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# Mapping Diasporas in the European Union and the United States

## Comparative analysis and recommendations for engagement: summary report

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### Key findings

- In comparison with their countries of origin, diaspora groups on the whole achieve better outcomes on a range of socioeconomic indicators.
- The comparison with receiving countries offers a more complex picture.
- Diasporas are increasingly seen as important partners for both sending and receiving country governments' strategies aimed at political (and in some cases, security), economic, and cultural outcomes.
- We found a consistent pattern between measured levels of engagement between diaspora organisations and their partners and a measured level of their satisfaction with those partners.
- Proactive communication is desired from partners to diaspora organisations.
- Concrete ways to engage with individual diaspora groups need to take into account their characteristics, tailored to specific contexts.

**SUMMARY** ■ The European Commission has commissioned RAND Europe and the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) to conduct a study mapping diasporas in the European Union and the United States. This study aims to provide an overview of diasporas present in Europe and the US, and to deliver concrete recommendations for engaging with diasporas as a bridge to their countries of origin, especially where improvement is sought in relations with those countries.

For the purposes of this study, we have followed the definition of diaspora offered by (Agunias and Newland, 2012), captured in Box 1 overleaf, though at various steps of the research process the team had to make slight adjustments to this working definition to accommodate data constraints and limitations.

The remit of the study was to:

1. Provide an extensive review and compilation of existing studies on the diasporas, and provide an updated overview of all diaspora communities settled in Europe and the US, in particular their demographics and socio-economic profiles.
2. Focus on a number of key diaspora groups, selected taking into account their demographic weight in both the EU and US, their engagement with the political and economic development of their countries of origin, and the relations between those countries and the EU/US.
3. Analyse the nature and strength of links between these diaspora groups and their countries of origin.

### **Box 1. Working definition of diaspora for the purposes of this study**

“Diasporas are emigrants and their descendants who live outside the country of their birth or ancestry, either on a temporary or permanent basis, yet still maintain affective and material ties to their countries of origin. The common thread among these recent arrivals and members of long-established communities is that they identify with their country of origin or ancestry and are willing to maintain ties to it.”

4. Survey the existence of official diaspora organisations – and other organisations that have an understanding of the diaspora – and characterise their activities.
5. Synthesise findings from the above tasks and propose concrete recommendations for possible EU action, particularly with respect to engaging constructively and effectively with diaspora groups.

Geographically, the remit of this study was diaspora groups in the European Union and in the United States. As stated in the list of objectives above, in its in-depth analysis, this study focused on diaspora groups from 25 selected countries of origin: Afghanistan, Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, and Yemen, as well as Chechnya and Kashmir.

This document is a summary report that includes an overview of the methodology used in the project, a brief discussion of its main findings and a full set of policy recommendations. For a detailed discussion of the research project and its individual components, please refer to the main report.

## METHODOLOGY

### Mapping

Our mapping process was divided into two distinct, yet related phases, with the aim of allowing us to situate the demographic and socio-economic profiles of diaspora communities in the EU and US in their relation to both the wider populations in their host countries and countries of origin. This is captured in Figure 1 below.

In the first phase, we focused on collecting information on diaspora groups and general populations in all Member States in the European Union and the United States. The primary purpose of this exercise was to identify diaspora groups in the European Union and the United States, and to obtain basic socio-economic information (gender, age, education, labour force) on these groups. In the majority of cases, we used the country of birth variable to identify members of diaspora groups.

In the second phase, we expanded our analysis to include a set of selected countries of origin and to collect the same data on the general populations of those countries of origin. In this phase, we also conducted a comparative analysis across selected diaspora groups, their countries of origin and their receiving countries. The aim of this comparative analysis was to enable insights into any notable patterns of outcomes between different diaspora groups in the same receiving country, between diaspora groups and their receiving country populations, between diaspora groups and the populations of

their countries of origin, and between diaspora groups in one country and that same diaspora group in other countries.

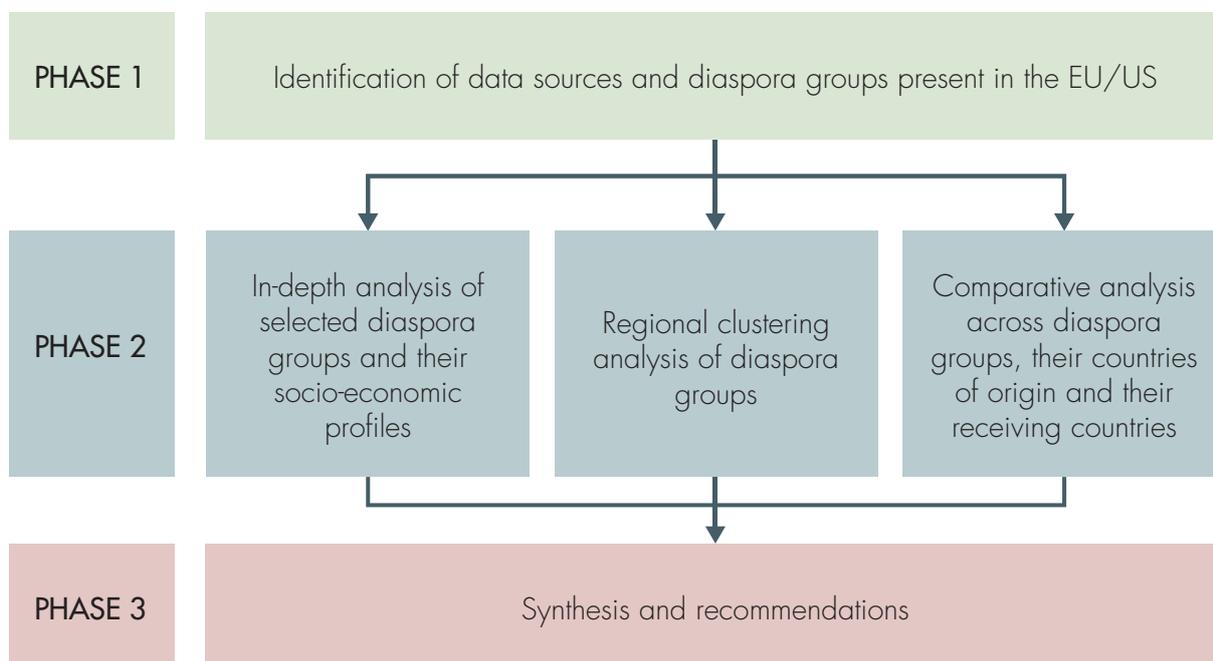
Most recent national censuses formed the basis for this research; however, these censuses were not sufficient to cover all indicators sought in the analysis. As a result, we supplemented these with alternative sources of data, such as the Barro-Lee data set on educational attainment and the OECD Migration Database. Figure 2 overleaf shows all identified diaspora groups from selected countries of origin in the EU and the US and their share of the total population in their respective receiving countries.<sup>1</sup> Top 10% of observations are highlighted in blue. For additional matrix tables that analyse socioeconomic indicators of diaspora groups (age, gender, education, labour force participation) please refer to the main report.

### Desk Research

At the outset of the project, we undertook a structured literature review of the academic and grey literature related to diaspora engagement. Through this review, we sought to understand broadly the models for, effectiveness of, and challenges in approaches to engaging diasporas for various ends. Following this initial review (the detailed methods for which can be found in the main report), we undertook targeted reviews largely outside of the academic literature relating to:

1. sending and receiving country strategies for engaging their diaspora populations, among a subset of countries selected for review;
2. the dynamics between diaspora groups, and;
3. recommendations for diaspora engagement available from prior reports on the topic.

