step towards finding a better way to effectively address migration between Africa and the EU, which was high on the agenda for both continents. He highlighted the EU's continuous efforts to find areas of cooperation between Africa and the EU, and identify specifically those to which the EU can add its expertise.

C. Panel II: Moving on from the Senior Officials Meeting - establishing a structured dialogue with civil society

The first panellist during this second panel, under the title "Moving on from the Senior Officials Meeting - establishing a structured dialogue with civil society ", was **Birgitte Markussen, Deputy Managing Director for Africa at the External Action Service (EEAS)**. She stressed the EEAS' emphatic commitment to engage with civil society actors, both in countries of origin and transit, on topics ranging from legal migration to border management, diplomatic issues etc. The need to engage with civil society is also mentioned in the EU's Global Strategy, which implies that the EU strives to mainstream engagement with civil society and issue of human rights in its external dimension.

She emphasised that the Valletta process had created a synergy for the Rabat and Khartoum processes, and created new hopes for an open discussion. The challenge of unabated numbers of people migrating required a balanced and comprehensive approach, an idea, which is reflected by the five pillar structure of the JVAP. Mrs. Markussen went on to identify a number of key issues with regards to the JVAP: (1) Ownership and avoid duplication of efforts, i.e. finding the right partners and the right set up in implementation; (2) Getting the right balance between regional and national approaches. In terms of priorities going forward, she stressed the EU's focus on youth and job creation, as well as the fight against trafficking networks. She concluded by assuring that going forward the JVAP will continue to address root causes, job creation, focus on youth, as well as the "fight" against networks of illegal trafficking.

The next panellist, **Till Blume, COAFR Delegate at the Permanent Representation of Germany to the EU**, opened by emphasising the complex nature of the migratory challenge for all countries involved, which necessitated a joint approach, rather than merely bilateral engagement. He reiterated the need for a regional approach, which unites several countries under a common framework and goal. He emphasised Germany's firm commitment to contribute to the stabilization of regional and national structures to ensure responses to the challenges of migration. He highlighted one project under the EUTF in particular, which spans 15 countries in North Africa and the Sahel, 'from Mauritania to Libya', and is financed by Italy, Germany, and the European Commission and consists of a targeted communications strategy to deter actual and potential migrants from making the perilous journey across the Mediterranean to European shores. Moreover, he stressed, German support to what he called 'key countries' along the migratory route, specifically Mali and Niger, to improve their migration governance, and provide support to those in transit, in particular livelihood support, education and employment. Finally, Mr. Blume assured Germany's support to multilateral processes and platforms

aimed at migration governance such as Valletta.

As representative of **DG DEVCO in the European Commission, Stefano Signore (Head of Unit Migration, Employment, Inequalities)** explained that Valletta was at its core about combining a platform for dialogue with concrete financing tools, i.e. the EUTF. He advised participants to focus in their evaluation of the JVAP on the EUTF and the number and scope of programmes implemented thereunder, since it was one of the key (and measurable) deliverables of the Summit in 2015. Still, quoting the political declaration, he said that all available means should be used in the implementation of the JVAP. Moving on to his assessment of the first year of the JVAP, Mr. Signore lauded the mobilization of fresh money for the EUTF. Mr. Signore distinguished the quick contracting (630 million Euros thus far) under the EUTF as compared to ordinary programmes as one of its advantages, which speeded up the implementation of the JVAP. With regards to the involvement of CSOs in the implementation, Mr. Signore mentioned examples from Northern Nigeria. He recognised however, that the implementing partners were mainly international NGOs, which he considered a shortcoming of the current state of implementation of the EUTF. He furthermore pointed out that continuous and high-quality exchange between the EC, MS and platforms representing local and regional NGOs was still missing.

As a final panellist, **Bob Jusu, Policy Officer at the African Union's delegation to Brussels**, opened his intervention by questioning the ultimate goal of the EU in the present partnership, alluding to the much voiced criticism that the EU's strategic engagement is aimed at stopping rather than governing migration, both between Africa and Europe and within Africa itself. Referring to the prominent issue of returns and readmission, Mr. Jusu warned that the promotion of such restrictive measures ran the risk of destroying the free movement regime that has been and is still being built up across Africa, naming the situation in Agadez as a particularly dire consequence of a disproportionate focus on returns. He went on to point out that the AU was not a party to either the discussions leading up to the Valletta Summit or a participant thereof. In addressing the financing tools foreseen for the implementation of the JVAP, Mr. Jusu criticized that while these instruments were called EUTF and Investment Plan for Africa, they did not contain any contributions from African countries or encourage and make possible investment from African stakeholders. Closing his remarks, Mr. Jusu advised those party to the Valletta process to give civil society an institutionalised and fixed role in the monitoring of the implementation of the JVAP.

