



G7 Interior and Security Ministers' Meeting Mirabella Eclano, 2-3-4 October 2024

ANNEX A: G7 Action Plan to Prevent and Counter the Smuggling of Migrants

Preamble

Call for a G7 Action Plan to Prevent and Counter the Smuggling of Migrants

We, the Interior and Security Ministers of the G7, in the context of the **G7 Coalition to Prevent and Counter the Smuggling of Migrants** launched by our Governments at the G7 Apulia summit as part of an approach '*to enhance border management and enforcement and curb transnational organized crime involved in migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons*', reiterate and confirm our determination to intensify our efforts to prevent, counter and eradicate organized crime groups engaged in migrant smuggling, also in its connection with trafficking in persons, and strip them of the proceeds generated by these heinous crimes while always providing protection and assistance to migrants and victims of trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls.

While the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons are different phenomena, they often interact and both endanger the lives of the most vulnerable, exposing them to dangerous journeys and to an increased risk of serious violence and exploitation, including, but not limited to, sexual and labour exploitation, forced begging, and forced criminality.

Although difficult to quantify in statistical terms due to its unlawful and hidden nature, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that the migrant smuggling trade generates about US\$ 6.75 billion a year for criminal organizations in two of the principal migrant smuggling routes leading from East, North and West Africa to Europe and from South America to North America. The global figure is likely to be much higher. Migrant smuggling is a form of irregular migration which undermines the sovereign right of states to regulate and manage the entry of foreign nationals and control their borders, which impacts security and damage public confidence in our systems.

While migrant smuggling affects G7 countries in different ways, it is a global phenomenon and we affirm our collective commitment and shared responsibility to a whole-of-route, whole-of-society, integrated, comprehensive, inclusive, sustainable and balanced approach. We will, in partnership with one another and with civil society organisations, tackle the challenges irregular migration presents and seize the opportunities created by regular, controlled migration, in line with the Global Alliance to counter migrant smuggling launched by the EU, including its call to action.

Recalling our G7 Leaders' Communique, in our shared efforts to counter organised crime involved in migrant smuggling, we reaffirm our commitment to protecting human rights and fundamental



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freedoms, regardless of their migratory status, and, in this regard, we also recall the right of everyone to seek asylum from persecution as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the obligations of states parties related to international protection under the 1951 Refugees Convention and its 1967 Protocol. In this sense we also acknowledge the importance action carried by the UNHCR in protecting victims of trafficking in persons. Furthermore, we will seek to ensure compliance with our international obligations, including those under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

Priorities of the Action Plan

Within this framework and shared approach, we have been instructed by our Leaders to develop the following "**G7 Action Plan to Prevent and Counter the Smuggling of Migrants**", pursuing the following priorities:

- **promote enhanced cooperation on investigative capacities**, involving the relevant authorities in the countries of origin, transit and destination of irregular migratory flows as well as relevant international organisations;
- **strengthen border management processes**, while respecting the sovereign right of States to control their borders and their prerogatives to govern migration within their jurisdiction. This should be conducted in accordance with international law, in particular as regards to the applicable rights of migrants, and in compliance with the applicable non-refoulement obligations and the prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- **develop concrete collaborative actions** to be taken in the global fight against transnational criminal organizations engaged in migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons;
- **promote a productive and reliable exchange of information** as well as effective cooperation activities between our law enforcement, immigration and border control agencies and those of Coalition partner countries, which are essential for joint law enforcement actions based on established evidence against migrant smuggling and human trafficking networks;
- **engage with all facets of the international transportation system**. Transportation companies – whether transport operators or supporting industries – play a critical role in preventing abuse of their service by migrant smugglers and traffickers in persons and in identifying potential victims of trafficking in persons. Engagement with aviation transport stakeholders – be it airlines or aviation authorities – is key to addressing the use of commercial means of transport to facilitate irregular migration, in line with the measures outlined in the EU's 'Toolbox addressing the use of commercial means of transport to facilitate irregular migration to the EU';
- **discourage migrants from embarking on irregular and potentially perilous journeys** by



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informing them about the heightened risks associated with migrant smuggling including the risk of trafficking in persons and of return from the destination country, if there is no lawful right to remain as well as on the availability of legal migration pathways opportunities and alternative economic opportunities in their regions.

The Action Plan is divided into **five pillars**: (i) strengthening the operational and investigative capacities of law enforcement agencies; (ii) strengthening international, judicial and police cooperation; (iii) intensified cooperation with third countries of origin and transit of irregular migration flows; (iv) prevention and awareness raising; and (v) knowledge and monitoring of the phenomenon.

Development of the Action Plan

(I) **Strengthening the operational and investigative capacities of law enforcement agencies** in the fight against organized criminal groups engaged in migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons by:

- creating in the G7 countries considering themselves affected by migrant smuggling, where not already existing, law enforcement units specialized in crimes and investigations in the field of migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons;
- creating or reinforcing, in the G7 countries considering themselves affected by migrant smuggling, a network of liaison officers from the relevant G7 countries (Police Liaison Officers, Internal Affairs and Justice Experts, etc.) in the countries of origin and transit of irregular migration flows;
- enhancing intelligence and information exchange as a crucial element for possible subsequent joint law enforcement actions, including in the framework of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) and by using established channels (e.g. Interpol's I-24/7, Europol's SIENA) for this purpose;
- establishing and launching joint investigative actions by law enforcement officers from G7 countries considering themselves affected by the phenomenon, and also from third countries, where appropriate. These actions should be aimed at conducting investigations on targets of common interest and identifying "High Value Targets," (i.e., organized transnational criminal groups, migrant smugglers and traffickers in persons) to be located for the purpose of capture, on which to focus the investigative attention and using INTERPOL and Europol capacities for centralised analysis;
- Working collaboratively with social media companies to monitor internet and social networks platforms, as appropriate, to prevent their use in enabling migrant smuggling and



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trafficking in persons including through collectively calling on social media companies to do more to respond to online content that advertises migrant smuggling services, taking into account the duty to comply with existing domestic and international legislation and to cooperate intra-industry, especially supporting smaller companies, and make effective use of new technology, such as Artificial Intelligence tools, to promptly remove online activity of smugglers promoting irregular migration and offering illicit transportation services to migrants.

