

THE SPANISH INSTITUTE FOR MIGRATION ANALYSIS PRESENTS ITS FIRST WORK IN MADRID AND CALLS FOR A MORE RIGOROUS, STRATEGIC, AND LONG-TERM DEBATE ON MIGRATION

The IEAM launch event, held at the European Parliament Office in Madrid, brought together institutional representatives, experts, international organizations, as well as African and European partners to analyze the main migration challenges between Africa and Europe

Madrid, April 16, 2026. The Spanish Institute for Migration Analysis (IEAM) held its official launch event this Wednesday at the European Parliament Office in Madrid. The event served to present its first research findings, share its working methodology, and open a space for plural reflection on one of the major structural issues of our time: migration.

Led by Beatriz de León Cobo, IEAM began its activities in September 2025 with the aim of providing rigorous analysis, proposing innovative policies, and creating dialogue spaces to anticipate and manage African migration in a sustainable, humane, and mutually beneficial way.

The event highlighted work that is already well advanced. In just six months, the Institute has produced technical reports, policy papers, infographics, and strategic dialogue activities across Europe and Africa, including workshops in Bamako, Dakar, and Rome. Its methodology combines strategic dialogue, research, and public influence, bringing together governments, researchers, civil society, diasporas, and the private sector to generate applied analysis and practical recommendations for decision-making.

The Institute's Executive Director, Beatriz de León Cobo, recalled that IEAM was launched six months ago in a global context marked by rapid information flows, polarized debate, and the difficulty of building effective, humane, and long-term migration policies. She emphasized the Institute's goal of creating spaces where diverse – even conflicting – views can be heard in order to improve public policy. She also highlighted West Africa and the Sahel as priority regions in this initial phase, due to their geopolitical importance and the need to incorporate African perspectives into the European debate.

The event opened with remarks by MEP Javier Zarzalejos, who advocated for a comprehensive approach to migration and warned against conflating integration issues with immigration-specific challenges. He called for a response combining effective management, cooperation, integration, and respect for democratic values. In his view, Europe is at a “turning point” in its migration strategy, with the new Pact on Migration and Asylum as a reference framework, while stressing the need to preserve rights and human dignity.



The first panel, moderated by Soraya Aybar, Director of África Mundi, brought together Valentina Benincasa, professor at the Complutense University of Madrid; Roméo Gbaguidi, President and Research Director of LemAfriQ; and Ángel Losada, Spanish diplomat and former EU Special Representative for the Sahel. The discussion focused on three key areas: irregular migration in Spain, the governance of mobility in West Africa, and the European dimension of migration policies.

Key conclusions included the importance of transitions into irregular status and the situation of unaccompanied minors. Ángel Losada pointed to the lack of unity among EU member states as a major obstacle to an effective Sahel policy. He also referred to Iran to highlight the need to anticipate regional crises before they result in increased migration pressures on Europe, emphasizing that migration cannot be addressed solely through border control.

The second panel, titled “Migration between Africa and Europe: strategic challenges and common responses,” brought together Ana Hernández Rodríguez, ministerial advisor; Francisco de Borja Morate Martín, Deputy Director-General for West Africa; Agustín Mussini, representative of the International Organization for Migration in Spain; and Javier Albaladejo, former senior commissioner of the Spanish National Police.

Regarding the extraordinary regularization process, Hernández Rodríguez emphasized that it targets people already in Spain, not new arrivals: “It is not about giving money, but about giving the possibility to be individuals with rights and obligations”. She also noted that the debate has been heavily influenced by the spread of incorrect versions of the text and by a wave of misinformation that has distorted the meaning of the measure.

From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Borja Morate Martín highlighted that the Spain–Africa Strategy 2025–2028 reflects the growing importance Spain attaches to its African policy and, in particular, to West Africa as a priority region. He also emphasized Senegal as one of the most relevant strategic partners for Spain in West Africa and highlighted the recent upgrading of bilateral relations to the level of a strategic partnership.

From the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Agustín Mussini recalled that in a country like Spain, migration is “neither marginal nor exceptional”, but a structural dimension of social, political, economic, labour, and demographic life. He added that a mature migration policy “does not merely manage entries; it organizes trajectories, reduces vulnerabilities, and expands opportunities”.

The security perspective was provided by Javier Albaladejo, who stressed that the fight against organized crime networks involved in human trafficking remains a constant priority on the European agenda. He underlined that the key often lies in effectively targeting the financial and organizational structures behind these networks.

In closing, Beatriz de León Cobo summarized the event in three ideas. First, that migration is an extraordinarily complex, technical, and cross-cutting issue that must be addressed with both respect and analytical ambition. Second, that the migration debate cannot be reduced to a single dimension, but must integrate security, demography, employment, social cohesion, foreign policy, and field-based knowledge. And third, that truly effective responses require time, predictability, and strategic vision, as it is not possible to resolve within a single legislative term problems and dynamics that have been built over decades. With this launch, the Spanish Institute for Migration Analysis consolidates a particularly active initial phase and positions itself as a new reference space for migration analysis in Spain. Its approach is based on building bridges between research, institutions, field realities, and civil society, and on contributing to a more honest, better-informed, and more useful public conversation on one of the issues that will most shape the future of Europe and Africa.

