



# THE EU'S GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT TO COUNTER MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

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Fighting and preventing migrant smuggling, and appropriately addressing trafficking in human beings including in the context of migration, are among core priorities of the European Union and a crucial element in providing a comprehensive response to irregular migration. Criminal networks take advantage of people's despair and use land, sea and air routes to facilitate irregular migration. They put people's lives at risk and seek in every way to maximise their profits. While trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling are two different crimes and therefore subject to different legal frameworks they are closely interlinked. In recent years, the EU has put in place concrete actions and stepped up cooperation at EU level and with non-EU countries and organisations.



## INSIDE THE EUROPEAN UNION

### Migrant Smuggling

The European Union has put in place effective policies and a solid legal framework to counter and prevent migrant smuggling networks, while at the same time protecting migrants' human rights. **The European Agenda on Migration, the European Agenda on Security** and the **EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling** are important means to prevent and counter migrant smuggling and to guarantee the EU's internal security.

### EU ACTION PLAN AGAINST MIGRANT SMUGGLING – 4 PRIORITIES

As part of the EU Agenda on Migration, the EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling (2015-2020) sets out a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach.



#### Enhanced Police and Judicial Response

Since its establishment in 2016, the European Migrant Smuggling Centre has supported Member States in their operational cooperation among law enforcement authorities to fight against migrant smuggling networks.



#### Improved Gathering and Sharing of Information

Information flow has been significantly improved at all levels, with the Information Clearing House within Europol being the latest output, aiming in particular at pooling information from law enforcement and military sources.



#### Enhanced prevention of smuggling and assistance to vulnerable migrants

The EU has been supporting several information and awareness-raising campaigns in key countries of origin and transit. Over €27 million has been devoted to information and awareness-raising activities since 2015.



#### Stronger cooperation with third countries

The EU has been focusing on operational cooperation with third countries through capacity-building projects, joint investigation teams, and better coordination of EU assets in third countries, in particular with the introduction of European Migration Liaison officers in key third countries.

Europol plays a key role in supporting Member States' operational cooperation through the secure **exchange of information, expertise and analytical support**.

As highlighted by the Council, in the operational measures approved in December 2018, disrupting smugglers' online communication can be of particular value. The number of **referrals of online content** related to migrant smuggling by **Europol's EU Internet Referral Unit** to internet service providers has steadily increased since 2015 and the **success rate of removal has reached 98%**.

## The European Migrant Smuggling Centre

The European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) was established in 2016 to support EU Member States in targeting and **dismantling** the complex and sophisticated **criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and document fraud**. It regularly deploys its European Mobile Investigation or Analyses Teams (EMIST/EMAST) to the field offering expertise, coordinating operational meetings, providing tailored analytical support and cross-checks against Europol databases. In 2018, to support Member State investigations, the EMSC supported 101 priority cases and 39 Common and Joint Action Days, leading to the arrest of 607 suspects. The EMSC has evolved into a hub of international cooperation against smuggling, hosting several liaison officers from the United States and conducting joint operations on the ground with the Member States.

The EMSC also hosts the Information Clearing House, with the participation of Interpol, EUNAVFOR MED Sophia, the European Gendarmerie Force, as well as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and key EU Member States. The Clearing House was set up in 2017 as a **'fusion centre-type' cooperation platform** aimed at improving Europol's intelligence picture on organised migrant smuggling and consolidating its support to partner law enforcement agencies with a focus beyond EU borders, on source and transit countries for migration.



## OUTSIDE THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU has further stepped up financial, technical and operational assistance to third countries to support the development of national anti-smuggling strategies and legislation, and to build the capacity of law enforcement and judiciary authorities to investigate and prosecute criminal networks and manage flows and border control more effectively. To respond to the need for more coherence and coordination of the EU's actions on migration in third countries, posts of European Migration Liaison officers (EMLOs) are now deployed in 12 priority third countries. The new EU regulation 2019/1240 aims to strengthen cooperation and information exchange within the network of Immigration Liaison Officers deployed in third countries by Member States, Commission and EU Agencies.

### EU ACTION AT SEA



**EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia**, was launched in 2015 to break the cruel business model of migrant smugglers and human traffickers and has played a decisive role in improving overall maritime security in the Central Mediterranean.

So far, the Operation has apprehended **151 suspected traffickers and smugglers** and removed **551 vessels** from the criminal organisations.