- Encourage, where appropriate, trauma informed approaches to law enforcement interacting with survivors of migrant smuggling and victims of trafficking in persons.

(II) Strengthening international cooperation between police, judicial and border officials to combat organized crime groups engaged in migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons;

- supporting key source and transit countries to fully implement their obligations under the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocols on the Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons, working with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as appropriate to assist those countries in the criminalization of smuggling of migrants;
- utilising existing multilateral forums and multilateral relations with international initiatives and stakeholders including the Roma-Lyon Group, the Venice Justice Group, the Financial Action Task Force, EU's Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other United Nations bodies, and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), through the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) within their respective mandates, and regional initiatives such as Niamey, Rabat, Khartoum and Budapest Process - in order to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of this plan and avoid duplication considering available resources;
- using national-level and regional resources, Europol, and INTERPOL's capabilities to support police, immigration and criminal intelligence cooperation and maximize the use of both national-level and multilateral databases and information exchange channels;
- develop and share good practice on disrupting the enablers of smuggling of migrants including work to degrade the supply and value chains. This should include sharing expertise on the seizure and confiscation of criminal proceeds or instrumentalities to maximise law enforcement efforts by taking a 'follow the money' approach. This would target the proceeds of organised crime groups engaged in migrant smuggling and



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trafficking in persons and would also strengthen cooperation to identify, trace, freeze, manage and potentially confiscate illegal profits from migrants smuggling. To this purpose, the G7 members should take full advantage of the the potential of the Financial Investigation Units' network.

(III) Stronger cooperation with countries of origin and transit of irregular migration flows, where appropriate through:

- the development and implementation of cooperation initiatives for the support of transit and origin countries in managing the challenges associated with, and providing alternatives to, irregular migration;
- exploring equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships and bilateral or multilateral instruments with countries of origin, transit, and destination, aimed at cooperation in the field of combating smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and border security;
- collaborating, where appropriate, with international organizations to enhance multifunctional centres along key migration routes offering information and assistance to migrants and the facilitation of the safe and orderly repatriation of those not entitled to remain in G7 countries;
- supporting host and transit countries along key migration routes in strengthening their capacities in the field of asylum and refugee protection;
- facilitating voluntary returns of migrants from transit and destination countries, fostering cooperation on enforced returns of persons with no right to stay, in full respect of human rights and the principle of non-refoulement, allowing for increased options for migrants and more effective management of migration flows;
- strengthening the management capacity of land and sea borders of the main countries of transit of irregular migration flows, identifying target countries and providing naval and land surveillance resources and assets or training;
- consideration of visa requirements for certain individuals with a nexus to migrant smuggling, where appropriate, and consistent with domestic and international obligations;
- working with the transportation industry and law enforcement of countries of transit to better identify potential migrant smuggling and cases of trafficking in persons and adjust responses based on emerging threats and known risks;



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- promoting the cooperation on international obligations to readmit own citizens who have no right to stay including under the Convention on International Civil Aviation of 7 December 1944, known as the Chicago Convention;

(IV) Prevention and awareness raising by:

- developing and promoting effective information and awareness raising campaigns in key countries of origin and transit, on the risks of irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons. Campaigns may also signpost on available legal pathways, the effectiveness of migration policies and measures to repatriate migrants without authorization to remain in country, in cooperation with local authorities and international bodies (such as UNHCR, IOM and European External Action Service) present both in countries of origin and transit. This may be in collaboration with international organisations and civil society where appropriate.
- facilitate legal and safe migration alternatives, as set out in the G7 Apulia Leaders' Communique which highlights regular pathways as a key part of comprehensive migration management strategies.
- Cooperation with social media companies, including through a roundtable event organised by G7 partners, for the active engagement to identify and counter online content which promotes and offers intermediation and irregular migration services.

(V) Increasing knowledge and Monitoring of migrant smuggling

- Encourage the conducting of field studies, including in collaboration with the international organizations, civil society organizations and academia to monitor and anticipate developments and trends in irregular migration flows, at global level and with regional focus;
- sharing among the relevant authorities of the G7 countries of good practices, in the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons and all related offences and exploitation, in the protection of smuggled migrants and victims of trafficking in persons, as well as in maintaining border management;
- supporting and further developing collective mechanisms for the exchange and analysis of statistical data on irregular migration flows and related phenomena, in order for G7 countries to improve their ability to monitor, identify and respond to identified trends;



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- Encourage, in a manner consistent with applicable law, collection of gender and age disaggregated data, and dissemination of data on labor exploitation connected to trafficking in persons;
- monitoring and review of the state of implementation of this Action Plan, to be conducted within the Roma-Lyon Group with progress reporting to the RLG Heads of Delegation to take place at the bi-annual meetings.