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Migration and mobility partnership signed between the EU and Morocco

Cooperation between Morocco and the EU is set to also apply to migration and the movement of people, thanks to an EU-Morocco mobility partnership which was signed today by Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Internal Affairs, Mr Saad dine El Otmani, the Moroccan Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Ministers responsible for migration from the nine EU Member States participating in this partnership (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom).

'I am delighted that Morocco is the first country from the Mediterranean region to enter into a partnership of this kind with the EU. The formation of structural cooperation on migration and mobility is a turning point for our relationship with Morocco. We have today made a huge step forward and I hope that other partner countries will also follow suit', commented Commissioner Malmström, speaking in the fringes of the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg.

The EU-Morocco mobility partnership establishes a set of political objectives and provides for a series of initiatives which are designed to ensure that the movement of persons is managed as effectively as possible. These measures include negotiations between the EU and Morocco on an agreement for facilitating the issuing of visas for certain groups of people, particularly students, researchers and business professionals. Negotiations will also continue on an agreement for the return of irregular migrants.

One objective of the Partnership is to improve the information available to qualified Moroccan citizens on employment, education and training opportunities available in the EU and also to make mutual recognition of professional and university qualifications easier. Another objective is to support the integration of Moroccan citizens who regularly visit an EU Member State.

As regards irregular migration, the EU and Morocco will work together in order to combat the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings and to provide assistance for victims of these crimes. They will work closely together in order to ensure that Morocco can establish a national asylum and international protection system.

The [Political Declaration](#) signed today sets out the objectives of the Partnership and the priorities of the two parties. It is accompanied by an annex describing the specific initiatives which will be taken in order to put this partnership into practice.

Background and key figures

- Morocco and the EU began a Dialogue on Migration, Mobility and Security in October 2011, and negotiations on the Political Declaration for the EU-Morocco Mobility Partnership were finalised on 1 March 2013 during a visit to Morocco by

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, and Commissioner Malmström.

The Mobility Partnership with Morocco is the fifth of its kind, following those entered into with the Republic of Moldova and Cape Verde in 2008, with Georgia in 2009 and with Armenia in 2011.

Negotiations with a view to entering into similar agreements with Azerbaijan have also begun, and discussions are in progress with other southern partners (Tunisia and Jordan).

Mobility Partnerships provide a flexible and non-legally binding framework for ensuring that the movement of people between the EU and a third country can be managed effectively. Thanks to dialogue and specific cooperation, their purpose is to ensure the joint and responsible management of migration in the interests of the Union, its partners and migrants themselves. They form part of the global migration approach developed by the EU in recent years ([IP/11/1369](#) and [MEMO/11/800](#)).

- 322 094 Schengen visas were issued in 2012 by the consulates of Schengen member countries in Morocco, making Morocco seventh in the world in terms of the number of Schengen visas issued.

Europe is by far the most popular destination for Moroccans living outside their country of origin: according to a 2011 European Training Foundation [report](#), of around 3.5 million Moroccans living abroad (3 473 209 people), some 84% (or 2.9 million people) lived in Europe. 58.6% of Moroccan migrants are men and 41.4% are women.

According to Eurostat, 119 728 residence permits were issued to Moroccan citizens in Europe in 2011.

For more information

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