FACT SHEET

The European Union and the Sahel

The EU is following a comprehensive approach to the Sahel region, using as reference the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel presented in March 2011. This strategy includes four lines of actions:

- Development, good governance and internal conflict resolution;
- Political and diplomatic action;
- Security and the rule of law;
- Countering violent extremism and radicalisation.

The EU has indeed been concerned by the deteriorating political, security, humanitarian and human rights situation in the Sahel region since the early 2000s. This situation predated the Libyan crisis, but was further exacerbated by its consequences. Since the beginning of the crisis in Mali, the Council has reiterated the EU’s resolve to accelerate and enhance the implementation of this Strategy in order to help tackle the regional consequences of the crisis.

The EU Strategy is based on the assumptions that development and security are mutually supportive and that the issues faced in the Sahel require a regional answer. This Strategy has proven a crucial tool to enhance the coherence of the EU approach and to mobilise considerable additional European efforts, with a particular focus on Mauritania, Niger and Mali.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780- Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu @EUHighRepSpox
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu @AshtonSpox_Maja
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu
Iulia Costea +32 460 75 07 17 – Iulia.Costea@ec.europa.eu
Follow us on Twitter @eu_e eas
www.facebook.com/EuropeanExternalActionService
www.eeas.europa.eu
Under the 10th European Development Fund (2007-2013) alone, more than € 1.5 billion were allocated to these three countries to mainly support good governance, rule of law, justice, decentralisation process, agriculture and rural development, social sectors, the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), economic development and infrastructures.

Finally, two CSDP missions were launched in Niger (EUCAP SAHEL Niger) and Mali (European Union Training Mission - EUTM) in order to support respectively Nigerien internal security forces and the Malian army.

Today, this Strategy continues to provide the key framework for EU action at both individual and collective levels to help countries in the wider Sahel-Sahara region to address key security and development challenges.

**Diplomatic efforts with national, regional and international stakeholders**

The EU pursues diplomatic efforts with national, regional and international stakeholders who have an interest in resolving the crisis in the Sahel region. The EU is in favour of an enhanced and effective international coordination on Sahel-Saharan issues in order to shape common positions and to coordinate action and international support in the political, security and development areas.

The EU is a core member of the international Support and Follow Up Group on the situation in Mali co-chaired by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations. The EU also has strong working relations with ECOWAS, Algeria and Mauritania.

**Two missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**

The EU launched a civilian CSDP mission EU CAP SAHEL in Niger in July 2012 with the objective to fight terrorism and organised crime. Over its initial two years mandate, the mission aims at:

- advising and assisting in the implementation of the security dimension of the Nigerien Strategy for Security and Development at national level, with other actors
- supporting regional and international coordination in the fight against terrorism and organised crime
- strengthening the rule of law through the development of the criminal investigation capacities and adequate training programmes
- enhancing the sustainability of Nigerien Security Forces (Gendarmerie, Garde Nationale and Police Nationale)
- contributing to the identification, planning and implementation of projects in the security field
With an annual budget of €8.7 million, the mission relies on 50 international police and military experts. Liaison Officers are deployed in Bamako and Nouakchott, to foster regional cooperation between the security forces of Niger, Mali and Mauritania in their fight against terrorism and organised crime, as well as to explore the opportunity to propose future actions at the request of relevant national authorities.

At the request of Mali and in line with relevant international decisions including UNSC Resolution 2085 (2012), the EU launched an EU military Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) on 18 February 2013, for an initial 15-month mandate.

The aim of the mission is to support the rebuilding of the Malian armed forces and to meet their operational needs by:

- providing expertise and advice, in particular as regards command and control, logistical chains, human resources and international humanitarian law;
- training combat units at the Koulikoro training camp. The mission is not involved in combat operations.

The headquarters of the mission is located in Bamako and the training is carried out at Koulikoro (60 km north-east of Bamako). Initially, the mission's mandate is 15 months. More than 200 instructors have been deployed, as well as support staff and a protection force, making a total of around 550 persons. The joint costs of the operation are €23 million for the mandate of 15 months.