**Figure 1. Process map of mapping analysis**

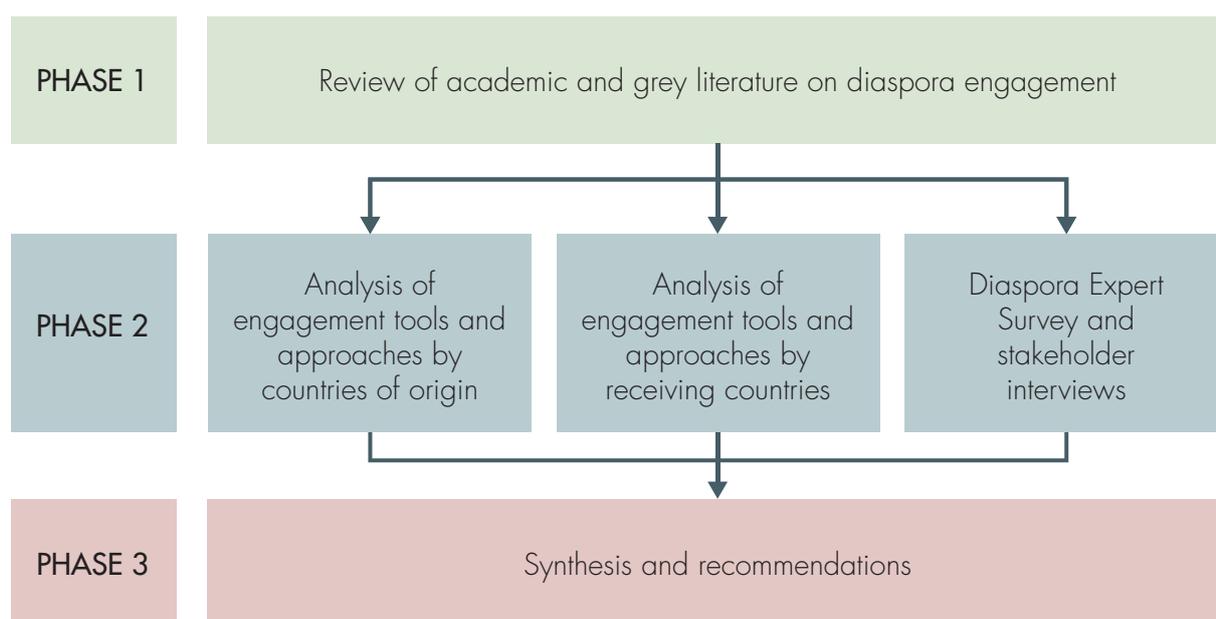


**Figure 2. Identified diaspora groups as a share of total population in their respective receiving countries**

| 24 selected sending countries |                | Asia        |       |          |             |           | Middle East and North Africa |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       | Sub-Saharan Africa |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------|----------|-------------|-----------|------------------------------|----------|-------|------|-------|---------|-------|---------|--------|-------|--------------------|----------|-------|------|------------|-------|---------|-------|--------|--|
|                               |                | Afghanistan | India | Pakistan | Philippines | Sri Lanka | Algeria                      | Djibouti | Egypt | Iraq | Libya | Morocco | Syria | Tunisia | Turkey | Yemen | Eritrea            | Ethiopia | Kenya | Mali | Mauritania | Niger | Somalia | Sudan | Uganda |  |
| Northern and Western Europe   | Austria        | 0.11        | 0.08  | 0.04     | 0.06        | 0.01      | 0.01                         |          | 0.06  | 0.03 | 0.00  | 0.01    | 0.02  | 0.02    | 1.91   |       |                    | 0.00     | 0.01  |      |            |       | 0.02    | 0.00  | 0.00   |  |
|                               | Belgium        | 0.02        | 0.06  | 0.04     | 0.03        | 0.01      | 0.08                         |          | 0.01  | 0.03 |       | 0.76    | 0.02  | 0.04    | 0.36   |       |                    | 0.01     |       | 0.01 | 0.01       | 0.01  |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Denmark        | 0.20        | 0.16  | 0.22     | 0.18        | 0.14      | 0.02                         |          | 0.03  | 0.38 | 0.00  | 0.09    | 0.07  | 0.02    | 0.57   | 0.00  | 0.01               | 0.04     | 0.03  |      |            |       | 0.18    | 0.01  | 0.02   |  |
|                               | Estonia        |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Finland        | 0.05        | 0.08  | 0.03     | 0.04        | 0.01      | 0.01                         |          | 0.02  | 0.15 | 0.00  | 0.03    | 0.01  | 0.01    | 0.10   |       |                    | 0.03     | 0.02  |      |            |       | 0.16    | 0.02  | 0.00   |  |
|                               | France         |             | 0.05  | 0.03     |             | 0.06      | 1.13                         |          |       |      |       | 1.04    |       | 0.37    | 0.38   |       |                    |          |       | 0.10 | 0.02       |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Germany        | 0.07        | 0.07  | 0.04     | 0.02        | 0.03      | 0.02                         |          | 0.02  | 0.10 | 0.01  | 0.08    | 0.04  | 0.03    | 1.97   | 0.00  | 0.01               | 0.01     | 0.01  |      | 0.00       | 0.01  | 0.00    | 0.00  | 0.00   |  |
|                               | Ireland        |             | 0.39  | 0.18     | 0.31        |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         | 0.03   |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Latvia         |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Lithuania      |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Luxembourg     |             | 0.17  | 0.02     | 0.10        |           | 0.13                         |          | 0.03  | 0.04 |       | 0.22    |       | 0.10    | 0.11   |       |                    | 0.02     |       |      |            | 0.03  |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Netherlands    | 0.24        | 0.13  | 0.12     | 0.10        | 0.06      | 0.05                         |          | 0.13  | 0.32 | 0.01  | 2.14    | 0.06  | 0.05    | 2.34   | 0.00  | 0.01               | 0.07     | 0.02  | 0.00 | 0.00       | 0.00  | 0.19    | 0.04  | 0.01   |  |
|                               | Sweden         | 0.36        | 0.38  | 0.22     | 0.21        | 0.14      | 0.05                         |          | 0.09  | 2.57 | 0.03  | 0.16    | 0.46  | 0.09    | 0.90   | 0.02  | 0.25               | 0.29     | 0.06  | 0.00 |            |       | 0.82    | 0.04  | 0.06   |  |
|                               | United Kingdom | 0.11        | 1.24  | 0.86     | 0.22        | 0.23      | 0.04                         |          | 0.05  | 0.13 | 0.03  | 0.04    | 0.02  | 0.01    | 0.16   | 0.03  | 0.03               | 0.03     | 0.25  |      |            |       | 0.18    | 0.03  | 0.11   |  |
| Southern Europe               | Cyprus         |             | 0.36  | 0.18     | 1.19        | 0.87      |                              | 0.39     | 0.23  |      |       | 0.39    |       | 0.06    |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         | 0.03  |        |  |
|                               | Croatia        |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Greece         |             | 0.03  | 0.20     | 0.02        | 0.00      | 0.01                         |          | 0.12  | 0.04 | 0.00  | 0.01    | 0.07  | 0.00    | 0.05   |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         | 0.00  |        |  |
|                               | Italy          | 0.01        | 0.20  | 0.13     | 0.23        | 0.14      | 0.04                         |          | 0.15  | 0.00 | 0.00  | 0.76    | 0.01  | 0.18    | 0.03   |       | 0.02               | 0.01     | 0.00  | 0.00 | 0.00       | 0.00  | 0.01    | 0.00  |        |  |
|                               | Malta          |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Portugal       |             | 0.08  | 0.02     | 0.00        |           | 0.00                         |          | 0.00  |      |       | 0.02    |       | 0.00    | 0.01   |       |                    |          | 0.00  |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Slovenia       |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
| Eastern Europe                | Bulgaria       |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       | 0.04    |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Czech Republic |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Hungary        |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Poland         |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
|                               | Romania        |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       | 0.01    |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
| Slovakia                      |                |             |       |          |             |           |                              |          |       |      |       |         |       |         |        |       |                    |          |       |      |            |       |         |       |        |  |
| United States                 |                | 0.02        | 0.59  | 0.10     | 0.61        | 0.01      | 0.01                         |          | 0.05  | 0.05 |       | 0.02    | 0.02  |         | 0.04   | 0.02  | 0.01               | 0.06     | 0.03  |      |            |       | 0.03    | 0.02  | 0.01   |  |

Colour coding:   Top 10%

**Figure 3. Process map of engagement analysis**



## Surveys and interviews

From our review of existing literature on diasporas, we concluded that the most significant gap in empirical evidence is related to tailoring engagement strategies to specific diaspora contexts, which we aimed to address through our Diaspora Expert Survey (DES) exercise. For this survey, we developed an online questionnaire, which we distributed to diaspora organisations internationally through available online contact information, respondent referrals (snowballing), and existing contact networks. In addition, we conducted eight interviews with diaspora representatives identified through the survey.

The objective of the DES was to help us to understand from the views and experiences of diaspora representatives how, and under what circumstances, diaspora engagement strategies should be employed. Of course, actual tailoring of engagement efforts will be case-specific. However, it appeared possible to suggest a set of principles for tailoring engagement efforts based on initial assessments of both the type of strategy(ies) to be used and the type(s) of diaspora organisation(s) to be engaged through a specific initiative or set of initiatives. We designed the questionnaire to provide a comparative basis on which to build and refine such a set of principles.

Figure 3 above presents a schematic overview of activities conducted as part of our engagement analysis.

## FINDINGS

### Mapping

Our analysis revealed several noteworthy patterns which may help policymakers better understand the characteristics, priorities and concerns of relevant diasporas. First and foremost, in comparison with their countries of origin, diaspora groups on the whole achieve better outcomes on a range of socio-economic indicators. Diaspora groups generally show higher rates of high educational attainment, labour force participation in their receiving countries, and, unsurprisingly, tend to have a higher share of working-age population compared with their counterparts in countries of origin.<sup>2</sup>

In comparison with their countries of origin, diaspora groups on the whole achieve better outcomes on a range of socioeconomic indicators

## Substantial variability exists among receiving countries in how successfully they achieve positive educational and employment outcomes for diaspora groups or attract groups with preexisting good outcomes.

