

Joint Conclusions of the Steering Committee on the Integration of Moroccans in The Netherlands
Rabat, Morocco
20-21 March 2006

Moroccan delegation: See attached delegation list

The Netherlands delegation: Ambassador Leenstra, M. Haimé, F. van der Velden, C. Nana

Procedural agreements

1. The delegations of Morocco and the Netherlands underline the importance of regular information exchange and dialogue about the position of the Moroccan community in the Netherlands. Both delegations have expressed their appreciation for information gathered in the report "Profile of Moroccans in the Netherlands" and believe that this will serve as a good basis for current and future discussions. The delegations agree to identify several aspects of the report to discuss in more detail, and to discuss the visit of the ministers on the 6th of April.
2. Both delegations named a member of the secretariat, who will manage the reports of the meeting and will maintain regular contact on the developments in the steering committee. C. Nana for the Netherlands and Mr. Tijani for Morocco.
3. The delegations have agreed to exchange French and English language versions of the conclusions. The secretaries will produce a consolidated report, which will be signed by both parties on the margins of the April 6th visit.
4. Official delegation members will be decided and exchanged prior to the visit on the 6th of April.
5. The steering committee has decided to focus discussion on four primary aspects of the report Profile of Moroccans in the Netherlands for this meeting: Education and training (incl. Emancipation); Employment (incl. Discrimination); Social and cultural integration (incl. religion); Housing and leisure activity (incl. segregation and access to housing).
6. These subjects relate primarily to integration. However, a need was also identified to discuss several issues related to migration. These will be taken up at a later date, when the departments responsible for migration issues are present.

Indicator Education and training

7. Both delegations agreed on the need to support parents in raising their children and the Moroccan delegation expressed in particular its support for the Dutch government's efforts on pre-school education. However, the Moroccan government expressed its dismay at the lack of consultation and information provision around Integration in the Country of Origin, even though it underlines the need to emphasise the importance of language abilities and education. Another very important aspect of education and employment is that young Moroccans are gaining low qualifications (if they have them at all). This means that they have a weak position on the labour market, and both governments recognise the need to solve this problem.

8. The Moroccan delegation has proposed two pilot projects:

Pilot Project 1: Former teachers of Moroccan culture in Dutch schools (ex- OALT and Moroccan culture teachers) and other key figures, would act as links between parents, children and schools. This would help the schools better understand the needs of the student and how to assist them effectively. And would help parents by giving them a person from their own culture and who speaks their language, to negotiate with the school.

Pilot project 2: aims to improve access to vocational training and to make sure that students are aware of the consequences that could flow from a particular choice of education. The idea would focus on the

regional educational centre's, increasing information about educational choices and access to the labour market.

The Dutch chair thanks the Moroccan chair for the proposals and will discuss these with her colleagues at the Ministry of Education. These will be mentioned to the ministers as proposals of the Moroccan delegation and will be discussed in the second meeting.

Indicator Cultural and social integration

9. With regards to cultural and social integration, both delegations agree on the need for reliable and fair information about religion and cultural difference in our societies. Religion has become a 'refuge' activity, in response to a feeling of not belonging, in addition to being a deeply held belief. Both delegations agree on the need to make religion, if people choose to believe or practice, a force for social cohesion. The key to positive change in this area lies with the Moroccan community in the Netherlands. They need to develop an appropriate response and survey of needs.

10. The Moroccan and Dutch delegations have explored the idea of intercultural spaces, in which information about diversity, religion and intercultural dialogue would be brought together and which would serve as a space for dialogue. Intercultural interaction is part of Dutch integration policy and these intercultural spaces could be part of integration efforts. On the issue of religion, the delegations have agreed that there was a fruitful exchange of views; these ideas may be worked out further in more detail.

Indicator Employment

11. Both delegations agreed on the need to combat discrimination. The structures exist in the Netherlands, and are being expanded at the local level to make the implementation and contact with the local community more effective.

Indicator Housing, Health and Social Security

12. Both delegations underlined the need to ensure that all members have equal access to these services. In addition, the issue of concentration needs to be further explored, especially in relation to education.

Dual Nationality

13. A short discussion took place on this topic. Both delegations agreed that this topic would be discussed in full in the Mixed Committee on Legal Affairs. The position of the Moroccan government is that there is evidence that Moroccans in the Netherlands would like to keep their legal bond with Morocco. The Dutch delegation agreed that the legal aspects of this issue should be further discussed in the technical mixed committee, but underlines the relevance of the sociological aspects of identity and dual nationality to many of the discussions that have been discussed during this meeting, as well as the importance of the freedom of choice for the individual with regards to nationality and identity.

