

11th Spain-Morocco High-Level Meeting

Madrid, 5 June 2015

Joint Declaration

Within the framework of the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation between the Kingdom of Spain and the Kingdom of Morocco, and following an official invitation from Mr. Mariano Rajoy, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, made an official visit to Madrid on 5 June 2015, together with an important delegation of ministers, for the purpose of jointly presiding over the work at the 11th High-Level Meeting between Spain and Morocco.

During the course of this visit, the Head of Government of Morocco was also received in audience by His Majesty King Felipe VI.

The High-Level Meeting, which took place within an atmosphere of friendship, mutual appreciation and trust, allowed the strategic scope of the bilateral partnership between Morocco and Spain to be confirmed and the ambition shared by the two countries to build an innovative and cutting-edge alliance within the Euro-Mediterranean region to be reaffirmed.

The two countries expressed their satisfaction at the friendly and respectful relations between Their Majesties King Felipe VI and Mohammed VI, which were likewise demonstrated during the official visits to Morocco by His Majesty King Juan Carlos I in July 2013 and His Majesty King Felipe VI in July 2014.

Based on such solid foundations, the two countries agreed to promote new joint initiatives aimed at strengthening bilateral political dialogue, consolidating their economic partnership and further supporting acts of cooperation between regional entities, as well as boosting the cultural and human ties that exist between civil society in the two countries.

Political Dialogue

Spain reiterated its enormous appreciation for the dynamic process of reform, openness and progress undertaken by Morocco under the aegis of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. Spain also praises the democratic model adopted by Morocco - the only one of its kind in the region - that is based on tolerance, openness and freedom.

The two countries welcome the strength of relations between their legislative institutions; embodied in the 3rd Parliamentary Forum held in Rabat in January 2015, following those held in Madrid in 2013 and Rabat in 2012.

They also highlighted the increase in reciprocal visits by Spanish and Moroccan journalists and opinion leaders from the two countries, as well as the positive repercussions from such initiatives on obtaining a better perception of political, economic and social trends in the two countries, thereby overcoming old clichés and stereotypes.

In this regard, the two countries welcome the commendable work undertaken within the framework of the Averroes Committee and are committed to conducting a joint analysis aimed at fostering dialogue between civil society in the two countries. A proposal was made to create two foundations.

As regards the diplomatic challenges, Morocco and Spain renewed their commitment to building a strong Euro-Mediterranean space based on solidarity and maintaining ambitious relations between Africa and Europe.

In this regard, Spain and Morocco reiterated the need to promote the Arab Maghreb Union as an unavoidable geopolitical option.

As regards issues in the Western Sahara, the two countries welcome the adoption of Resolution 2218 of the United Nations Security Council in April 2015. Against this backdrop, Spain welcomes the serious and credible efforts being made by Morocco. Similarly, the two countries reiterated the importance of resuming negotiations based on solid foundations in accordance with the resolutions and parameters clearly defined by the Security Council, and underlined the spirit of commitment and realism targeted at reaching a mutually acceptable political solution based on consensus.

The two countries acknowledged that a solution to this lasting dispute and increased cooperation between the Member States of the Arab Maghreb Union will contribute to stability and security in the region.

As regards Libya, Spain and Morocco underlined the need to find a political solution through the mediation efforts being made by Mr. Bernardino León, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations. Spain welcomes the initiative launched by Morocco to host inter-Libyan dialogue.

As regards the Mediterranean, both Morocco and Spain are committed to promoting EU-AMU (Arab Maghreb Union) dialogue, as well as the 5+5 Initiative, the regular Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting of which will soon be held in Morocco. Similarly, and in light of the 20th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration in 2015, the two countries confirmed their commitment to the Union for the Mediterranean as the ideal framework for forging a strong alliance based on solidarity between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Within this context, the two countries welcome the launch of the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez.

As regards the European Neighbourhood Policy, Morocco welcomes the commendable initiative by Spain to organise a meeting between EU Foreign Affairs Ministers and their counterparts from the Southern Neighbourhood countries at the Union for the Mediterranean headquarters in Barcelona in April 2015 to reflect on the future of this policy. The two countries called for the configuration of a new European Neighbourhood Policy; particularly one capable of applying the concept of differentiation.

In this same spirit, Spain reiterated its support for optimum application of the Advanced Status enjoyed by Morocco with the European Union. The two countries welcome the progress made in this regard, especially in terms of the Mobility Partnership, cross-border cooperation (Mid-Atlantic) and the Action Plan 2013-2017 on regulatory convergence. The two countries highlighted the importance of concluding an Agreement for a Comprehensive Free Trade Zone between the EU and Morocco, which should especially tackle such issues as “development” and “flanking”. The two countries also highlighted their desire to strengthen joint cooperation on institutional twinning projects within the framework of the Morocco-EU partnership.