The comparison with receiving countries offers a more complex picture. Diaspora groups have a higher share of working-age population than the populations in the countries where they settled, but are generally lagging behind with respect to labour force and education outcomes. The size of this gap is much larger for labour force participation rates than for educational outcomes.<sup>3</sup>

Substantial variability exists among receiving countries in how successfully they achieve positive educational and employment outcomes for diaspora groups located in their territories or attract groups with preexisting good outcomes. A particularly striking difference was observed between the United States and EU Member States, though we recognise that this difference may be somewhat attributable to geographical factors. In the European context, groups located in northern and western European countries tend to display better outcomes than their southern counterparts. Patterns such as these are particularly useful for identifying any policy and other contextual factors that could be assessed in seeking to explain the outcome differentials across observed diaspora groups. These policy and contextual factors include both policies that may have generated the differentials and policies designed to address the differentials. Refining questions about these policy and contextual factors through such analyses is important for the effort to identify and assess potential ways to improve outcomes for diaspora communities and, by extension, their countries of origin.

### Desk research

Desk research reviewing available literature and government policy and strategy documents suggests that diasporas are increasingly seen as important partners for both sending and receiving country governments' strategies aimed at improving political (and in some cases, security), economic, and cultural outcomes. Our review of existing engagement strategies revealed notable differences in how sending and receiving countries consider diaspora engagement. That is, receiving countries tend to subsume diaspora engagement under

broader integration and migration programmes, while countries or origin are increasingly developing diaspora-specific policies and/or creating national-level agencies with oversight of diaspora affairs.

In both sending and receiving contexts, diaspora groups are actively sought as potential partners in building wealth, increasing security and stability, and promoting both receiving country integration and cultural ties with their homelands. We identified economic, political, and cultural/social goals within diaspora engagement policies amongst both sending and receiving countries. A substantial amount of existing diaspora engagement literature and programmes are directed at the strategic use of diaspora individuals, groups and populations for homeland economic development, primarily though not entirely through remittances and investment. Despite the preponderance of interest in their economic role, a broader potential for diaspora involvement – in skills transfer, facilitating business, supporting engagement with the broader migrant community in host societies, and institution-building in the homeland – is clear in both literature and policy.

Through our review and analysis, we have developed a summary of recommendations common to the available literature on diaspora engagement. The recommendations are outlined opposite in Table 1.

While we find no reason evidence that these recommendations are unfounded, we also note that the evaluation culture surrounding the implementation of diaspora engagement strategies is limited. It is not possible to provide an evidence-based assessment of whether or not these recommendations produce or are associated with better engagement.

In addition, while we broadly acknowledge the value of engagement with diaspora populations, the literature clearly demonstrates both potential barriers and drawbacks to this engagement. First, these populations are often hard to identify and may not easily take up certain types of engagement where processes or goals of engagement are unclear. Engagement with certain diaspora groups may also pose risks for partners, both at civil society and government levels. Partners

should be aware of the dynamics within a diaspora, as well as its relationship to its home country, in advance of crafting an approach to engagement.

## Surveys and interviews

Our survey questionnaire generated 53 responses for analysis. In addition, the survey responses generated a further eight follow-up interviews with diaspora organisation representatives. Respondents to our survey represent organisations serving over 25 separate diaspora communities, with 32 of the respondents representing diasporas from the sending countries selected for in-depth review. Just under one-third of

respondents were based in the US, three represented diaspora groups settled in high-income countries outside the EU or the US,<sup>4</sup> and the remaining two-thirds were based in EU Member States.

Headline findings from quantitative analysis of the survey exercise include:

- A consistent pattern between measured levels of engagement between diaspora organisations and external partners (such as receiving country government agencies, sending country governments, or other civil society organisations), and a measured level of their satisfaction with those partners, in addition to levels of engagement with other partners.

**Table 1. Overview of recommendations in existing literature by theme**

| Recommendation                        | Description   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Know your diaspora                    | Diasporas are heterogeneous entities and diaspora members may have competing conceptions regarding goals and motivations for engagement. Understand the potential divisions and nuances of position between groups within a diaspora for more successful collaborations and partnerships.   |
| Carefully identify your partners      | Diaspora populations may have many possible points of contact, but not all will be suited to specific goals of engagement. Related to the recommendation to 'know your diaspora', governments and others seeking to engage diasporas should consider where potential partners are placed vis-à-vis the broader community and key stakeholders.  |
| Strive for equal partnerships         | Some studies have stressed the importance of achieving balance within partnerships with diaspora or migrant groups and organisations. Where a government or resource-rich NGO partner takes too much responsibility or control, the diaspora partner can become detached from both process and outcome.   |
| Support capacity-building             | Whether in direct partnership on an initiative, or more broadly seeking to support diaspora communities, diaspora engagement should involve support for capacity-building within diaspora communities so that organisations can operate in a stable and more self-sufficient environment.   |
| Provide funding specific to diasporas | While there are many key aspects to successful engagement, little can be accomplished without adequate funding. Non-traditional or innovative funding mechanisms may be appropriate for some engagement activities – but funding remains important in any form.   |
| Build links across diasporas          | Separate diaspora communities or organisations may have common interests or otherwise benefit from linkages. Look for the possibilities for these kinds of partnerships within broader diaspora engagement strategies.  |
| Consider the wider policy context     | Engagement takes place within broader social policy initiatives, and the capacities of governments and other organisations to work with diaspora communities may be affected by government policy shifts in seemingly unrelated areas. Equally, diaspora groups may be interested in engaging in broader debates on national issues such as immigration, foreign policy and human rights which acutely affect their members, and may both appreciate their inclusion and provide important perspectives for such debates. |
| Learn lessons through evaluation      | Research on diaspora communities has recently begun to stress the importance of evaluating engagement programmes to develop and improve engagement efforts. Evaluation should be a core component of any initiative and be considered throughout planning and implementation.   |

- A consistent message – through both free-text question responses and interview respondents – that proactive communication is desired from partners to diaspora organisations.
- While funding remains important to these groups, it was not the only concern identified in the survey. Diaspora groups' substantive goals can often be fulfilled by non-costly interventions such as the ability to provide input on policy processes, audiences with key officials, or technical or administrative support/advice for daily operations.

Our experience from the survey of diaspora organisations reinforces themes in broader literature on diasporas and other migrant groups: they are notably complex populations to access. We recognise that the sample of diaspora organisations to which we reached out is drawn from a much wider unknown population, and that response rates among identified organisations are relatively low, even taking into account that many identified organisations may no longer be active. In particular, we recognise that most or all of the diaspora organisations who provided responses could be considered 'engagement-seeking' in that they exhibit relatively positive attitudes toward engagement with government and civil society partners. We should therefore caveat all results by acknowledging that results may not be transferable to all diaspora organisations, especially for engagement with organisations not seeking engagement with sending and/or receiving country governments. Instead, our findings should be seen as illustrative of experiences and preferences of the responding organisations, with potential lessons (meriting further testing and assessment) for engagement with organisations that could be classified as engagement-seeking.

**Proactive communication is desired from partners to diaspora organisations**

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

### Based on our findings, we propose eight main recommendations for receiving countries seeking to engage with diaspora

This section provides a list of recommendations for policymakers intending to engage with diaspora groups. This list draws from our assessment of the data from our diaspora organization survey alongside relatively consistent messages in existing literature which clusters around key themes for diaspora engagement.

Two underlying points help situate the proposed recommendations. First, concrete ways to engage with individual diaspora groups need to take into account their characteristics, tailored to specific contexts. Some useful data and indicators on the socioeconomic profile of diaspora groups and how they compare across countries and other groups can be gleaned from the mapping exercise conducted as part of this research project and used as a basis, albeit partial, for building an understanding diaspora groups.

Second, evidence collected through our fieldwork suggests that there is room for further work with respect to establishing basic principles and good practices for diaspora engagement. The following points reflect this perspective and focus on establishing broad guidelines pertaining to diaspora engagement.

The recommendations are structured as follows. First, a brief statement of the recommendation is provided, followed by an overview of underlying evidence. Subsequently, we discuss issues surrounding implementation of these recommendations and offer relevant existing examples, where applicable.

After the recommendations, we include a section on further policy considerations. These are points and observations that are not necessarily, or are only more loosely, based on our fieldwork and may not be backed up by as strong evidence as our recommendations. Instead, these policy considerations are intended to serve as starting points for further discussion about policy interventions, and it is hoped they may thereby contribute to the on-going policy debate and to generate impetus for strengthening of the existing evidence base.

### *Be aware of, and attend to, the complexity and heterogeneity of diasporas*

Policymakers should familiarise themselves with the diaspora group and organisation with whom they would like to engage

in order to better understand its characteristics and objectives. There are often many groups representing a diaspora. These groups may at times reflect overt schisms; for example, a number of sending-country political parties have branches or committees where their diaspora is concentrated in receiving countries, and members of these communities may not all support the same party or political position. Divisions may also be due to more subtle distinctions, for example where there are diaspora associations for specific regions of a sending country or where associations are only open to certain members of the diaspora (such as diaspora professional or business organisations). In this context, it is particularly important to build strategies that do not assume that all diaspora organisations have the same aims or engage with various partners for the same reasons.