Participatory approach

14. The Moroccan delegation has proposed adopting a participatory approach, in which the Moroccan government, the Moroccan community and the Dutch government would work together and collaborate on finding solutions to these problems. The Netherlands is committed to the principle of self-determination. Every Dutch resident and citizen has the right to choose his/her partner for dialogue; in addition, the Moroccan community in the Netherlands is heterogeneous and cooperative efforts must not divide the community. Both delegations agree that the Moroccan community must be at the centre of all activities and that the proper modus of cooperation will be discussed further.

In light of the above, both delegations think that it is not yet the time for agreement on a work plan. This meeting has provided the forum for a first exchange of views and has been very fruitful. But the discussions must continue, and a decision must be taken on the methodology that will underlie further work of this group. The Dutch delegation would like to identify further the gaps in its own policy in relation to the Moroccan community and then to engage in further discussion on the proper division of responsibilities between the Moroccan community, the Dutch government and the Moroccan government.

The Dutch delegation proposes the following:

- The Dutch delegation invites the Moroccan delegation to participate in a joint conference, which will take place before or after the second meeting of the joint committee on the integration of Moroccans in the Netherlands. The National Consultative Bodies for Ethnic Ministries, as well as other key figures in the Moroccan community in the Netherlands, will have a chance to speak about many of these issues with experts from the Moroccan government.

This idea is interesting to the Moroccan delegation. Both delegations will work on proposals and exchange these ideas.

Visit of the Ministers

15. Both delegations agree to inform their ministers immediately on the outcomes of this meeting. The Moroccan delegation proposes that the discussion focus on approval for the mini-conference and a participatory approach. Both delegations will also think further about the steps that must be taken before we can agree on the work plan, and inform their ministers about these steps. The Dutch delegation extends an invitation to Minister Chekrouni to participate in the presentation of the Triumph Prize on 6th of April.

16. The Dutch delegation will establish contact with partners at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment about the convention between the Netherlands and Morocco.

17. The Dutch delegation will provide the Moroccan delegation with the following information:

- Policy paper 'Strengthening society's resilience to radical influences' to the Moroccan delegation
- The sections of the SCP report on emancipation that relate to Moroccan women
- Information on segregation and education ('zwarte scholen')
- Information on the coordinated approach to preventing and reducing criminal activity among Morocco youth
- Its views on the mini-conference for the participatory approach
- A report on the last version of the Council of Europe's Convention on Fighting Discrimination

18. The Moroccan government will provide the Netherlands with the following information:

- A short description of the pilot projects listed above
- Additional information about the strategy on managing religion
- Its views on the mini-conference for the participatory approach
- Regular reports on the developments around the representation of Moroccans abroad in the Parliament

Full Record, Steering Committee on the Integration of Moroccans in the Netherlands
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I. Introduction

The Chair of the Moroccan delegation welcomes the Dutch delegation and underlines the importance of discussion on this issue, that it is important to both of our ministries. People circulation, job creation/employment, integration, social and cultural life are all cross-cutting issues with relation to the Moroccan community abroad. Coordination is very important. The interdepartmental effort is lead by the Prime Minister's office, under the supervision of Minister N. Chekrouni.

Ambassador Leemstra thanks the Moroccan chair for his warm welcome and looks forward to a fruitful exchange of information. Introduces the Dutch delegation, and M. Haimé as head of delegation in the absence of Director-General Visser.

C. Nana is introduced as secretary for the steering committee; the meeting report will be shared in draft form tomorrow morning. Mr. T ijani will represent Morocco for matters related to the secretariat of this steering group.

The report 'A Profile of Moroccans in the Netherlands' is distributed. The delegation has already received a summary of the report. The Dutch Chair reports that an SCP report is now available on the position of women from an ethnic minority background in the Netherlands. The information regarding the position of Moroccan women will be provided to the group.

II. Agenda setting

The Dutch government is thanked for the drafting of this report; it is rare when a host country is willing to be open about the challenges confronting an immigrant community. Feels that we speak the same language – the problems will not be solved over night, but they need to be addressed constructively. The Moroccan chairs put forward the following work method: start with general reactions and then identify 3-4 indicators/subjects for more focused discussion and possible actions. The Dutch chair agrees that indicators could be a useable manner of structuring the discussion. In addition, she would like to discuss the planning for the visit of Minister Chekrouni.