As regards Africa, the two countries expressed a joint aspiration in pursuit of development and stability in Africa. From this perspective, Morocco and Spain - as logistics centres between the two continents - decided to examine all opportunities arising from the alliance framework between Africa and the EU, especially in terms of logistics connections.

Spain welcomes the presence by Morocco as an observer partner at the Ibero-American Summits; a testament to the strength and vitality of cultural ties between Morocco and the Ibero-American space.

The two countries expressed satisfaction with the Spanish-Moroccan Initiative on Mediation in the Mediterranean and the positive development thereof as it consolidates the position of the two countries as agents for peace and promoters of stability in the region.

Within the framework of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the two countries committed to strengthening their collaboration on preparing the next Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, due to be held in Azerbaijan in 2016, and underlined the usefulness of this initiative in pursuit of tolerance and respect between cultures and religions. They welcomed the initiative by Spain to organise a meeting of representatives from civil society on intercultural and interreligious dialogue in Barcelona on 23 July.

The two countries highlighted the importance they assign to the protection and promotion of human rights within the scope of the United Nations and examined the joint initiatives they could launch in this regard.

As regards the matter of climate change, Morocco and Spain underlined the importance of reaching an ambitious agreement on this issue at the COP 21 due to be held in Paris in December 2015. Spain congratulates Morocco on its decision to host the COP 22 in 2016.

Spain congratulates Morocco on having been chosen as Joint Chair of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and welcomes its initiative to build a Group of Friends of the Fight against Terrorism within the scope of the United Nations in New York.

In turn, Morocco applauds Spain for its organisation in July 2015 in Madrid of an open session of the United Nations Counterterrorism Committee focusing on the phenomenon of foreign combatants.

In this regard, Spain expressed its support for the Moroccan counter-terrorism strategy, focusing on increased security, the promotion of inclusive economic development and fostering religious tolerance.

The two countries also welcome their collaboration in terms of the fight against nuclear terrorism and are committed to strengthening their cooperation through specific actions, such as the exercise on security during the transportation of nuclear and radioactive material that took place earlier this year alongside the IAEA. Furthermore, they welcome the contribution from Morocco and Spain as Chairs of the Task Force (IGTN/NSS) in drawing up an action plan that will be adopted at the next Nuclear Security Summit.

Economic Partnership

Spain and Morocco welcome the outstanding development of their economic partnership and express satisfaction with the increasingly better integration of production chains in the two economies. With average annual growth of close on 15% over the last five years, trade exchanges between the two countries have improved considerably. Spain has been Morocco's leading trade partner since 2014.

The two countries are committed to fostering an economic framework capable of leading to increased trade exchanges, investment flows and joint companies, especially in emerging sectors such as renewable energies, the automotive industry, the agri-food industry and liquefied natural gas.

The two countries underlined the importance of cooperation between government agencies, as well as involvement by economic stakeholders in improving the management of issues related to investment and bilateral trade.

Within this context, they agreed to strengthen their alliance in the automotive sector through an exchange of experiences.

As regards digital issues, the two countries highlighted the importance of promoting best practices in terms of e-Government.

As regards scientific and technological research, the two countries welcome the joint efforts being made by Spanish and Moroccan researchers since the signing of a general memorandum of understanding in Rabat on 21 September 2014.

Furthermore, they welcome the regular nature of bilateral financial cooperation stemming from the memorandum of understanding signed in December 2008, which has enabled finance to be provided to implementing a computerised management system for the railway transport and traffic plan of the Kingdom of Morocco worth 4.3 million euros and the opening of security and signalling installations at the Casa Port station worth 3.3 million euros for the ONCF. Furthermore, this cooperation will enable finance to be provided to the Casa-Tangier Med railway line signalling project worth 73.8 million euros for the ONCF and the solar-powered pump drinking water supply project worth 6.59 million euros for the ONEE.

Spain and Morocco expressed their desire to maintain cooperation in terms of energy, especially within the framework of creating Mediterranean cooperation platforms on natural gas, renewable energies and energy efficiency.

As regards electricity interconnections, the two countries are committed to maintaining contact through the task force due to hold its second meeting in Rabat shortly. Spain recalled the importance of using and increasing interconnections between Spain and the rest of Europe.

As regards tourism, the two countries expressed satisfaction with the full implementation of the action programme signed in 2012 and agreed to launch a new programme for the period 2015-2016 specifically aimed at the promotion of tourism, statistics and training.