This is a key point and mirrors every other related study on this matter. It also aligns with our findings on intra-diaspora dynamics and with the main messages derived from our diaspora survey, as exemplified by the spread of data around perceived benefits from engagement by diaspora organisations or the breadth of activities that survey respondents reported undertaking. For instance, representatives of political organisations identified a range benefits in engaging with various sectors of receiving countries' governments, while economic organisations frequently saw benefits in engaging with the government of their countries of origin.

Socio-economic data presented in the mapping section of the main report may be a useful starting point in the process of identifying the main characteristics of diaspora groups and their relationships with their country of origin. Subsequently, these will need to be complemented with highly contextualised qualitative information about potential partner organisations, the broader intra-diaspora dynamics, and, if the home country is to be involved, a mapping of up-to-date information about homeland diaspora engagement strategies, policies and initiatives.

### ***See the potential in each organisation: Many diaspora organisations work far outside their core mission, and others may be interested in expanding their capacity***

This point is an extension of the previous one. In the process of learning about and engaging with diaspora organisations, policymakers and other stakeholders should keep in mind that the number of areas in which a given organisation would be a suitable partner might be larger than it may seem at first glance.

This recommendation is based on data collected through our survey of diaspora organisations. Of those who

responded, many reported engaging in a number of activities not obviously related to their public-facing materials or to their principal areas of activity. Similarly, numerous organisations identified benefits from engagement with partners that would not necessarily be expected given their stated mission. Therefore, diaspora organisations may still be meaningful actors across many spheres, especially local/social ones, and may also be able to partner in development of policy or services for specific migrant groups. In other words, they could assist local/national governments in accessing hard-to-reach populations, and may also be a more trusted/credible delivery mechanism for local services.

### ***Reach out: Proactive communication from governments is desired across diaspora organisations***

Policymakers should keep in mind that diaspora organisations report appreciating shared responsibility for engagement. Therefore, government, to the extent possible, should adopt a pro-active approach to diaspora engagement.

This is one of the clearest findings, based on the diaspora survey and stakeholder interviews. What is more, the finding appears to hold true irrespective of context in our sample, as it applies to both large and small organisations and to organisations of any (political, cultural, social or economic) orientation. Survey respondents reported consistently higher levels of engagement and resulting satisfaction in instances where collaboration was a result of the effort of both parties. This suggests that outreach should be offered by host governments wherever possible (at least to the point that approaches are rebuffed by the organisation). Examples of outreach from host governments can be the so-called 'minorities' fora' in Belgium and the Netherlands, which were set up by the respective governments to establish an ongoing policy dialogue, as discussed in greater detail in Box 3.

### ***Provide support and advice, whether direct or in-kind: most diaspora organisations are small and volunteer-led***

Diaspora organisations are often small and volunteer-led, and do not necessarily have the capacity to assess the potential implications of new policies or opportunities that governments devise. Host society governments should take this into account and assist diaspora organisations in navigating policies and accessing resources if it is important to a receiving country that diaspora organisations persist and grow as civil-society actors. This is particularly applicable where both host societies and diaspora organisations may benefit from

## Box 2. CIM Program Migration for Development Germany

The Program “Migration for Development” has been implemented by a governmental organisation called *Centrum für internationale Migration und Entwicklung* (Centre for International Migration and Development, CIM) since 2011.<sup>5</sup> CIM is ‘jointly run by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the International Placement Services (ZAV) of the German Federal Employment Agency’ (*Centrum für internationale Migration und Entwicklung (CIM)*, n.d.). Their work is financed by the *Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung* (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ) (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2012). According to its website: CIM ‘supports migrant organisations that are implementing projects in their countries of origin that are relevant to development policy’ through the provision of not only financial support but also training and networking opportunities. The stated aim of these efforts is to ‘both advance the social engagement of the migrant organisations and promote the integration of migrants within Germany’ (*Centrum für internationale Migration und Entwicklung*, n.d.). In addition, the Program also aims to enhance ‘the visibility of migrant organisation activities in Germany and in their countries of origin’ (Keusch & Schuster, 2012, p. 36). Migrant associations are eligible when, among others, they are a registered non-profit organisation based in Germany with most of its members from the migrant community. In addition, they should have a strong partner organisation in the country of proposed project. In terms of funding, the Program supports the project for up to 50% (maximum of 50,000 EUR) and the migrant organisation should contribute 50% minimum (minimum of 10% financial and the rest may be other forms of input, including other funds) (Keusch & Schuster, 2012).

the uptake of government programmes and initiatives by these organisations.

This recommendation is primarily a reflection of interviewees’ testimonies, which highlighted the desirability of having access to support systems and capacity-building resources, and was also a point highlighted in the literature on existing integration and engagement activities. In addition, our survey showed that most organisations are very small in terms of their staff and perform their activities to a considerable extent on a voluntary basis. Nonetheless, calls for support should not always be automatically understood as requests for financial assistance, as evidenced by the relatively low prevalence of fundraising as a benefit identified by diaspora organisations. Organisations and other diaspora representatives noted that they would welcome more resources, but many organisations were able to articulate needs outside of, yet related to, direct contributions. An example of a combination of financial and practical support is the German Program “Migration for Development” [discussed in greater detail in

Box 2 above] which supports migrant organisations through financial aids as well as training and networking opportunities.

Where an organisation is (or would like to be) grant-funded, it may be just as important to have accessible staff ready to assist with and explain the existing proposal-writing process to have a pot of money available. Equally, when terms of funding change, sensitive communication including measures to ensure an understanding of these changes may be helpful. This is especially true where policy changes may impact the organisation’s ability to operate/exist. Changes need to be communicated clearly to non-experts and often non-native language speakers who may be unfamiliar with rules and regulations. This finding is in line with lessons derived from a diaspora engagement project in Antwerp, which recommended increasing the city’s role as a match-maker, to hold information meetings about funding opportunities and for the city of Antwerp to liaise with the Belgian regional and federal government(s) to see to what extent these

Host society governments should assist diaspora organisations in navigating policies and accessing resources if it is important to a receiving country that diaspora organisations grow as civil-society actors

initiatives can be brought under official development initiatives (CeMIS, 2012, p. 75).

### ***Make yourself and your activities known to diaspora representatives***

This recommendation is closely related to the previous one in that policymakers may want to improve the extent to which and the way in which they reach out to diaspora groups. Policymakers and other stakeholders interested in engaging with diaspora groups should not assume that diaspora representatives are familiar with their activities, portfolios or even their existence.

This recommendation is based on the fact that several diaspora representatives reported relatively low levels of familiarity with on-going initiatives to engage diaspora groups and limited ability to navigate existing policy landscape. This is particularly applicable to the European Union and its agencies, which some interviewees admitted they did not consider a potential partner for engagement.

### ***Maintain relationships: Higher levels of engagement are correlated with higher levels of satisfaction towards governments and other organisations***

Once working relationships with diaspora groups are established, policymakers should make an effort to facilitate their long-term continuation. Not only are long-term relationships more cost-effective, they may also lead to positive spillovers for other stakeholders and into other forms of collaboration with diasporas.

This recommendation builds on the finding relating to communication between diaspora groups and their partners. Our analysis revealed that levels of engagement with one aspect of host country government are positively associated with the frequency of engagement with other partners, suggesting there may be knock-on effects between various types of engagement. Moreover, levels of engagement with one partner were in several instances positively associated with levels of satisfaction with another partner. This is potentially of significance because it supports the hypothesis that sustained relationships can produce positive spillovers in both directions – i.e. they can help diaspora organisations engage better with other partners but can also help policymakers reach out to other diaspora groups with whom the engaged organisation has existing relationships.

In addition, some available evidence suggests that continued and sustained relationships qualitatively improve over time to produce tangible results – for instance, in the

**Policymakers interested in engaging with diaspora groups should not assume that diaspora representatives are familiar with their activities, portfolios or even their existence**

form of increased diaspora capacity to engage with policymakers. With respect to a local initiative in Belgium mentioned above, its review found that cooperation between the development cooperation agency of the city of Antwerp and migrant organisations ‘led to professionalization of projects and network expansion of the migrant organisations’ (CeMIS, 2012).

### ***Improving diaspora engagement does not have to be costly: identify ‘low-hanging fruit’***

It is important to stress that improvements in diaspora engagement do not necessarily need to take the form of creating new offices, initiatives and projects. In fact, policymakers and other stakeholders may be able to reap substantial benefits with steps that are not costly or onerous.

This point is based on comments by diaspora representatives in their survey responses and subsequent interviews. For instance, interviewees tended to express positive sentiments towards officials who had accepted their invitations to events. Simple gestures such as these seemed to provide real social capital for future engagement and were likely to be truly appreciated by diaspora representatives.