The Moroccan chair remarks that the programme for the ministerial visit is full and that is why they have suggested these four indicators. Both delegations can report to the ministers on the aspects of the discussion today related to these indicators. Then the reports will be presented to the ministers, along with the exchange of views on the above mentioned topics. The chair emphasises the importance of open and continued dialogue. Not just between the Dutch and Moroccan delegations, but the chair emphasises the need for more contact between the Moroccan government and the Moroccan community in the Netherlands. The Dutch Chair welcomes the proposals regarding the use of indicators and would like to discuss the participatory nature of this group in the afternoon, in the context of the formal relationship that the Dutch government has with ethnic minority groups.

The indicators are agreed upon in the following order:

- Education and training
 - incl. Emancipation
- Employment
 - incl. Discrimination
- Social and cultural integration
 - incl. religion
- Housing and leisure activity
 - incl. segregation and access to housing

III. Reaction of the Moroccan delegation to the Report

Several important aspects are addressed in this study, on which the Moroccan delegation will briefly comment: By 2010, 350,000 people of Moroccan descent will be living in the Netherlands and they are concentrated in the large cities. In addition, there are still a large number of immigrants each year and the fertility rate is still quite high. Observes that the number of dual nationals has increased from one-third to two-thirds in the last 10 years. It will be interesting to see how this develops further. In addition, educational disadvantage follows students throughout their educational careers. The study refers to *zwarte scholen*. The delegation would like more information about these schools, the environment and how they have been created.

The Moroccan community is also lagging behind in employment. An unemployment rate of 22-24% is worrying, especially given that the Netherlands has the lowest unemployment rate in Europe. This situation is exacerbated by lack of language knowledge. But there are also some success stories, e.g. rising number of entrepreneurs from a Moroccan background. With regards to social and cultural integration, religion is an important factor and is especially relevant in a country (the Netherlands) that was identified by NIPO as having the most negative view of the Islam in Europe.

The Moroccan chair remarks that this report shows a number of warning signs about the position of Moroccans in the Netherlands. There is a clear sign that this group is isolated/self-isolating and that is never a good sign. Our urgent task is to understand *why* they are cutting themselves off and not wanting to integrate in Dutch society. The answer also has to include listening to the Moroccan community itself; that is why the participatory approach was suggested. It is important to identify key figures and use them as change drivers to bring the community as a whole out of isolation. They have to be brought into Dutch community, but without a denial of their own identity. This background is very important for the migrant, otherwise you lose yourself.

IV. Reaction of the Dutch delegation

The Dutch chair underlines the common views of the Moroccan and Dutch governments about shared values for society. That is why the Netherlands has changed its policy in the last few years. Prior to this time, the focus was on multiculturalism and now it is on shared citizenship. At the community level, common norms and values dominate but everyone has a right to their own identity. Common values: the Constitution, law regarding equal treatment (gender, sex, background, religion, race, sexual orientation), right to education, freedom of religion and speech. Recent initiatives have focused on more strongly embedding these values into the public consciousness, e.g. by social contracts. And different groups will give meaning to these fundamentals in different ways: religion is very important to Moroccan identity and to the daily lives of Moroccans in the Netherlands. For this reason, the government supported the Ramadan Festival, which aimed to help celebrate Ramadan but also to educate the native Dutch public about Islam and the place of Islam in identity. The Prime Minister wished all Muslims a blessed Ramadan and many Muslims were very happy with this. Where the problems often arise, are in areas related to cultural values- and these are not confined to the Moroccan or Muslim community; domestic violence, the role of women. So we have focused on efforts to start discussions on these topics within the community itself, to break through the taboos.

With regard to the warning signs: the figures are worrying, but there is reason for hope. Many of these figures are still dominated by the problems of the first generation, who came to the Netherlands with little education and language knowledge. But this is starting to change and the report of the SCP highlights these developments well. But there are also worrying signals about criminal activity. Recent action has been taken in response to problems in the Diamond (Diamant) Neighbourhood in Amsterdam, mostly involving Moroccan youth. The Minister of Immigration and Integration is now working with the Ministries of Internal Affairs, Education, Social Affairs and Housing to complete a report on the situation, the aim of which is to have a complete picture and also to identify the gaps in policies and support systems. The Dutch chair hopes that progress is further before the second meeting; the Dutch delegation will provide the Moroccan delegation with a copy of this report.