In their responses to the panellists, the civil society respondents harshly criticized the lack of representation of African civil society in the JVAP. First up, **Mr. Abi** identified the location of the most high level and decisive dialogues – in European rather than African capitals - as symptomatic for their imbalanced nature. While lauding the Mr. Jusu's earlier words on the need for strong civil society engagement, he called out the inaction by the AU itself to actively engage CSO on the continent and establish a structured dialogue. He reiterated his earlier claim that civil society – both African and European - needed to be engaged from earlier on. **Ms Kentaro** emphasised the need for humanitarian considerations and the provision of safe passage, which should be the primary concern of any negotiation. Finally, **Mrs. Hueck** echoed her predecessors concerns and arguments by pointing to the need for more policy coherence and transparency in the Valletta process, which constituted a virtual blockage for meaningful and constructive civil society engagement. The upcoming SOM, she remarked, offered therefore an opportunity for the four CS representatives to seek ways to engage

on a more continuous basis. Importantly, Mrs Hueck called on civil society itself to improve its level of internal dialogue, and consider involving geographically removed stakeholders, such as diaspora groups and local CSOs delivering services to vulnerable migrants on the ground, with the aim of fostering a more structured engagement of CS.

In the ensuing Q&A session, participants echoed the points raised by the civil society respondents. In particular, the rhetoric as promulgated by panellists earlier on as to the need and possibility for the Valletta process to allow and encourage greater CSO participation was met with some scepticism. It was argued that the JVAP needed to be more responsive to react to realities on the ground, instead



Afternoon Sessions

promoting policies, which favour quick fixes. As such, one participant pointed to the lack of knowledge of African CSOs as to what the JVAP was about at its core, its priorities, aims and modus of implementation, and called for greater and more targeted information management. It was argued that the end result of the programmes implemented under Valletta, as well as other European migratory policies, such as the Laissez-passer, would inevitably lead to the violation of human rights of migrants, citing several examples from his home country Mali. Other participants suggested that in order to adequately seek greater involvement of CSOs in these processes, the dialogues forming the basis

of the agreements, notably the Rabat process, needed to be analysed in further detail. Finally, the role of borders and border management both in the JVAP as well as the MPF was brought to the fore. Rounding off the participants' remarks, the Chair asked, what the specific civil society contribution should look like at the SOM.

In her response, **Mrs. Markussen** emphasised the continued need for a two-way dialogue and conceded that some gaps in the discussions existed, possibly to be explained by insufficient engagement by certain departments of the European Commission. With reference to the criticism issued throughout the preceding discussions, she explained that the European Commission had been reaching out to the AU in order to fill the gaps and create linkages with and between the Khartoum and Rabat processes. Nevertheless, she insisted that the criticism that the panellists saw themselves confronted with contradicted the evidence from the positive reports on EU engagement with civil society she had been presented, thus emphasising that the through the Valletta process, the EU was conscious to save lives rather than contribute to an outdated narrative and restrictive policies. With a view to 'bridge the gaps' and insisting on the EU's outreach efforts, Mrs. Markussen called on every party's responsibility to act, and highlighted the EU's and especially the EEAS's efforts to call African leaders on their responsibility as politicians.

Mr. Blume emphasised the EU's and Germany's efforts at reaching out to various stakeholders, emphasising that the process and discussion needed to be had. The close engagement of civil society in Europe was cited as a very positive example. Mr. Blume mentioned the good cooperation that

existed with both European and African CSOs in policy areas other than migration, and suggested that after careful analysis of the dynamics at stake, these lessons and structures could potentially be transplanted to the area of migration. Responding to the earlier discussion around the balancing of and apparent priority given to certain domains within the JVAP, he reflected on the criticism voiced and the strong focus in the discussions on quantitative outcomes of the JVAP, remarking that a balance that was purely expressed in numbers was tricky and that only numbers or percentages did not necessarily paint a full picture. In response to the chair's introductory question, Mr. Blume emphasised that the continued dialogue with civil society after the SOM was of utter importance to Germany and that the platform of the Valletta process should be maintained.

Mobility was one of the key issues criticized by civil society as having been fundamentally disregarded by the process. In his final remarks, **Mr. Signore** took up this plight, saying that mobility was the key question in order to support and ultimately guarantee a stronger regional integration and economic development, naming Latin America as best practice example. However, he said that mobility was jeopardised by smugglers and traffickers. Mobility therefore needed to be well managed and he is willing to continue talks with civil society after the SOM.