In short, the two governments welcome the Spain-Morocco Business Meeting that was also held today in Madrid and urge economic stakeholders to consolidate their trade relations and direct investment operations.

The two countries expressed their desire to promote the Spain-Morocco Business Council as a forum for future business agreements.

The two countries welcome the agreement reached recently by the two tax administration services responsible for the joint interpretation of Article 12 of the double taxation treaty, which will provide economic operators with greater legal certainty.

Cooperation on Agriculture, Fisheries, the Environment and Water

The two countries agreed to step up dialogue between professionals in both countries and establish an action plan on cooperation and technological transfer in the fields of agriculture and livestock-raising.

In terms of water, the two countries welcome the adoption of two statements of intent: one on the assessment, planning, management and protection of water resources and another on cooperation between the Loukkos River Authority in Morocco and the Segura River Authority in Spain. Furthermore, they welcomed the adoption of the Western Mediterranean Water Strategy within the framework of the 5+5 Initiative.

The fisheries agreement between the EU and Morocco has enabled the resumption of fishing activity by the Spanish fleet, demonstrating the consolidation of cooperation in this regard between the two countries.

Infrastructure and Transport

Spain and Morocco welcome the efforts made in the field of infrastructure and transport, aimed at improving connections between the two countries, and welcome the signing of a statement of intent on transport and transport infrastructures.

Similarly, the two countries praise the effort made within the framework of the Group of Western Mediterranean Transport Ministers (GTMO 5+5).

The two countries ratified their interest in achieving optimum implementation of the agreement on international passenger and freight transport by road that was signed in 2012 and particularly focuses on the quotas and types of authorisation to this effect.

In the field of railway transport, they expressed their interest in updating the current partnership agreement between ONCF, ADIF and RENFE.

Spain and Morocco are also committed to maintaining cooperation in terms of maritime rescue and maritime traffic control, as well as coordination between the centres in Tarifa and Tangier.

The two countries expressed their interest in helping create a Strait of Gibraltar brand in the port sector with a view to strengthening its fundamental role in international maritime transport.

As regards aviation security, the two countries reaffirmed their desire to collaborate with EU authorities in order to deploy the EGNOS and Galileo satellite navigation systems in northern Africa.

In the field of logistics, Morocco expressed its interest in developing a framework of cooperation with Spain for the development of logistics training areas specialised in logistics activities and urban logistics structuring.

The two countries welcome the improved air and sea connections between Morocco and the Canary Islands.

As regards the project for a fixed link across the Strait of Gibraltar, the two countries welcome the appointment of members to the Joint Committee and called for the 43rd meeting thereof to be held before the end of 2015.

Migration and Employment

Spain welcomes the new migration policy implemented by Morocco in September 2013, and particularly highlights the exceptional illegal immigrant legalisation operation and their insertion into the economic and social fabric of the country. Spain will continue supporting the efforts made by Morocco towards implementing its new migration policy.

Similarly, the two countries have expressed deep concern over the recurrence of tragic incidents in the Mediterranean. In this regard, they expressed their commitment to further strengthen their collaboration in the fight against illegal immigration, people trafficking and criminal trafficking networks, and highlighted their collaboration with the IOM on the voluntary return programme for immigrants wishing to travel back to their countries of origin.

Furthermore, they underlined their full agreement within the framework of various multilateral forums, particularly highlighting the Rabat Process that they have been supporting since 2006.

As regards the Moroccan community residing in Spain, the two countries examined ways to boost their contribution to closer ties and economic growth in both countries, as well as ways to re-launch their role as a catalyst for human and economic exchanges.

The two countries believe it is necessary to establish global, harmonised and effective management of migration. In this same spirit, the integration of immigrants and their families represents a major challenge and significant opportunities for the two countries. Special attention will be paid to part-time and seasonal workers. The two countries recognised the importance of managing issues related to family reunification in a flexible and appropriate manner in accordance with the corresponding national legislation.

Morocco and Spain examined the possibility of negotiating a reciprocal agreement on participation by citizens from the two countries in municipal elections.

The two countries welcomed the success of Operation Crossing the Straits of Gibraltar - Marhaba, which takes place satisfactorily every summer and represents a model for north-south cooperation in terms of people movement.

The two countries welcome the excellent cooperation in terms of civil protection and crisis management.

Spain and Morocco expressed their desire to collaborate on work-related accident prevention and risk management, as well as on strengthening institutional capabilities in this regard, and agreed to develop their cooperation in terms of the self-employed workers' statute.

Furthermore, Spain is willing to collaborate with the Moroccan national employment and competitiveness agency (ANAPEC) on training for employment.

