Berlin Roundtable on Refugees and Migration - Chairman’s Conclusions

2016-07-12

The movement of refugees and migrants is not a new development. In order to respond to needs and manage the enormous scale of people on the move today in many parts of the world, including the Middle East, Europe and Africa, we need to take our shared values of respect for human rights and dignity as a starting point. We must also look for innovative, creative and sustainable solutions based on existing international human rights and refugee law. National or European answers are not enough. We need greater international commitment and a coordinated and complementary approach. This is why we met here today.

Throughout 2016, the international community is organising several international conferences, each addressing the refugee and migrant situation directly or indirectly. At the London Conference on 4 February, the focus lay on protection, humanitarian and development needs in regard to Syria and the region; at the

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Conference in Geneva on 30 March, the emphasis was on legal pathways of admission; and on 23 and 24 May, the international community met for the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in order to discuss the necessary reforms of the humanitarian system. The next milestones ahead of us are the high-level meeting of the

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General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants that will take place in New York on 19 September and the Leaders’ Summit on Refugees hosted by US President Obama on the following day and co-hosted by Germany, Canada, Ethiopia, Jordan, Mexico and Sweden. The upcoming Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) meetings will provide an opportunity to further the discussions on migration and development. All these events address different aspects of the challenges and opportunities of supporting the needs of refugees and vulnerable migrants, as well as managing migration, and show that action is urgently needed on various levels in order to improve the current situation. We need continuous engagement, strengthened efforts and effective coordination between States, civil society and international organisations. I have therefore invited the

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High Commissioner for Refugees, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Migration, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and representatives of the World Bank and the European Union to a second meeting in this format in Berlin on 12 July 2016. This forum in Berlin provides an important opportunity to exchange views, coordinate steps and identify concrete measures that can be taken.

Today we discussed necessary further steps with a view to lending impetus to this year's Summit meetings in New York, as well as the December Summit meeting of the GFMD in Dhaka, Bangladesh and the upcoming German-Moroccan Co-Chairmanship of GFMD in 2017 and 2018.

I am pleased to announce that we have agreed on the following practical measures, some of which we will all pursue together and others involving cooperation between Germany and one or more of the agencies represented here:

Collection and analysis of reliable migration and refugee data for a fact-based migration policy

Policies addressing refugee and migrant movements of the scale we are experiencing today need to be based on reliable data. Governments and organisations have different roles and responsibilities in collecting and analysing data. This means that cooperation is important. We decided today that,

working within our various capacities and mandates, we will improve coordination on migration and refugee data and make access to it more efficient. As a concrete step, the Federal Foreign Office will provide financial support to launch a Global Migration Data Portal that will be established in Berlin by the IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre. This portal's objective is to promote collaboration between IOM and other agencies, such as the World Bank,

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, the

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Statistical Commission, the OECD and Eurostat in order to provide reliable, coherent and accessible data as well as analysis on the movement of migrants and refugees. As a key priority, information-gathering and analysis must provide policymakers with reliable and agreed baseline data for decision-making. In order to achieve this, we are committed to improving cooperation on data gathering and to facilitating timely analysis of such data.

During the first phase, the portal will therefore focus on data related to Europe. In the second phase, the aim is to reflect on the rest of the world. Germany will also host a discussion with agencies that collect migration data. Its aim here is to foster more fact-based policies and public debates.

Information and communication in countries of origin and destination

We agreed that refugees and migrants need accurate and targeted information in regard to decisions affecting their lives. Tragically, people smugglers and human traffickers taking advantage of people's vulnerabilities and desires are spreading false information about countries of destination in Europe, such as Germany. We need to reach out to people and to inform them about the risks they may face and about available legal pathways. The German Government is already conducting information and (social) media campaigns in countries such as Afghanistan and regions like the Middle East. In order to increase efforts in the MENA region to provide reliable information to migrants and refugees, German missions in the region will explore the potential of cooperating with the offices of

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and IOM.