Similarly, survey respondents offered suggestions for improving relationships with host governments that could be achieved at low cost and with limited effort. These included greater acknowledgement or recognition of the organisation or diaspora, as well as inclusion in planning or consultation for government policy and projects. Diaspora organisations’ desire for inclusion in government processes is in line with our survey findings, which suggested that diaspora organisations felt more satisfied when the responsibility for engage-

### Box 3. How changes in policy may influence sustainability of projects: the Dutch example

In 1997 the Dutch government set up the *Landelijk Overleg Minderheden* (National Consultation Platform for Minorities, LOM) (LOM, n.d.-b). The legal basis for this consultation was laid out in the *Wet Overleg Minderhedenbeleid* (Minority Policy Consultation Act, WOM) of 1997 (Minister van Justitie, 1997).

LOM was set up by the government 'to discuss its integration policies with interlocutors from the main immigrant and minority groups' (De Haas, 2006, p. 38). LOM works with eight so-called 'alliances' that represent a specific ethnic minority group in the Netherlands. These alliances 'jointly represent more than 1.8 million citizens of Caribbean, Chinese, Moroccan, Moluccan, Surinamese, Turkish and South European descent and refugees in the Netherlands' (LOM, n.d.-a). As a representative for minority groups in the Netherlands, LOM is involved in the policy debate involving these groups in the form of recommendations and solutions (LOM, n.d.-a).<sup>6</sup> The annual funding in 2011 for LOM partnerships was around €3 million in total (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2012).

After a first announcement in 2011, the WOM was withdrawn in June 2013 (Nederlands Juristenblad, 2013; Nederlandse Regering, 2011). The accompanying explanatory statement listed several reasons for the discontinuation of the LOM structure, which included, among others (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2012):

- The position of migrants had changed with groups having become more diverse in terms of, for example, education level and generation differences (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2012).
- The Dutch government argued that 'people should be held accountable on the basis of their individual responsibility as a citizen, instead of on the basis of ethnicity'.<sup>7</sup>
- Furthermore, the government stated that policy on ethnicity places emphasis on differences and hence is 'at odds with the pursuit of common citizenship'.
- One of the goals of the WOM was to strengthen 'the participation in policy processes of minority groups that were not sufficiently represented at different levels, and therefore had fewer opportunities to exert influence'. As the current integration policy is aimed at responsibility of individuals to actively take part in society, this goal is no longer applicable.

Despite the withdrawal of the WOM, the government will continue to discuss integration issues with Dutch society, yet this will take the form of a more flexible dialogue based on current events and themes (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2012). From 2012 until January 2015 there is a transition period in which funding is being gradually phased out in order for the LOM partnerships to conclude their activities, to look for other funding sources, to secure their knowledge and networks and thus 'to prepare themselves for an independent future.' (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2012). This 'phasing out' period was not laid down in the original Act. However, the Minister for Immigration, Integration and Asylum stated in his explanatory statement that it is 'desirable' that the subsidy arrangement continues for the time being (i.e. until January 2015).

ment did not rest solely with them. This desire is also likely related to the broadly-stated interest from respondents for more, and more regular, communication from the host government, as outlined at a number of points above.

These kinds of gestures do not necessarily represent a heavy burden of commitment on the part of policymakers and public officials, though they do require consideration of whether and how governments want to align with these organisations, and whether and to what degree they would support similar requests from other diaspora organisations.

However, to the degree that governments would value such engagement, these kinds of opportunities for increased contact appear to be both valuable and practicable without substantial resource requirements.

While originally applicable to the field of discrimination and prejudice, some further insights related to this recommendation can be gleaned from Allport's contact theory (1954). As Allport suggested (and as further supported by subsequent analysis, see, for example, Esses, Jackson, Dovidio, & Hodson, 2005), positive outcomes can be achieved

by increased interaction between diverse groups. What is more, a number of facilitators may increase the likelihood that inter-group contact results in positive outcomes, which could be useful as guidelines to policymakers in the design of future policy initiatives. First, more positive dynamics tend to occur when all groups perceive each other as equals. In addition, when members of different groups are involved in doing something collaborative (sharing and pursuing a common goal), the results of that contact tend to be more positive. Finally, the effects of contact tend to be greater when this contact is supported by law, custom or social institutions, which provide ‘norms of acceptance and guidelines for how members of different groups should interact with each other’ (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). This point further reinforces the importance of engaging in regular and proactive communication and equal partnership initiatives, especially where the goal of the engagement is to build relationships among diasporas and partner organisations.

### ***Sustainability of engagement may be crucial for its success***

The effectiveness of collaboration with diaspora groups is to a large extent dependent on the ability to sustain the working relationship for a prolonged period of time. Policymakers need to be aware of the often precarious position in which many diaspora organisations find themselves in and have the longer term in mind.

Higher levels of engagement are associated with greater satisfaction on part of diaspora organisations. Our survey question on levels of engagement asked ‘how often’ diaspora representatives collaborated with other partners, which is a somewhat different question from asking ‘how long’ such a relationship has been in place. Nevertheless, our interpretation of its link to sustainability is supported by the fact that longer-established organisations reported higher levels of engagement. In addition, sustainability considerations featured prominently in stakeholder interviews in which several interviewees reported anxieties about uncertainties in regard to future funding streams, continuation of mutual projects, policy priorities, etc.

Of course, it is not always possible to prevent a discontinuation of a programme or a change in policy. However, it may be feasible to shield diaspora organisations from some of the attendant adverse effects and help them better withstand external shocks, for instance by introducing a gradual phase-out as opposed to abrupt discontinuation. For instance, this approach was adopted in the decision to discontinue the Dutch platform for consulting minorities (see Box 3 opposite).

### **Policy considerations**

The recommendations above are all backed by evidence in existing literature and data gathered for the present study. Some of the following suggestions come from a less extensive or concrete evidence base than that which underpins our recommendations section and may refer to novel or untested, but promising or compelling, factors and components to consider for future policy and practice. We therefore provide the following policy considerations as additional guidance in the interpretation of our recommendations and when planning and implementing engagement initiatives.

### ***Embedding evaluation and learning at all stages of diaspora engagement is key for building an evidence base in this area***

As discussed at some length in the main report, there is a relative paucity of evaluations in the field of diaspora engagement. In addition, a good number of assessments that do exist and are publically available are closer to progress and activity reports than they are to rigorous assessments of the programme or intervention’s effects and impacts. This kind of activity-focused reporting contrasts sharply with official national and pan-European guidance on the need for more evidence-based policies, especially at a time when budget constraints call for careful utilisation of resources to ensure value for money and effectiveness. In order to address this discrepancy, decision makers at all levels of government should consider making evaluation an important component of policy interventions, embedded in their design and implementation. Doing so would help develop the evidence base for current and future decisions and expenditure, while improving clarity and transparency about the aims and rationales of policy choices.

### ***Diasporas operate in an ever-changing environment: Keep up-to-date on developments relating to conditions for engagement***

In the main report, we have provided typologies of goals for and targets of engagement, as well as charting initiatives and structures currently in place in selected home and host countries that may bear on possibilities for diaspora engagement in each context. This information will provide starting points for determining how, why, and through which actors, diaspora communities may be engaged. Nonetheless, the terrain on which engagement takes place is constantly shifting. The appropriate target for achieving specified goals, as well as the

means through which these are achieved, may also shift during planning for or implementation of engagement initiatives.

Regarding engagement for homeland development, we particularly note that many of the diaspora engagement initiatives and national strategies identified in the selected sending countries are currently in development. Moreover, many existing engagement initiatives are predicated on government institutions which are, in some cases, not coherently organised at present, despite a national intention to do so. Also, in certain states examined within the selected countries, we expect that approaches to diaspora engagement may be redrawn in the aftermath of recent or ongoing conflict or may be subject to change following political transitions.

Attention to these and related conditions for engagement should thus be foregrounded in future initiatives, and in turn efforts will be required to harness area knowledge from experts, officials, and/or diaspora members as appropriate. This observation is related to the point made in the mapping section with respect to data limitations. Ultimately, information presented in this report is a reflection of knowledge amassed at a certain moment in time. To ensure its continuous utility, the underlying data should be regularly monitored and updated to reflect the situation on the ground.

Finally, in relation to engagement with specific diaspora organisations, we note that these organisations tend to change in focus and scope over time. New organisations emerge and, conversely, sometimes established groups cease organised activities altogether. Regarding our survey of diaspora organisations, most respondents (58%) represented organisations that had existed for 10 years or less, and many of the organisations we contacted for response were no longer active, suggesting a level of transience in these organisations.<sup>8</sup> In turn, those seeking partnerships with diaspora groups may wish to maintain relationships with multiple representative organisations, and should stay in regular contact with established diaspora organisation partners to remain up-to-date on relevant developments that may impact future collaboration or engagement opportunities.