In both missions, particular attention is given to synergies with other EU and bilateral projects funded through the European Development Fund, the European Commission Instrument for Stability or by EU member states.

**Response to the food crisis and long-term food insecurity in the Sahel region**

The Western Sahel region suffers from chronic food insecurity, linked to national under-production, increase of food prices on international markets or local agricultural over-production which causes rapid price fluctuations. An additional burden is that currently over 5 million children are stunted representing about 40% of the children under five. On top of the distressing human and social costs, the economic cost of malnutrition is estimated between 2% to 8% of GDP.

Some specific areas are constantly suffering from food and nutrition insecurity. The difficulties to secure adequate food supply and decent income in the Sahel region are due to:

- **Climate change and ecosystem degradation** increase the unpredictability of rainfall.
- **Population growth** is among the highest in the world (on average, the population of the Sahel doubles every 25 years). This increases pressure on natural resources and food supply.
- **Chronic poverty** - the Sahel states rank at the bottom of the 2011 UN Human Development Index (Niger ranks 186, Burkina Faso 181, Chad 183, Mali 175 and Mauritania 159 out of the 187 countries listed).
• **Regional economic disparity** (between Sahel countries and coastal countries) and **low resistance to external economic shocks** (e.g. the food price crisis of 2008) contribute significantly to the fragility of the Sahel. **Food insecurity in the Sahel is primarily a matter of income and not production.** For example, Senegal, despite the fact that it imports nearly half of its food consumption needs, is less food insecure than Niger because it has a higher income. As another example, widespread lack of economic access to basic healthcare contributes substantially to malnutrition among children under five and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

• **Weakness of public finances and national institutions** in some countries makes it more difficult to respond to the frequent crises that affect the region. However, some countries have adopted national response strategies and have been supported by large-scale funding, including the European Commission. This funding has contributed to some improvements in the recent year.

**Humanitarian aid**

In the countries of the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) acute malnutrition rates are persistently above the internationally recognised alert threshold of 10% Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate. An estimated 226,000 children in average die because of malnutrition or directly related causes every year, whether or not there is a crisis. The Commission’s Humanitarian Office (ECHO) has so far allocated €181 million to respond to the on-going food crisis in the Sahel region of which over € 54 million was used in Mali to help the victims of both the food crisis and the political crisis. The on-going emergency and the recurrent nature of the crisis in the Sahel call for both an immediate response to help the people in need and a long-term strategy to reduce the chronic risks of food security and strengthen people’s resilience.

**Long-term EU development response to the food crisis: building Resilience**

In addition to humanitarian support, the EU is implementing development programmes aimed at strengthening resilience, helping address the root causes of malnutrition, improving the functioning of regional markets and increase the regional and national capacity to reduce the risks of disasters. Projects for over € 200 million (EU budget and EDF) are currently on-going or planned in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Chad. Moreover, the European Commission has launched in 2012 together with regional organisations an international partnership for resilience in West Africa including Sahel region (Alliance Globale pour l’Initiative Résilience - AGIR). The EU intends to allocate approximately €1.5 billion for resilience in West Africa for 2014-2020, playing a catalysing role by encouraging regional and national authorities to define their resilience priorities. A € 56 million regional project on food security reserves funded by the 10th EDF will start in 2014, helping West African countries plan and build their necessary systems of resilience. To address the root causes of the crisis, the AGIR Regional Roadmap adopted in April 2013 by all members of the Alliance including partner countries, international donors, NGOs and civil society focuses on 4 key specific objectives and will be translated by partner countries in national resilience strategies:
- Improve social protection for the most vulnerable households and communities in order to secure their livelihoods
- Strengthen the nutrition of vulnerable households
- Sustainably improve agricultural and food production, the incomes of vulnerable households and their access to food
- Strengthen governance in food and nutritional security

More Information:
EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel
CSDP civilian mission "EUCAP SAHEL Niger"
European Union Training Mission (EUTM)
Response to the food crisis and long-term food insecurity in the Sahel region of Africa