Mr. Jusu responded directly to Mr. Abi's remarks by pointing out that the AU had indeed a good level of engagement with civil society, referring, among others, to the post-Valletta conference held by the AU in Nairobi in 2015, as well as a number of other documents and conferences organised on a regular basis to link with CSOs. Still, it was difficult to bring to the table African civil society and the AU's Member States due to their differing priorities in the area of migration. Picking up on the criticism voiced by some CS participants on the European travel documents, known as Laissez-passer, Mr. Jusu remarked that the related discussions almost capsized the whole Valletta agreement, since the AU refused to accept the Laissez-passer for African nationals to be forcefully returned to Africa. He linked this topic to questions surrounding mobility and trafficking/smuggling of migrants, stressing that those agreeing to mobility-restricting measures should ask themselves what contribution they are thus making to traffickers/smugglers' business. He furthermore acknowledged that previous policy dialogues on migration had been left on the sides in favour of a renewed focus on the Rabat and Khartoum processes in the context of the Valletta process.

The Chair, **Mr. Faal**, summarised the key discussions by stressing the need for Civil Society on both continents to be included in a structured manner and to be given a continuous and institutionalised role in the deciding on priorities, implementation and programming of the JVAP and related processes. He reminded participants and panellists that thus far, neither civil society on the African continent nor diaspora were involved in the process. Picking up on an earlier criticism voiced by CSOs participants of the difficulty for CSOs to access funding under the EUTF and related financing instruments, Mr. Faal suggested that creating a **Call for Proposals under the EUTF exclusively aimed at CSOs would offer the EC the possibility to provide proof of their commitments**. Mr. Faal referred to the present conference and the SOM in February as an **opportunity to correct past shortcomings** by implementing a **continued and comprehensive communication strategy** and bringing CSOs to the table. The test for the parties to the Valletta process, which repeatedly have stated their willingness to include more Civil Society in the processes and discussions around Valletta, would come eight to nine months from now, i.e. at the end of 2017 and two years after the Valletta Summit and with enough time after the SOM to implement recommendations.

D. Closing Remarks

Professor Jan Pronk gave the closing remarks of the conference. Reflecting on the breadth of the discussions held, issues raised and recommendations formulated during the day, he expressed his appreciation to the panellists, and civil society participants alike. The rare setting and combination of stakeholders at this meeting had provided a space for direct and sometimes confrontational, but at all times frank and open, debate. He hoped that these discussion would prove fruitful and instructive for the implementation of the JVAP going forward.

Responding to the criticism raised during the day, Mr. Pronk dissected the five priority domains of the JVAP. He purported that while the JVAP claimed in beautiful language that development was one of its key concerns, it seemed rather focused on using development to diminish migration to Europe. The often one-dimensional discussion about root causes, which are framed in purely economic terms, he said, therefore reached a hypocrite dimension.

Connecting the JVAP to the global level, Mr. Pronk foregrounded the global nature of migration and displacement, which, if not addressed and governed in a solidary manner, will only continue to grow. In a direct criticism of both the structure, political objectives and the content of the JVAP, Mr. Pronk referred to the UN Agenda 2030, claiming that the only way to comprehensively use development as an instrument in order to manage, then all 17 Sustainable Development Goals needed to be take into account. Concluding his remarks, Mr. Pronk emphatically called for the need to create a transparent, engaging and mutually beneficial dialogue between governments and civil society as partners. He urged civil society to continue engaging and participating in the Valletta process, and to address the quality of the political process.

E. Conclusion and Recommendations

With a view to providing concrete recommendations to those steering and implementing the JVAP and present at the SOM in Malta, the discussions at the meeting were guided by the findings of the survey, which showed a strong desire of and need for engaging civil society in a structured and institutionalised manner in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the JVAP. The underlying rationale is that a more participatory approach that enables African and European Civil Society to become trusted partners in the governance, implementation and monitoring of the JVAP and the EUTF is paramount to ensuring its sustainability and acceptance.

While respondents to the survey and participants at the CSC came from a broad range of countries and thematic foci, a number of concerns arose repeatedly from both the survey and the consultation. The strongest demand that came out during the day was the call for a greater role and more structured involvement of civil society and affected migrants and host communities in the governance, implementation and monitoring of the JVAP in order to ensure an effective, compassionate and rights-based response to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Civil society, as well as other actors, struggles to find a way of engaging or making their voices heard.


Moreover, the large number and complexity of processes between the EU and Africa, including Valletta, make it complex and confusing, resulting in a lack of transparency and constructive engagement.