Discussion

Ministry of Interior underlines the importance of language learning and is involved in the integration of Moroccans in other countries. Would like to remind the Dutch delegation about the King's decision to establish a Council for

Moroccans Abroad. This will serve as a platform for communication between the ministries here and the communities abroad. Would like to underline the good relationship between the Netherlands and Morocco and the celebration of 400 years.

The Ministry of Education suggests a future report on specific issues, but then a truly cooperative effort would be necessary- with Moroccan and Dutch writers. Notes that the chapter on education doesn't mention the teaching of Arabic language and the cultures of the country of origin. These efforts were stopped in public school and there is dissatisfaction about this. It is not just a loss for the students, there were also 400 Moroccan teachers who lost their jobs. These discussions were discussed in a mixed committee on education, but that group hasn't met since 1998.

The Moroccan chair proposes that the group postpone a possible discussion on Arabic language education until a later date. There will be a meeting of the mixed committee on education on 11-12 April in the Netherlands and it is better to wait for its recommendations.

V. Indicators

A. Education and training

How can we reduce the drop out rate and encourage the Moroccan community to improve their knowledge of the Dutch language? How can we improve access to jobs? How can we create more awareness among parents about the problems of their children at school and about the education system in the Netherlands? The Chair offers the help of the Moroccan government in using intermediaries to reach parents more successfully. Young Moroccans are directed towards technical education because they do not have the Dutch language skills to go further. This, in turn, means that they are relegated to the jobs at the lower end of the labour market. There needs to be more investment and special attention/coaching for young Moroccans to make sure that they close this gap. This is the necessary investment if you want to create a new working generation. Emphasising the success stories is also important. There is also a need for spaces for communication and engagement, and these could also be 'safe' places in which more attention can be given to schools, etc. The period of multiculturalism is over but the period of interculturalism must be supported.

The Dutch chair emphasises the fact that, although the situation is bad among Moroccan youth, the problem of unemployment is wide spread about youth in the Netherlands. The specific problems of young Moroccans, are often related to the fact that their mothers have low language skills. These youth start with two years of educational disadvantage. In addition, low language skills make it difficult to bring parents and teachers in contact. The spoken Dutch of the second generation is generally good; but their written Dutch is poor, and this has an effect on their job performance and hinders their entrance into higher education. There are a number of initiatives (including integration in the country of origin and in the Netherlands, to provide assistance at the beginning) that are focused on helping students, particularly mentoring/coaching schemes and transition classes.

The Moroccan chair emphasises the importance of strengthening the relationships between schools, parents and children and would propose two pilot projects.

Pilot Project 1: Former teachers of Moroccan culture in Dutch schools (ex- OALT and Moroccan culture teachers) and other key figures, would act as links between parents, children and schools. This would help the schools better understand the needs of the student and how to assist them effectively. And would help parents by giving them a person from their own culture and who speaks their language, to negotiate with the school.

Pilot project 2: aims to improve access to vocational training and to make sure that students are aware of the consequences that could flow from a particular choice of education. The idea would focus on the regional educational centre's, increasing information about educational choices and access to the labour market.

The Dutch chair thanks the Moroccan chair for the proposals and will discuss these with her colleagues at the Ministry of Education. These will be mentioned to the ministers as proposals of the Moroccan delegation and will be discussed in the second meeting.

But we will also have to focus on the problems of the parents, especially given that migration of spouses perpetuates the problems of the first generation. For example, mothers who come to the consultation office and can't speak Dutch, will be given the chance to take language courses. They can also receive assistance on child-raising in the Netherlands. That is also why the Netherlands has set up Integration in the Country of Origin and why we are working on early recognition of high risk groups.

The Moroccan chair regrets the fact that the Moroccan government did not receive any information or warning about the plans for integration in the country of origin from the government of the Netherlands. It has been received badly and is seen as an unnecessary hurdle to family reunification. There is a lack of information about the new programme and the press has been negative. The Moroccan government does not appreciate the fact that this decision was taken unilaterally by the Dutch government, and calls for more cooperation/consultation in future.