It is also of crucial importance to provide better and accurate information to returning migrants and refugees about opportunities in their countries of origin. Germany, which provides a wide range of assistance programmes in countries of origin of migrants and refugees, will collaborate with the organisations present today, as well as with the German Red Cross and local civil society and with the diaspora living in Germany, in order to disseminate this information more effectively.

Scholarship programmes for refugees

Assistance for refugees needs to be provided on many different levels. We agreed to work on promoting the importance of education for refugees and migrants, be it primary, secondary or higher education, in the high-level meeting of the

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General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants on 19 September and at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees hosted by US President Obama on 20 September.

Since 1992, the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) at

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has enabled over 8,000 refugees to access higher education in their country of asylum. In 2016, Germany is funding another 2,500 new DAFI scholarships mostly for Syrian, but also for Afghan and African refugees. However, the demand for higher education continues to far outweigh the existing opportunities, emphasising the need for continuous fundraising efforts and innovative ways to provide access to higher education for refugees in cost-efficient ways. We decided today to build on our experience with the DAFI programme in order to promote the benefits of higher education for young refugees. Germany calls on its partners to support education for refugees and the DAFI scholarship scheme.

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and Germany would be pleased to assist all interested parties who are planning to develop education initiatives for refugees and migrants by sharing their experience and identifying synergies with the DAFI initiative.

We also discussed the following topics that are crucial for an effective global response to large movements of refugees and migrants:

Cooperation with the private sector

In light of the scale of movements of refugees and migrants and with a view to responding to their needs, governments and international organisations need the support of civil society and the private sector. Private business plays a crucial role, particularly with regard to self-reliance and progressive economic and social integration. Some of the most important factors for successful integration into a new society are jobs, employment and opportunities for entrepreneurial activity. Many companies in Germany and other host countries are committed to supporting refugees and migrants and to creating win-win situations that also benefit the host countries' economies. International companies can also play an important role in supporting refugees in countries of first arrival and host societies. In order to explore ways for companies to cooperate more closely with international organisations in supporting refugees in Germany, in countries of first arrival or transit, we are meeting representatives of the German private sector today.

Resettlement and other complementary pathways to solutions for refugees

We need to identify effective measures to demonstrate solidarity with host countries and to share responsibility for refugees, including through the establishment of safe and regular channels of resettlement and complementary forms of admissions and stays for refugees, including humanitarian admission, family reunion, educational and employment opportunities, respecting the principle of non-refoulement and providing viable and safe alternatives to resorting to people smugglers.

The Syria crisis has underlined the need for States to provide humanitarian temporary admission programmes and to cooperate closely with

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in doing so. Germany also supports the idea of private sponsorship programmes for resettling refugees, reuniting family members and providing other pathways of admission.

Access to education and livelihood opportunities in host countries would underpin such efforts and increase the prospects of self-reliance in the host country, the country of origin, once people return home, or a third country. Germany also firmly believes that we need more international efforts to set up rapid response procedures for large movements of refugees that would include ways to build skills as an essential step towards enabling long-term solutions of various kinds.

Safety and dignity along the migratory trail, return and reintegration

We reaffirmed that all migrants, regardless of their legal status, are entitled to safety and dignity across their migratory journeys. We agreed that we will work together to guard against any further deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea and other routes to Europe and in other areas of the world.

With regard to returning and reintegrating people not in need of international protection to their countries of origin, we reemphasise that any decisions to send back an individual must be made in

full respect of his or her rights and dignity. At the same time, all States need to fully respect their obligation under standard international law to readmit their own nationals, notably by cooperating on their swift identification and by issuing emergency travel documents. We share the view that migrants are also responsible for abiding by the relevant national legal frameworks at all times in accordance with international law.

Integration of migrants and refugees

We stress the importance of cooperation between all States, relevant international organisations, national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other civil society actors as regards promoting the successful integration of refugees and migrants into social, cultural and economic life in host countries. Today we discussed how to address the question of education and preparation for a host country’s job market. Integration and the creation of opportunities can be facilitated through, for example, a focus on education and employment, including the provision of language and vocational training opportunities, the recognition of skills and degrees, the promotion of social inclusion and the reduction of xenophobia.

Chairman's Conclusions - download

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