The JVAP has resulted in African countries making commitments that undermine existing (Pan–African and regional) frameworks and agreements that foster economic development and intra-regional mobility. Bilateral agreement like the compacts that are being negotiated as part of the Migration Partnership Framework, which show a strong prioritisation of returns and re-admission agreements to stem migration, often undermine trust in the JVAP framework.

The following **key recommendations** based on the results of the survey and discussion among civil society participants at the Breakout Sessions and throughout the consultation, were compiled in a [short Civil Society Statement](#), which was presented by four civil society representatives at the [Senior Officials Meeting in Malta on 8 and 9 February 2017](#), as well as an in-depth [position paper](#) outlining civil society’s demands for a concrete, structured and permanent engagement with civil society by those entities steering the implementation of the JVAP and its related processes:




- Monitoring mechanisms and the review process must measure negative or unintended consequences as well as positive impacts of the Valletta Action Plan and other processes and platforms.
- Ensure civil society has an active and institutionalised role in both policy design and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the VAP and related processes.
- Make funding directly accessible to African and European civil society organisations, which are best able to judge and respond to needs on the ground, and remove any barriers that prevent local organisations from accessing funding.
- Address the lack of transparency in funding processes and eligibility criteria. The complexity and diversity of existing tools require significant additional efforts to bring clarity in the process and transparency in the allocation.
- Ensure that regional organisations, such as the AU, and international organisations with mandated protection roles, have a place in the dialogue, and are not merely included so that their presence provides a ‘rubber stamp’ to decisions already made.



**Save Lives and Protect
Human Dignity**

- Recognise that political problems require political solutions and take bold action to address and resolve conflict and persecution.
- Ensure robust protection mechanisms are in place. The most vulnerable must be protected, including people in transit and vulnerable irregular migrants stranded in Europe, unable to go forward or back.
- Protect the right to seek and enjoy asylum. The “fight against irregular migration” must not close borders to people at risk.
- Ensure an adequate share of resettlement places and other legal avenues are available to refugees in Africa
- Ensure that human rights and protection standards are in place before embarking on return and readmission agreements or operations.
- Treat humanitarian and development assistance as ends in themselves and do not instrumentalise them to prevent migration.
- Take a long-term approach to addressing the negative root causes of migration and forced displacement. The underlying dynamics are highly complex, and quick fixes either fail or are unsustainable



**Build Resilient People
and Communities**

- Ensure that measures taken to reduce irregular migration do not negatively impact mobility and economic integration in the Regional Economic Communities in Africa.
- Engage diaspora groups holistically, and not just as providers of resources through remittances and investment. Create opportunities for them to be active in mentoring and peacebuilding, and through sharing their experiences of forced migration.
- Facilitate avenues of legal migration in Europe for low and medium skilled workers from Africa to enhance opportunity and fill labour gaps.
- Actively strengthen and build the capacity of CSOs in Africa to ensure an effective partnership in the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan.
- Ensure that CSOs are central actors in the social and economic reintegration of returnees. Promote stronger interaction between European and African CSOs to better prepare and accompany long-term return and reintegration processes.
- Ensure the creation of sustainable, long-term employment and opportunities for youth, in line with the VAP’s declared priorities.

Civil society, like states, understands how important migration is to economies, politically, and in providing safety to people in need. This importance will only increase as people increasingly move in response to the long-term impacts of climate change and globalisation.

States and regional organisations have been discussing migration for many years, but the substantial increase in movement of refugees to Europe in 2015 galvanised their efforts. Many civil society organisations are concerned that despite the narrative about saving lives and addressing negative root causes of forced migration, the measures that have most recently been taken, including through the Valletta Action Plan, actually serve to increase vulnerability and violations of human rights, rather than the reverse.

It has been noted that civil society in particular in Africa lacks coherent organisation and great differences exist at national, (sub) regional as well as pan-African level. Moreover, common positioning and actions are divided along linguistic lines and there is little interaction between Franco- and Anglophone countries. African CSOs have raised their demand to see greater support to have civil society's capacity reinforced and to further increase the integration of both policy and grassroots CSOs into EU-Africa cooperation.

The role of civil society in shaping the agenda and ensuring strong implementation cannot be left to chance or granted on an ad hoc basis. Civil society actors are a critical resource due to their roles as implementers of humanitarian and development programming, as researchers and analysts, and as representatives of communities in their own right, including diaspora. Without their systematic involvement from the highest policy-making levels to the level of programme delivery, little can be achieved to address dangerous and irregular migration.