### *Diasporas can provide useful data: Voluntary databases of diaspora organisations could capture key information to facilitate future engagement*

A number of governmental and non-governmental organisations have begun using databases of migrants as a part of their broader engagement strategy. The motivations for this approach differ between cases; in some, such as Kenya, the interest is in connecting diaspora groups with one another in host societies, whereas in others, such as the Sudan or Algeria, a targeted database is maintained for skilled or expert members of the diaspora population to support development in the homeland. Databases can thus collect information on individuals or organisations, and the kinds of information collected should be tailored to engagement need. From the results of our survey, we suggest that a database aimed at diaspora organisations may want to collect information on the kinds of activities in which an organisation engages in, or otherwise determine the main goals of the organisation, so that potential partners with diaspora groups can more easily identify appropriate partners.

### *There already exists infrastructure for diaspora engagement: Exploring ways to utilise it may be an effective way forward*

An effective form of engagement with and outreach to diaspora groups does not necessarily have to entail the establishment of new policy infrastructure or the creation of a new policy instrument. Numerous initiatives and programmes run by receiving countries are already in place and, as evidenced by survey respondents and follow up interviews, diaspora organisations make use of these, albeit to varying degrees. Receiving countries might consider exploring ways to get involved in official channels of communication and collaboration between various third countries and their diasporas. Policies and contractual arrangements with other countries which would facilitate remittances and circular flow of people, such as the UK and US government engagement with Kenyan financial institutions designed to serve their diaspora, are just one example. This is in line with observa-

Numerous initiatives and programmes run by receiving countries are already in place and diaspora organisations make use of these, albeit to varying degrees

tions made elsewhere, which have, among other suggestions, also included calls for strategic relationships with a selected group of countries of origin (A.R.S. Progetti s.r.l., 2007; OECD, 2012).

### **Overcoming coordination challenges across multiple stakeholders may require sharper focus and clearer goals**

As discussed elsewhere in this report, diaspora engagement is a field that spans multiple policy areas. This span has clear benefits as it invites the participation and buy-in of various stakeholders. At the same time, it creates challenges, not least in the form of coordination complexities, risks of diffusion of responsibility and overall lack of clarity. For example, evaluations of initiatives in Italy and at the EU level highlighted the importance of strong operational partnerships (Charpin & Aiolfi, 2011; De Haas, 2006). Similarly, in Spain, where local authorities have been engaged with diaspora and migrant groups - especially in some of the regions with greater concentration of migrants, like Andalusia, Madrid, Catalonia and Basque Country - issues around coordination and duplication of activities and services have been reported (A.R.S. Progetti s.r.l., 2007).

The situation is further compounded by the fact that receiving countries intent on collaboration with diaspora groups have not generally produced a diaspora engagement strategy or a policy manifesto outlining policy goals and relevant actors. This lack of strategy is in line with the testimony of numerous representatives of diaspora groups who have admitted a relatively low level of awareness of official engagement policies, on-going initiatives and available sources of support.

Therefore, policymakers might consider exploring ways to facilitate access for diaspora groups, improve their ability to navigate across the landscape of relevant organisations and players, and also clarify any existing misperceptions that might exist on the part of officials and policymakers. A clear formulation of diaspora engagement goals and principles might be a useful step in this regard, though it should not be seen as a panacea. A similar recommendation was made in a study reflecting on a local initiative in Antwerp, which found a lack of clarity about whether migrant organisations were supported by both development and integration agencies. In response, the authors called for better alignment of integration policy and development cooperation agency and for the publication of good practices of migrant organisations (CeMIS, 2012).

Another possibility would be to designate a one-stop shop for diaspora groups and organisations that might serve

as a gateway and access point to policymakers and other stakeholders charged with sign-posting to relevant agencies. An example of a related type of arrangement is IdeA, which aims to bring together diaspora organisations and assist with their further networking efforts.

### **Diaspora organisations often face similar challenges as other civil society organisations. There may be substantial added value in coordinating efforts to work with the two.**

It may be worth exploring ways to increase coordination and synergy between initiatives involving diaspora groups and other civil society groups, as well as encouraging collaborative initiatives between multiple diaspora organisations. Our survey suggests that diaspora organisations are regularly engaged with one another, with 39 of 53 respondents indicating regular engagement with other diaspora organisations, and 37 of 53 indicating regular engagement with NGO and other civil society groups. If existing infrastructure to engage with diaspora groups remains underdeveloped or ineffective, it may be more efficient and cost-effective to identify ways in which the existing infrastructure could work with voluntary, charitable and other civil society organisations.

This observation is based on the similarity between challenges that diaspora representatives report and those commonly associated with the voluntary sector in general. Some of these most consistently mentioned issues included capacity constraints, fundraising concerns or staffing challenges, i.e. issues amply addressed in the academic literature pertaining to the third/voluntary sector (Cairns, Harris, & Young, 2005; Cunningham, 1999; Harris, 1998; Palmer, 2005). Also, as noted, survey respondents consistently reported higher levels of engagement with other civil society organisations than with any government actors. This disparity suggests that platforms for engaging with third sector organisations may serve as useful tools for increasing access to diaspora organisations. This is not to say that diaspora organisations do not have their specific characteristics (such as sensitivity to migration, integration and development policies). Instead, this observation highlights the potential room for efficiency and economy-of-scale gains using existing infrastructure where possible.

An example which recognises the position of diaspora organisations within the broader world of civil and voluntary sector, albeit with a very close link to the US foreign policy establishment, is the US-based Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society, described in Box 4 overleaf.

#### **Box 4. 'Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society': the United States' working group approach**

Engagement with civil society is a 'cornerstone' of US foreign policy (The White House, 2013). Established in 2011, the Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society of the US Department of State 'provides a forum for cooperation with civil society and a vehicle for telling the story of our ongoing work to support and protect the freedoms of association and expression' (US Department of State, n.d.-b). Representatives of civil society groups from several countries, the US government and US-based international NGOs are involved in the Dialogue which is now carried out by a Federal Advisory Committee (US Department of State, n.d.-b). Virtual participation in the Dialogue through US embassies is also a possibility. Under this initiative, thematic working groups are held which focus on, for example, empowering women, governance and accountability and labour (US Department of State, n.d.-b). Following the Mission and Washington-based working groups, civil society representatives came up with policy recommendations brought to the State Department by the Federal Advisory Committee for discussion (US Department of State, n.d.-b).

#### ***Choosing appropriate level of analysis and organisation may require careful consideration***

An important consideration for working with diaspora groups is to select the most appropriate organisational level at which to engage with them. This primarily applies to levels of government, but in principle can apply to the vertical hierarchy of diaspora groups as well. As discussed in numerous places in this report, work with diaspora occurs across various levels of government. With that in mind, different levels may be better or worse positioned to act on a particular issue. For instance, our analysis of existing policy tools and frameworks at the level of receiving countries showed that, generally speaking, diaspora engagement from the perspective of home country development is predominantly addressed at the national level, whereas subnational levels are more occupied with an integration-related agenda and other local issues. Added to the mix is the European Union, which, as reported by surveyed diaspora representatives, is not automatically thought of as a potential partner for engagement.

Correspondingly, several levels of collaboration can be distinguished with respect to diaspora groups. Diaspora engagement can take the form of collaboration with diaspora organisations, focus on engaging directly with diaspora populations, or work through diaspora organisations to impact diaspora populations. As a consequence, considerations about the appropriate level of analysis and organisation should be part of any engagement planning process. We develop this point in greater detail below and offer the schematic Table 2, which may prove useful as a guideline for engagement tailoring. In this context, it may be worth noting that given the ad hoc and transient nature of many diaspora organisations, governments may wish to avoid putting all of their eggs into one organisational basket.

#### ***Funding assistance may entail improving access to already existing sources and/or introducing new types, such as social investment***

Several more remarks about the role of funding and financial support within the context of diaspora engagement are worth noting. As already suggested in the recommendations above, funding appears to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for successful diaspora engagement. In other words, policy-makers should not view funding as a goal in itself but as a component that diaspora organisations perceive as instrumental in achieving their goals. Faced with the pervasiveness of budgetary constraints and possible unavailability of additional funding, it may be helpful to consider ways to facilitate access to what has already been made available to diaspora organisations. This suggestion echoes sentiments expressed by several diaspora representatives who have often found funding application processes confusing and excessively onerous.

In addition, while policymakers might not be in a position to increase the volume of direct financial support, they may be able to provide diaspora groups with assistance in accessing other types of funding. Social investment could be an example of such a source of support. As evidenced by the socioeconomic indicators presented in the mapping section, diaspora groups (and the populations of their countries of origin) generally exhibit lower levels of various social outcomes such as educational attainment or labour force participations in comparison with native populations of receiving countries. A significant share of surveyed organisations reported being involved in activities intended to improve these outcomes, which may be of potential interest to socially-minded investors who have shown interest in supporting such activities. This means there may be a role for policymakers to serve as an intermediary between diaspora groups and social investors

## Policymakers should not view funding as a goal in itself but as a component that diaspora organisations perceive as instrumental in achieving their goals

and help establish and nurture relationships (including potential funding relationships) between the two groups. This point has been echoed in an engagement scheme in Antwerp, which found that the city can be a facilitator between companies/sponsors and migrant organisations (CeMIS, 2012, p. 75).