Security and Justice

The two countries welcomed the exemplary cooperation in terms of security and the extremely positive results in this regard thanks to mutual trust and close collaboration between the respective security services. They welcomed the results obtained in the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, and clandestine immigration.

As regards the fight against drug trafficking, the two countries agreed to step up and continue effective collaboration in terms of the fight against drug trafficking by land, sea and air across the Strait of Gibraltar, underlining the effectiveness of the Telos Plan, which constitutes a model for coordinating border control strategies and the fight against drug trafficking by air.

The two countries encouraged the mixed commissions set up under the bilateral agreements on civil and criminal justice issues to hold meetings and called for a resumption of activity by the joint team responsible for assessing the bilateral agreements.

Development Cooperation and Social Issues

Spain and Morocco welcome the signing of the Country Partnership Framework (2014-2016) in June 2014 for a total amount of 150 million euros - 50 million euros in subsidies from central government, the regional governments, local authorities and universities, and 100 million euros as concessional loans and other types of credit.

Spain and Morocco welcomed the signing in June 2014 of the Country Partnership Framework and expressed their desire to add new momentum to the efforts aimed at implementing the "ADL" II Programme on justice.

Furthermore, within the framework of the advanced regionalisation process undertaken by Morocco, Spain expressed its interest in supporting the development of capabilities within Moroccan local authorities by strengthening their collaboration with the Directorate-General of Local Authorities of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The two countries expressed their desire to increase collaboration in the fields of non-formal education and professional training. In this regard, Spain suggested that the Tetuan Workshop School be integrated into the Moroccan network of training and learning centres.

In the field of health, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation has committed to supporting the creation of a primary healthcare model in Morocco and to training specialists in family and community medicine. The two countries expressed satisfaction with the support from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation for the plan to reduce maternal and infant mortality launched by the Government of Morocco.

Generally-speaking, the two countries welcomed the contribution made by the Masar Programme to strengthen capabilities within Moroccan civil society.

The two countries also committed to continued collaboration in the field of child protection, family affairs and equality, and welcomed the signing of a statement of intent on these issues.

Cooperation on Education, Culture and Communication

The two countries agreed to further strengthen their cooperation in terms of education, higher education and research, culture and communication.

They welcomed the progress made in applying the Arabic Language and Moroccan Culture Education Programme (Spanish acronym: LACM) in Spain, based on Spain's success in teaching Spanish language and culture to children in the Spanish community overseas. Spain committed to introducing Arabic and Moroccan history and geography into the syllabuses used at Spanish education centres in Morocco.

Furthermore, the two countries agreed to foster the teaching of Spanish language at education centres in Morocco. To this effect, Spain expressed its desire to collaborate on implementing the project undertaken by the National Education and Professional Training Ministry aimed at creating a "Spanish" option for the international Moroccan baccalaureate.

The two countries acknowledged the importance of Morocco starting to examine the official recognition requests being made by graduates from the "Juan de la Cierva" Institute in Tetuan in order for the various levels of vocational training currently in force in Spain and Morocco to be officially recognised following publication of the texts produced by Morocco in this regard. They also committed to studying the possibility of standardised recognition of qualifications issued by said institute regarding the various specialities if they meet the necessary requirements.

The two countries agreed to strengthen their relations in the field of higher education and scientific research through new inter-university cooperation programmes and programmes to foster Arab and Spanish culture at higher education centres in the two countries.

They also welcomed the steps taken in terms of culture, particularly the areas of visual arts, theatre, libraries, archives and heritage. In this regard, they committed to fostering the exchange of best practices, professionals from cultural industries and young artists, collaborating on the fight against cultural piracy and forgery, and strengthening cooperation in terms of research, restoration and the management and development of cultural heritage in the two countries.

The two countries expressed their satisfaction at the recent publication in bilingual Spanish-Arabic format of the report on the Spanish language in Morocco.

In terms of communication, they agreed to further strengthen their cooperation in terms of audio-visual activities and professionals working in this field, the cinema, written press, training and copyright.

Expansion of the Legal Framework

The two countries welcome the expansion of the legal framework governing bilateral cooperation relations by signing the following documents:

- Joint Statement of Intent on Water Resources
- Joint Statement of Intent on Cooperation between the Loukkos River Authority and the Segura River Authority
- Joint Statement of Intent on Social Development
- Joint Statement of Intent on Legal Cooperation

- Joint Statement of Intent on Transport
- Tourism Programme 2015-2016

The two countries agreed that the two Heads of Government and Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ministers would follow-up on these issues.

The two countries decided to hold their next high-level meeting in Morocco at a date that will be confirmed subsequently.