The Dutch chair responds that this leads nicely into a discussion of the dialogue structure in the Netherlands. The primary ethnic minority groups have an official consultative structure, which is legally required. The group comes together at least four times per year and new policy initiatives are discussed. The minority groups are asked for their opinion and consequently also asked to raise support within their own communities. For many years, this has been a rather one-way discussion from government to the minority groups. So we have been increasingly involving NGO's in these discussions. The policy on integration in the country of origin was, in fact, discussed in the consultative body and, of course, many of them (except often the women) were not happy. But it is a policy that applies to all Dutch residents, not just minority groups. In addition, the government agreed to supply more information about the Netherlands to potential immigrants. The material developed is presented to the chair of the Moroccan delegation.

B. Social and Cultural Integration

The Moroccan chair identifies Islam and religion as an important factor in the formation of identity between Moroccans in the Netherlands and the native population. This is one area in which the trend remains unchanged through the second and third generation, maintaining an orthodox interpretation of religion. Religion is simultaneously part of one's cultural identity and is also a reaction of 'refuge'. But many questions remain. The report names the facts, but it is important to better understand why. One possible idea would be the establishment of meeting places for people of different cultures.

The Dutch Chair underwrites the analysis about religion as an important factor in identity and also in divisions between groups in society. But the government has no role to play in religious matters; it can only support efforts that help citizens make fully informed choices about their lives. So there is support for educational programmes about democracy and civics, but also about Islam. In addition, FORUM (Institute for Multicultural Development) is working with various institutions to train professionals to deal more adequately with the needs of a diverse population.

Finally, the Dutch government, in cooperation with the National Dialogue Structure (LOM) and FORUM, started to invest heavily in the prevention of radicalisation after the murder of Theo van Gogh. The policy focuses on increasing the resilience of the Muslim community to radical influences. One thing that became clear is that parents often have very little idea about the radical ideas of their children, and that children often search for other support networks when their parents cannot help them negotiate their lives in two cultural contexts in the first place. We are working to support more open discussion from within the Muslim community itself about keeping young on the right track and combating negative social practices. The Dutch delegation will send the policy paper to the Moroccan delegation by email.

The Moroccan chair inquired as to religious education in schools in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has public schools and these are not confessional. Students receive information about all religions at these schools. But there are also private confessional schools that receive state funding (right to education on religious

denomination); at these schools, religious education is allowed and can be exclusively dedicated, for example, to Islam. Thus, Islamic schools are allowed in the Netherlands. Research has been done on these schools. The results were as follows; a number were very conservative and had atmospheres that were quite restrictive. In addition, the establishment of Islamic schools does lead to an increase in the number of 'zwarte scholen', schools in which children of an ethnic minority background are concentrated. Because these schools receive state funding, the state is required to inspect them and these schools will also be included in efforts to fight segregation in the educational system.

The Moroccan chair observes that the first generation is not problematic with regard to the exercise of their belief. They grew up in an atmosphere in which Islam was part of daily life all around you, and in which you are brought up with practices, you grow into your religion in a broader social context. The Moroccan government started to worry in the second generation, who started growing up in Islam that was a refuge, and practiced outside of a broader social context. The Moroccan government would like to invest in cooperative efforts to strengthen the religious education of young Muslims in the Netherlands. Students should know about their religion, should be provided with the space to practice their religion. The strategy will include the training of imams and will be conducted in cooperation with the host country. Morocco never saw this radicalisation coming and as a Muslim country, would like to help other host countries.

The Netherlands underlines the importance of combating radicalisation, but reemphasises the fact that the Netherlands cannot legislate on religion. The 'management of religious fields' was mentioned in connection with the strategy, but the Netherlands cannot manage religion. For Morocco, the two are not so separated. Religious education goes alongside scientific education and training on literature and historical. Morocco would suggest centres of knowledge, in which information would be available on Islam as well as guidance on being a good Muslim and citizen in the country in which the person lives. It would maintain contacts with mosques and with religious leaders. It would give a feeling of recognition for the Muslim/Moroccan community in the Netherlands. Then young Muslims will not use religion as a refuge, but will be a force for integration and inclusion. The Chair from the Netherlands has reemphasised the fact that our starting points are similar, but that the government cannot get involved in religion. The response of the Moroccan delegation is that, if you don't control it, you will be unhappily surprised. However, the Dutch position is that this is a task that must be undertaken by the Muslim community itself. THEY have to take the initiative to demand high quality of their imams. Morocco chooses to give every minority its own religious education.