### *(Un)willingness to engage may be related to some groups' precarious formal status*

Some reluctance on the part of diaspora groups to engage with authorities may stem from the fact that some diaspora members may not be legally authorised to reside in the receiving countries or may otherwise find their legal status surrounded by uncertainties. They might opt to keep a low profile and avoid entering into relationships with official bodies, even if they would benefit from such collaboration and the other party does not intend to impose any sanctions on them. This consideration did not feature prominently in the survey responses, potentially owing to either the kind of respondents involved or the unwillingness to report such an issue, but it remains present in literature on existing examples of diaspora engagement.

Policymakers should recognise this consideration as one of the potential barriers to collaboration with diaspora groups. Some diaspora groups, for instance, might be particularly sensitive to changes in migration policy and the legal context of its implementation. Building on one of the recommendations made in the previous section, this may be an area where policymakers could make a real difference in their qualitative relationship with diaspora groups with relatively modest steps. Of course, overhauling immigration policy would be a serious political undertaking, which might not be politically desirable. However, tangible benefits might be realised by incremental changes such as tackling long waiting

and processing times or reducing the bureaucratic burden placed on participants in the immigration system. For such groups it may also be beneficial to encourage engagement with NGOs and other CSOs, perhaps as less threatening or more informal alternatives. In addition, policymakers may wish to consider the desirability of introducing some form of firewall mechanism between immigration enforcement and diaspora outreach efforts.

### *Identification of suitable partners can be a challenging and, at times, risky undertaking*

Several important considerations should be kept in mind when identifying suitable partners for engagement with diaspora groups, as discussed below. These points are based mostly on the reviewed literature and our reflections on the diaspora survey and stakeholder interviews. However, unlike other points in this chapter, they reflect the research team's synthesis of available literature and interpretation of survey data rather than any preferences or points explicitly expressed by diaspora representatives.

First, there is a risk of engaging with groups who might hamper long-term collaboration with a diaspora and its country of origin. An example would be an organisation that is clearly on one side of a political debate in its country of origin and could thus carry the potential of alienating potential partners from another side of the divide.

Second, as exemplified by the relatively low response rate to our contact efforts, diaspora groups can be difficult to reach. Moreover, within diaspora groups substantial differences may exist in the extent to which organisations are willing and able to engage with officials and other stakeholders. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that collaborating with hardest-to-reach groups may yield the largest benefits, depending on the engagement goals in question. Particularly if the aim is to improve the outcomes for diaspora populations, hard-to-reach groups might represent those who would most benefit from such interventions or could enjoy disproportionate access to this population subset. Conversely, those groups that may be more predisposed to or open to collaborating with public officials might not be the most ideal partners. This may be due to, among other factors, incompatibility of objectives or lack of shared sense of priority.

Third, in light of the access difficulties discussed above, policymakers need to be aware that diaspora engagement carries the risk of creating an association, albeit in all likelihood an indirect one, with groups with whom policymakers may prefer not to be linked. Examples of such organisations may be groups with extremist, violent and intolerant views, or groups that advocate non-democratic policies. This is not

necessarily a concern with organisations that are most ready to or already are engaging with policymakers but may arise when trying to increase the reach of engagement activities to include lower-profile actors.

Fourth, if it is indeed the case that official engagement efforts fail to find suitable partners, there might be other indirect routes to reach various groups, particularly if policymakers and other stakeholders are intent on engaging with groups in the diaspora country of origin. Social media has been suggested as one such example of a novel medium to get in touch with hard-to-reach groups in challenging contexts (CBC News, 2013; Radio Free Europe, 2013; The Guardian, 2013).

We recognise that these points do not offer conclusive answers to the issues raised; nevertheless, it is hoped that some use is gained by presenting them here in order to set realistic expectations and highlight to policymakers and other relevant parties some challenges likely to be encountered. The following section includes more detailed suggestions of how some of these challenges may be overcome.

### **Engagement strategies can be directed at specific diaspora groups or individuals, wider diaspora populations, or a combination of these; and may be targeted at specific issues or broader goals**

‘Engagement’ is a rather non-specific term which can carry multiple meanings and manifestations. In this study, we examined engagement strategies based on their dominant motivations – political, economic, or sociocultural – and in the case of receiving countries, by whether they were primarily directed at benefitting either the home or the host society.<sup>9</sup> These distinctions help to illuminate the goals of engagement. Equally, we also believe it is worthwhile examining strategies based on the targets of engagement, especially when considering future engagement opportunities.

Engagement strategies may be targeted at diaspora populations as a whole, either within one or more receiving countries, or to the diaspora more globally. Strategies may be targeted at diaspora organisations, either individually (i.e. a partnership with a single organisation) or at multiple organisations representing one or more diaspora groups. They may also be targeted at individual or select members of the diaspora, whether or not those individuals are previously organised or connected to one another. Moreover, they may involve a combination of targets, for example seeking to engage the broader diaspora population through well-placed individuals or organisational partnerships.

Some strategies for diaspora may also seek specific outcomes around identified issues, with clear goals and potential for measurement. In contrast, other strategies may be broad-based, or without clear end-points or goals, aiming to facilitate diaspora activity more generally. We provide a typology of these distinctions opposite in Table 2, with some indicative examples of diaspora engagement strategies in the intersecting cells.

The boundaries between these distinctions will often be blurred. For example, initiatives such as co-development programmes may be broad or targeted in nature, and may involve diaspora organisations alongside the wider diaspora population in supporting their efforts. Nonetheless, there are qualitative differences between the scope and content of these different approaches to engagement that deserve consideration when seeking to determine appropriate strategies.

### **Recognising the characteristics of a diaspora organisation may help in determining appropriate engagement strategies**

As noted regularly in this report, the most frequently cited recommendation – both in previous studies of diaspora engagement, as well as in related fields of migration and integration studies – is the importance of knowing each diaspora group when seeking to engage, provide services, assist with integration, or otherwise connect for with these populations. While the previous section noted that diaspora organisations were rarely a suitable proxy for entire diaspora populations, diaspora organisations nonetheless may represent means for accessing potentially significant subsets of diaspora populations. It appears likely that receiving countries and sending countries alike will continue to access relevant diaspora populations through representatives of local, national and international diaspora organisations, fora, and councils, owing to a combination of the convenience of this approach, the lack of a plausible and practicable alternatives, and the often profuse links that key members of diaspora organisations may have to the broader diaspora community, relevant agencies, and other civil society organisations.

It is challenging to categorise diaspora organisations along one defining set of characteristics. The particular axis of characteristics one examines will play a part in determining what appears important in terms of understanding the organisation, yet other considerations are likely to be useful. The following questions may provide a checklist of questions to consider when seeking to ‘get to know diaspora organisations’, and hopefully offers some insight into the consequences of each answer.

**Table 2. Matrix of engagement by breadth and target group**

|                      |                                | Breadth of engagement  |  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
|                      |                                | Broad  | Targeted   |
| Target of engagement | Diaspora population            | <p>Initiatives aimed at encouraging links with large and potentially undefined sections of the diaspora population, for wide-ranging goals such as integration in the receiving country or encouraging economic or other contributions to the sending country.</p> <p>Examples include <b>diaspora banks/accounts; diaspora conferences; voting, representation and citizenship rights for diaspora members; and migrant integration programmes in host societies.</b></p> | <p>Initiatives aimed at a potentially undefined section of the diaspora population, but with a specific goal in mind, such as developing a sector of the sending country economy, financing a specific project or contributing to one aspect of integration.</p> <p>Examples include <b>diaspora bonds; co-development programmes between home and host societies; and counter-radicalisation initiatives.</b></p> |
|                      | Diaspora organisation          | <p>Initiatives aimed at developing capacities of diaspora organisations generally, but not necessarily partnering with specific organisations.</p> <p>Examples include <b>databases of diaspora organisations; funding initiatives for development of diaspora/civil society organisations; and funding for community events.</b></p>  | <p>Initiatives aimed at developing diaspora engagement through specific diaspora organisations, with identified goals.</p> <p>Examples include <b>language and cultural schools; single-issue partnerships (such as engagement with migrant groups at risk of specific health problems); and diaspora branches of homeland political parties.</b></p>  |
|                      | Individual members of diaspora | <p>Initiatives aimed at individual members or small groups within diaspora communities, with diffuse or general expectations of outcomes from engagement.</p> <p>Examples include <b>diaspora councils and consultative bodies; databases of skilled members of diaspora; and development of diaspora business councils for trade facilitation between home and host countries.</b></p>  | <p>Initiatives aimed at individual members or small groups within diaspora communities, with identified goals from engagement.</p> <p>Examples include <b>return of skilled migrants programmes (e.g. directed at sending country health care or administrative capacity); and the use of high-profile diaspora members in awareness campaigns or transitional governments.</b></p>                                |

### **What are the general characteristics of the organisation?**

How big or small, established or new, is this organisation? Does it receive funding from grants, foundations, community members, and/or private donors? Is it volunteer-led, or does it have paid staff? Is it a stand-alone or umbrella organisation? Does it claim to represent all diaspora members from a sending country, or is it oriented to a sub-group of the diaspora (such as a regional, youth-based, or women-specific group)? How does it make its decisions and engage its membership? These basic characteristics will likely bear on the kinds of initiatives in which such an organisation can participate, and how easily it can connect with its membership or the broader diaspora.

