



Tripoli 10 December 2013

EU Border Assistance Mission celebrates International Human Rights Day with Libyan counterparts

On December 10th, the International Day of Human Rights, the EU Border Assistance Mission to Libya – EUBAM - organized a seminar on "Human Rights and Migration in Libya" in Tripoli.

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights", said Peter Rundell, EUBAM acting Head of Mission, quoting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on December 10th 1948, in welcoming the participants to the seminar.

The event, an acknowledgement of the importance of the day and the subject, focused on how Libyan border management agencies encounter migrants, the human rights issues related to the migration management activities of border agencies, and possible ways to work together to raise standards.

Officers from Libya's Border Guards, Customs, Naval Coast Guard and the Department for Combating Illegal Migration, and representatives of international organisations including UNSMIL, IOM, UNHCR, the EU Delegation to Libya and EUBAM, engaged in discussion and exchange of experience on the issue of migration and respect for human rights. Officers from the Libyan agencies gave presentations, as did representatives of the international organisations involved.

The debate focused on understanding the difficulties encountered by the border agencies involved in migration management with respect to protection of human rights, working out ways in which those difficulties can be surmounted, and identifying potential areas for international organisations to support the Libyan authorities through training and other capacity-building activities.

"Our main goal is to save migrants from death at sea. Libya feels solidarity with the migrants" said Colonel Mansoud Ibrahim Dahad, of the Coast Guard, during the discussion. Some of his





colleagues from other agencies acknowledged problems like poor conditions in detention centres for migrants, citing a lack of staff, funding and facilities to meet the standards to which they aspire. As seminar organiser Maria Nystedt, from EUBAM, said, "border management agencies have at the same time the responsibility to protect the rights of migrants and to protect Libya from illegal immigration". With one Libyan participant estimating the number of migrants into Libya at over a million, the scale of the challenge was clear.

Rundell concluded that the seminar, together with other events celebrating the International Day of Human Rights in Libya, demonstrates the direction that Libya is taking. Libya's border agencies face great challenges, and are determined to meet them in compliance with the Prime Minister's repeated restatement of Libya's commitment to human rights and the rule of law.

EUBAM Libya supports the Libyan authorities in developing border management and security at the country's land, sea and air borders.