The Moroccan delegation understands the limits of the Dutch governments' involvement in religion. However, the request is only to help the Moroccan community in the Netherlands establish this sort of system of 'managing religion'. The delegation proposes a tripartite effort; the Moroccan community, the Dutch government and the Moroccan government. This could even take the form of cooperative efforts between universities.

Both groups agree to further explore a better understanding of religion, culture and dialogue. The Dutch delegation also reminds the group that the Dutch Moroccan Institute will open in the coming months. The discussion on this issue is hereby concluded; both delegations agree that initial views have been exchanged and that further work will be needed on specific proposals.

C. Employment (incl. discrimination)

The Moroccan chair emphasises the need to combat discrimination on the labour market. The Dutch delegation outlines the framework in the Netherlands to fight discrimination. The Equal Treatment Act also applies to discrimination on the labour market and the Commission for Equal Treatment responds to cases of discrimination. But there has also been investment in local initiatives, so that people can seek help for discrimination in their own municipality. These don't cover the whole of the Netherlands at the moment, but they are being expanded.

The Moroccan delegation brought up the issue of the Convention on social security (1971) and the need to renew it. The Dutch chair has agreed to take up the matter with her colleague at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

D. Housing

The Moroccan chair underlines that immigrants are generally dependant on social housing. If you build social housing in one area, then you get concentration. The Dutch chair states that it is related to the socio-economic position of the Moroccan community in the Netherlands at the moment. Post war housing concentrated on cheap housing in one area. Now that the large portion of the poor are from ethnic minority groups, and with 'white flight', they have become concentrated. But we have been working on restructuring programmes in the large cities; the evidence also shows that upwardly mobile ethnic minorities are moving into Vinex locations.

The Moroccan government emphasises the need for non-discrimination in housing and access to health care.

The discussion tomorrow will resume at 9.30. The following topics will be discussed: the manner of cooperation, the ministerial visit, the organisations to be involved in discussions on these topics. The King of Morocco has called for the creation of a Council of Moroccans Abroad and would like to have representation for Moroccans Abroad in the Parliament. The Moroccan chair feels that this will build a bridge towards countries like the Netherlands. He would like to underline the importance of this meeting, especially in light of our 400 years of contact.

VI. Participatory approach

The Netherlands is committed to the principle of self-determination. Every Dutch resident and citizen has the right to choose his/her partner for dialogue. The Dutch chair reemphasised the legal role of the consultative bodies for ethnic minority groups, which is an established consultative structure in the Netherlands. But she also underlined the idea of transnational identities, which can give one a more multi-dimensional view of both the host country and of the country of origin. But the Netherlands stands behind the right of every individual to choose his/her allegiances.

In this view, the Dutch delegation proposes the following: it would like to invite te Moroccan delegation to participate in a joint conference, which will take place before or after the second meeting of the joint committee on the integration of Moroccans in the Netherlands. The National Consultative Bodies for Ethnic Ministries, as well as other key figures in the Moroccan community in the Netherlands, will have a chance to speak about many of these issues with experts from the Moroccan government, and to discuss an appropriate mode of dialogue with the Moroccan government.

The Moroccan chair accepted this invitation, but both delegations remarked on the diversity of the Moroccan community in the Netherlands, the difficulty in selecting appropriate dialogue partners, and the need to avoid polarisation among the Moroccan community. The Moroccan chair suggests the establishment of criteria for selecting participants, and although we may miss some voices, we must see this as a start. Both the Moroccan and the Dutch governments need to be open to possible critique and to engage with the community, and the Moroccan government reemphasises the importance of dialogue between the Moroccan government and the Moroccan community in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands understands this need for contact, but has to abide by the principle that all residents and citizens of Moroccan descent in the Netherlands have the right to choose their partners for dialogue and the group with which they would like to associate. The Netherlands, therefore, cannot overtly favour the Moroccan government, but it can work on a joint effort to promote dialogue among several parties.

Both the delegations agree to work on a proposal for a mini-conference that will take place on the margin of the second meeting of the steering committee in the Netherlands. These proposals will be exchanged by email and jointly elaborated on.

VII. Dual nationality

The Dutch delegation mentions that we have been speaking about identity during these deliberations and that this discussion has a link to questions of nationality. Detailed legal questions around nationality will be discussed in the Mixed Committee in which Mr. Frans van der Velden is involved. However, there are questions of choice and

basic freedoms that are important to the Netherlands. This issue was discussed during the visit of Minister Verdonk to Morocco, as all of the participants will be aware, given the press attention that was given to it. The Netherlands understands the sensitivity surrounding this topic for the Moroccan government. It is also sensitive in the Netherlands. But the Netherlands would like to know more about the reasons that the Moroccan government is against allowing Moroccans the choice to maintain or to give up their Moroccan nationality.