### **What is the organisation's main mission?**

While we found that organisations are hard to strictly categorise, most have a 'main' or primary mission that fits into the goal-orientations we defined earlier (political, economic, or sociocultural) and with a handful of organisations, this mission seems to be their primary or only activity. In particular, we found that some organisations actively make efforts to show that they have no designs on (particularly) home country politics and are only interested in host society policy as it pertains to their smooth integration into the host society or the wellbeing of their membership. Many other organisations, however, have explicitly political goals or interests within their stated sphere of activities, which is perhaps unsurprising and often non-problematic. In all cases, the main focus of the organisation provides a guide for the types of partnerships organisations are willing to engage in, and may impact on the kinds of engagement valued by each.

### ***Where does the organisation direct its activities?***

Certain diaspora organisations are almost entirely focused on homeland issues, while others avoid everything to do with the homeland and focus on receiving society integration and participation. Is the organisation host society or home society focused, or does it take a blended or comprehensive approach to diaspora issues? Does it also engage with other civil society groups regularly, and is it involved with intergovernmental and international organisations and initiatives? Understanding the direction of the organisational focus can assist in linking organisations to one another as well as understanding the breadth of partnerships that may be possible.

### ***Is the organisation narrow or broad-based in its activities?***

Some organisations may only have one goal, such as a specific policy change or awareness around one issue; whether by choice, or due to capacity, they may limit themselves to attempts at success within this specific domain. Certain groups are only interested in business development, for example, and so would have little involvement with more disadvantaged members of their broader diaspora.

While these questions for consideration are apparent from our respondents, these are unlikely to be an exhaustive list of potential considerations. In particular, organisations who responded to the survey are likely to represent only part of the picture, and in particular include organisations more likely to support receiving country integration, intercultural dialogue, sending country economic and political development toward more Western models, and closer ties between sending and receiving countries in terms of business links and brain circulation. It is unclear what proportion of all diaspora organisations would share these characteristics.

### ***Are there any negative repercussions that could stem from engaging with this group?***

Engagement with diaspora organisations, individuals and populations is broadly perceived as positive in the available literature, as noted above, and proactive engagement was seen by our interview and survey participants as constructive and encouraging further engagement. However, there are a number of potential cautions for engagement with diaspora groups. Governments and organisations seeking to engage diasporas should be aware of existing schisms within the broader diaspora population, and consider whether their point of contact – for example, an established diaspora

organisation – is inclusive or exclusive of certain viewpoints. Similarly, governments and organisations should consider the potential implications of requests made by certain diaspora groups on their relationships with other organisations and governments, both at receiving and sending country levels. This should not discourage governments and organisations from engagement, but rather ensure that potential repercussions from certain types of engagement are understood and to the extent possible avoided or protected against in advance.

### **Mapping data may be used to help understand the broader diaspora population, and to help tailor engagement initiatives, at the receiving country level**

Generally speaking, there is high heterogeneity of single country-of-origin diaspora groups across EU Member States and the United States. The policy implications of this are that the principle of heterogeneity within and amongst receiving countries must be considered by national-level officials when tailoring engagement initiatives for any one sending country, as the socio-economic profile of one country's diaspora in France will often be very different from its profile in the UK, for instance. Using mapping data to understand the diaspora profile *as related to one specific receiving country and how that compares to other settings* is a useful tool for policymakers to tailor engagement initiatives based on evidence, not on assumptions of the efficacy of initiatives in other countries with a large population of the same diaspora. Similarly, understanding the profile of the diaspora at the receiving country level should feed back into existing engagement initiatives, which may need to be amended as this profile changes over time.

For policymakers at EU-level, developing holistic engagement strategies for specific sending countries should also bear in mind this heterogeneity-in-dispersion. Mapping data can identify countries in which a diaspora would benefit from home country investment and skilled labour return, along with countries where more effective diaspora engagement could take the form of inward investment such as increased access to education and training.

While mapping data can be used to better identify characteristics of the diaspora population at the receiving-country level, it can also be used for local, national, and international organisations such as the EU to better identify organisations with whom to engage. By identifying the characteristics and needs of diasporas from mapping data, governments can

choose organisational partners which may have more of an impact with broad- and single-issue based engagement initiatives. In this context, mapping longitudinal data may be useful to improve understanding of how diasporas develop over time. For instance, there may be notable differences between ‘old’ and ‘new’ groups, and composition may change based on home or host country events. Longitudinal data may also help measure the impact of policy changes.

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## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The potential for future practice is evidently wide-ranging in the area of diaspora engagement by both sending and receiving countries. Our considerations and recommendations should thus be seen as foundations for, rather than as proscriptive against, potentially innovative developments. There will certainly be circumstances where even our most robust findings – such as knowing a diaspora in advance of engagement – are impracticable and yet engagement may be unavoidable or essential within a broader policy programme.

In these terms, we recognise that these recommendations land on an existing policy and social landscape so provide them as guidelines that will be sensitive to local conditions. This report provides a high-level analysis of very significant and pressing issues. While diaspora engagement has been a specific area of interest for many countries for decades, many others are only beginning to actively seek out their own diasporas as promising levers of economic and social development at the homeland level. Receiving countries appear to be less developed than countries of origin in identifying diaspora engagement as an area for policy and programme development, but diaspora engagement can nonetheless be found within these countries’ broader integration and migration policies.

Yet, and returning to the definition of diaspora offered at the outset of the report, diasporas are more complex in some aspects than other migrant groups, as their continued affective and material ties to the homeland can both complicate and enhance the ways in which they integrate and partner with host country actors. The choice that members of diaspora make to maintain links with their homeland underpins their value as potential partners for engagement and collaboration.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The following inclusion criteria were applied to our analysis to identify groups large enough to allow the research team to comment in confidence on their socioeconomic profiles:

1. Included only groups totalling at least 1,000 individuals across all receiving countries combined
2. Included only receiving countries where all diaspora groups combined totalled at least 1,000 individuals
3. Included only diaspora groups totalling at least 100 individuals in any particular country
4. Included only diaspora groups that constituted at least 0.001% of total receiving country population

<sup>2</sup>We note substantial scholarly interest in this area. For instance, in line with our findings, Aleksynka and Tritah (2013) found higher proportions with a tertiary education among immigrants in 22 European countries than in the home country for 73 out of 76 sending countries. In the US context, Feliciano (2005) found higher educational attainment among immigrants than the average educational attainment in all 31 sending countries for which those data were available in 2000.

<sup>3</sup>As above, our findings in this area are in line with those presented in other scholarly work. For instance, a study of the EU labour market demonstrated that migrant women achieve worse labour force outcomes than men, an effect even more pronounced for women from non-EU countries of origin (Rubin et al., 2008).

<sup>4</sup>We recognise the inclusion of these respondents is beyond the geographical remit of the study. Nevertheless, we consider these responses relevant as they provide an insight from contexts similar to the European Union and the United States.

<sup>5</sup>From 2007 to 2010 it was run by GIZ, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH*, as part of the sector programme 'Migration and Development'. In 2006, GIZ commissioned research into diaspora organisations in Germany, held conferences and advertised the programme. Subsequently, a pilot programme started in 2007 with a budget of 650,000 EUR for three years.

<sup>6</sup>Following the withdrawal of the WOM, the final consultation under the LOM structure with the government took place at 24 April 2013 (Surinaams Inspraak Orgaan (SIO), 2014). However, LOM as a platform still exists and the LOM partnerships will receive funding until 2015. There can still be a dialogue with the government, yet not as an exclusive interlocutor.

<sup>7</sup>Unless otherwise stated, text in this document reflects the research team's own translation of original Dutch documents.

<sup>8</sup>We would suspect that similar levels of transience can be identified among civil society organisations more broadly, so would not suggest that this is a unique feature of diaspora organisations.

<sup>9</sup>For a full discussion of this typology of engagement, please refer to the main report.

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## About this report

RAND Europe, in collaboration with the Institute for the Study of Labor, were commissioned by the European Commission to provide an overview of diaspora communities settled in Europe and the United States. This report summarises the project's findings based on an analysis of existing population data sets, with an emphasis on demographic and socioeconomic profiles, a targeted literature review and a survey of diaspora organisations. The research draws on findings to deliver concrete recommendations for EU and U.S. engagement with diaspora groups.

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