The Operation is also closely following the evolution of broader smuggling and trafficking activities: it has conducted **more than 2,400 hailing** and **160 friendly approaches** as part of its mandate to disrupt weapons smuggling, thereby allowing for a better understanding of how routes can be used by criminal networks on the high seas.

Operation Sophia also trains and monitors the Libyan Coastguard and Navy to enhance their capability to disrupt smuggling and trafficking in Libya and to save lives and improve security in Libyan territorial waters.

**417 personnel** of the Libyan Coastguard and Navy have been trained so far.

A **Crime Information Cell** has been established as a hub within Operation Sophia. Liaison officers from Europol and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) help facilitating cooperation and timely information exchange between the Operation, Europol and the EBCGA on issues relating to crime prevention, investigation and prosecution. The CICI is inherently scalable and can adapt to operational requirements.

## SANCTIONS



The **European Union** introduced **restrictions** in 2017 on the export or transit of **inflatable boats** and **outboard motors** to Libya.

On 14 June 2018 the Council of the EU transposed into **EU law sanctions** adopted by the UN, imposing a **travel ban and asset freeze on six human traffickers and smugglers** operating in Libya. This was the first time that the UN had imposed sanctions on human traffickers and smugglers.

## PROVIDING SUPPORT AND ENHANCING SECURITY

Effective **border management** and **security** are key to prevent migrant smugglers and traffickers. The EU's **civilian Common Security and Defence Policy missions** along the Central Mediterranean Route are actively contributing to the fight against criminal networks, and dedicated projects and programmes, including under the EU's **Emergency Trust Fund for Africa**, have been launched to this end.

### North Africa



The civilian EU Border Assistance Mission EUBAM Libya advises the Libyan government on border management, law enforcement and criminal justice, to further operationalise and expand its engagement to contribute to the fight against criminal networks.

Under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, programmes worth **€91.3 million** are in place in Libya to support the capacity of relevant Libyan authorities in the areas of **border management, fight smuggling and trafficking in human beings, search and rescue at sea** and in the **desert**.

A **regional programme** worth **€15 million** implemented with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, was launched in August 2019 to support national actors in the areas of **law enforcement** and **criminal justice** in the North of Africa, through capacity-building and light equipment (such as IT tools) to dismantle organised criminal groups involved in migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

The successful partnership under the **AU-EU-UN Joint Taskforce to Address the Migrant Situation in Libya** allows for close cooperation with key origin, transit and destination countries to build a stronger security architecture in the region.

The EU has mobilised **€144 million** to help Morocco's border management authorities protect vulnerable migrants, address irregular migration and dismantle cross-border criminal networks involved in human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

### Sahel



The EU is fighting smuggling activities also by providing capacity-building, training and advice to local security forces through its civilian CSDP missions **EUCAP Sahel Niger** and **EUCAP Sahel Mali**. The transfer of know-how through training and advice by these missions supports the development of the national internal security forces in their drive to become modern security providers that respect the principles of human rights and rule of law. As part of the regionalisation process, the CSDP missions in the Sahel are now able to support the enhancement of cross-border cooperation within the G5 Sahel countries and with neighbours, to prevent and fight against terrorism and transnational crimes.

Since 2018, the **EUCAP Sahel Niger** also supports Niger authorities to establish a mobile border control unit which will improve the fight against security threats in instable border regions.

Through regional projects under the EU Trust Fund, such as **AJUSEN** (Appui à la Justice, Sécurité et à la Gestion des Frontières au Niger) and the **Joint Investigation Team**, the EU is helping the Nigerien authorities apprehend and prosecute more criminals and thus crack down on smuggling and trafficking. Against this background, a **Common Operational Partnership** with **Senegal, worth €9 million**, adopted under the EU Trust Fund for Africa in November 2018, is further helping with efforts to address smuggling and trafficking comprehensively, dismantle criminal rings and boost regional cooperation in this area. **Search and rescue missions** in Niger supported by the EU Trust Fund have **rescued more than 21,000 stranded migrants** since 2017.

**The Joint Investigation Team**, a team of French, Spanish and Nigerien officials with €6 million in funding from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, has been deployed in Niger to investigate and prosecute smuggling and trafficking networks. Thanks to constant peer-to-peer dialogue, training and mentoring, the Nigerien law enforcement authorities are investigating criminal networks and have secured 266 prosecutions. In addition, 39 international criminal networks have been dismantled since its inception in 2017.