The Moroccan delegation remarks that this topic was not on the agenda, to which the Dutch delegation responds that the number of dual nationals is tracked in the report, and that it is only interested in hearing some arguments on the Moroccan position. The Moroccan chair emphasises that this is a technical matter that should be discussed in the Mixed Committee.

However, informally, the Moroccan delegation can share the following thoughts: yes, it is evident that an increasing number of Moroccans are choosing to acquire the Dutch nationality. In the opinion of the Chair, this choice has probably been made so that these people can take advantage of the benefits of both nationalities. Furthermore, there haven't been that many applications submitted to the Minister of Justice, because there are provisions for renouncing Moroccan citizenship. However, most Moroccans want to keep both of their nationalities- because one is the nationality of origin and one is the nationality of the country in which you work. That is one category. The other category includes people who wish to cut off all legal links with the country of origin and who wish to fully assimilate in the country of destination. The Moroccan government does not impose anything on any Moroccans; and recognises both the Dutch and the Moroccan nationalities. In any case, there are several indicators that one can use to show that Moroccans still want to keep an attachment to Morocco: remittances, their return in the summer, the number of Moroccans as a percentage of total tourists. There is no evidence of assimilation of the Moroccan community in the Netherlands.

The Dutch delegation replies that there have been attempts to renounce citizenship and that these have been blocked by the Minister of Justice. In addition, underlines the weak link that children of the seventh or eighth generation will have with Morocco, if they have been born and raised in the Netherlands and born of Dutch-born Moroccans. They no longer know Morocco. The Moroccan delegation repeats the importance that Moroccans attach to their identity. The Dutch chair accepts the position that the legal aspects of this issue should be further discussed in the technical mixed committee. However, she underlines the relevance of the sociological aspects of identity and dual nationality to many of the discussions that we have had, and will have, in this committee.

VIII. Next steps and the visit of the Ministers

The Moroccan chair thinks that this has been a fruitful exchange of views, but believes that it is too early to agree on a work plan for the group. He plans to report on the discussions of the work group to the minister, especially on the four indicators and proposes approval of the ministers on the participatory approach as one goal of the ministerial meeting.

The Dutch chair agrees with the Moroccan chair that the time is not yet for agreement on a work plan. Offers two points for further investigation: the Dutch government needs to identify further the gaps in its own policy in relation to the Moroccan community. In addition, further discussion is necessary on the proper division of responsibilities between the Moroccan community, the Dutch government and the Moroccan government. If the Moroccan delegation would like more information about the position of the Moroccan community, the Dutch delegation will be happy to provide it. The NIDI report was based on annual figures that are submitted to Parliament on the position of the Moroccan community.

As regards the visit of Minister Chekrouni, the Moroccan chair reports that his minister was waiting for the outcomes of this meeting to decide on the official agendas for the visit. He suggests that both delegations inform their ministers and then communicate the proposals with each other.

One reminder from the Dutch Chair: it is difficult to gain support for policy directed towards one specific group in the Netherlands. The Netherlands tries to solve problems with general policy and only when it is really needed, to create specific policy. The general policy also has to be taken into account, and should be included in any future

attempt to come up with a work plan involving the Moroccan community. The Moroccan chair agrees with this approach.

IX. Other business

European activities in the field of integration

The Moroccan delegation took note of the activities between the Member States in the field of integration. It has been watching these with interest, and feels that they are the step in the right direction. The Moroccan government is using many of these ideas in working towards a special status of relationship with the EU, one that goes beyond the Association Agreement.

Triumph Prize

The Dutch delegation mentioned that the Triumph Prize will be given when Minister Chekrouni is in the Netherlands. It is given for a project/a woman who has worked in the interest of the emancipation of the ethnic minority women in the Netherlands. The Dutch delegation hopes that Minister Chekrouni will be able to accompany minister Verdonk in giving this prize.

Proposals of the King on voting rights/seat in Parliament

The Dutch delegation requests additional information about the plans announced by the King to give passive and active voting rights to Moroccans abroad, to allow them to run for office and which will establish a Council for Moroccans Abroad. This decree was made and the Moroccan government replies that they are working on the texts of these proposals.