The EU is the largest supporter of the **G5 Sahel Joint Force**, which aims to tackle security challenges, including organised crime and the trafficking of arms, drugs and trafficking in human beings. An EU – AU and G5 Sahel co-hosted conference on 23 February 2018 pledged €414 million, with €100 million from the EU alone. At the International Conference of Donors and Partners of the G5 Sahel in December 2018, the EU pledged a further contribution of €125 million from the Trust Fund for stabilisation efforts in the region.

**Regional coordination** is also expanding through programmes targeting criminal organisations, including trafficking in human beings, in the countries of the [Gulf of Guinea](#), aimed at providing partner countries with the appropriate tools to protect migrants, prevent smuggling and prosecute the criminals.

## Horn of Africa



EU funding is being allocated under a wide range of instruments – such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) – to initiatives which include addressing smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings through, for example, awareness-raising campaigns, assistance, protection and reintegration programmes, national and regional strategies against migrant smuggling as well as meeting international legal standards in that regard.

## BETTER MIGRATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (BMM) IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The BMM programme, worth €46 million (€40 million EU contribution, €6 million contribution from the Federal Ministry for of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany), aims to improve migration management in the region, and in particular to address the trafficking and smuggling of migrants within and from the Horn of Africa. The priority is to strengthen the rights of migrants and to protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation. The BMM works on four fronts:

### 1) Coordinating policies to counter human trafficking and smuggling

The East and Horn of Africa borders are some of the busiest in the world, as they cut across key migration routes to Europe and the Gulf countries. The BMM supports partner country governments in establishing a coherent approach to managing migration and to addressing trafficking in and smuggling of migrants.

### 2) Supporting institutions to counter human trafficking

Up until now, more than 1,000 representatives from the judiciary from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Djibouti have received training in prosecution techniques focusing on protection and support for victims. Additionally, 1,600 first responders from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda have received training on identification and referral of vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking.

### 3) Protection and support

The BMM programme helps identify, assist and protect victims of trafficking in human beings and vulnerable smuggled migrants, especially women and children and other vulnerable groups. So far, over 12,000 trafficked victims and vulnerable migrants have been assisted with protection services, such as accommodation, basic services, and counselling.

### 4) Providing information and advice on safe, legal migration routes and employment opportunities

So far, over 10,500 victims of trafficking, vulnerable migrants, potential migrants and victims of trafficking have been reached through public events.

## OFFERING ALTERNATIVES

Projects and programmes have been launched **providing economic alternatives** to individuals and groups in communities previously dependent on illegal migration, such as through support to the agricultural sector or by supporting the insertion of youth into the labour market.

In Niger, the **PAIERA** project offers **economic and employment opportunities** and alternatives to people who once acted, for example, as smugglers, making a living from irregular migration. They receive training and job opportunities in agriculture, the retail sector and others. Since the launch of PAIERA in June 2017, **371 people** have been assisted. More eligible projects will be funded now that PAIERA has entered its second phase, through the project "Stabilisation et renforcement socio-économique des populations affectées par la migration irrégulière dans les zones de transit au Niger", adopted in November 2018.

**Information campaigns:** 6 information and awareness raising projects on the risks of irregular migration and possible alternatives kicked off in 2019 in Africa (Tunisia, Mali, Niger, The Gambia, Ivory Coast and Guinea Conakry) under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Furthermore, two grants have been awarded under AMIF 2018 to empower the voice of the Senegalese diaspora in several EU Member States and counter migrant smugglers' narratives. In addition, online information campaigns are also addressing major linguistic communities in need of reliable information about migration, i.e. [Tellingtherealstory.org](https://tellingtherealstory.org), [InfoMigrants.org](https://info-migrants.org).

## GLOBAL ACTION TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AND THE SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS

The European Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are implementing a four-year (2015-2019) initiative worth **€11 million**, assisting **13 countries** (Belarus, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Lao PDR, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, South Africa and Ukraine) in six key areas to prevent and address trafficking and smuggling. These areas are: (1) national strategies and policies; (2) national legal frameworks; (3) criminal justice responses; (4) regional and trans-regional cooperation; (5) assistance and support programmes for victims; and (6) protection and assistance for children.