EU-Libya relations

Through diplomatic action and concrete support, the European Union (EU) is assisting Libya's political transition towards a stable, functioning country and is supporting the United Nations (UN) led mediation efforts in this regard. The EU underlines the importance of inclusiveness of the political process and Libyan ownership, notably through the participation of all legitimate Libyan stakeholders.

The EU provides assistance to Libya through a specific set of measures tailored to the needs of the Libyan people to support the implementation of economic reforms including improved revenue transparency, improve governance and socio-economic conditions, respond to the humanitarian needs and support youth and civil society. Also, in the framework of the trilateral African Union (AU)-EU-UN Task Force, thousands of migrants and refugees have been assisted in Libya. The EU supports the Libyans in addressing security challenges through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to Libya and the EU Liaison and Planning Cell (EULPC).

Support for political transition and negotiated settlement

The EU firmly supports the UN-led mediation process and the efforts of Special Representative of the Secretary General Ghassan Salamé to implement the UN Action Plan on Libya and bring about a lasting solution to the political crisis. The EU works closely with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) under the leadership of the Special Representative to support the implementation of
the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), consolidation of governance, security and economic arrangements and assist in helping Libyans to prepare for elections through support for the High National Electoral Commission (HNEC).

Through the Stabilisation Facility[1] the EU helps the Government of National Accord (GNA[2]) to gradually strengthen the institutional capacity in particular at municipal level to deliver basic services and rehabilitate local infrastructure.

The EU also engages with neighbours and regional partners including by coordinating efforts with the League of Arab States (LAS), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) in the framework of the Libya Quartet to advance the political process and assist Libya in its democratic transition.

**Bilateral assistance**

The EU has been providing significant support to Libya since the beginning of the crisis.

The EU currently has a package of close to €70 million in bilateral support to Libya in 23 projects across several sectors, such as: civil society; governance; health; economy, youth and education; and support to the political process, security and mediation activities, mainly through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).

Through ENI projects the EU contributes to the capacity building of Libyan Institutions at national and local level in the areas of public administration, socio-economic development and the health sector.

The EU’s cooperation in the Governance sector aims at reinforcing the capacity of democratically elected institutions. It encompasses a wide array of subsectors of intervention including institutional support to core government functions —such as those of the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank— municipalities and local councils, media professionals and other government institutions.

In 2017, a special measure, worth €10 million, focussing on urgent needs in the health sector, such as maternal health, blood transfusion services, nurse training, mental health and non-communicable disease prevention was adopted.

The EU supports economic growth, by promoting the development of SMEs, capable of creating employment and livelihoods for Libyans, and in particular for women and youth, through widely accessible and relevant SME support services.

A significant and comprehensive series of actions has been set up by the EU to support civil society in the country. Those include the programme “Support to civil society in Libya” (€3 million), which aims at promoting and facilitating dialogue between civil society representatives with national and local authorities and the programme "Civil Initiatives Libya" (over €5 million) which helped setting up 4 training centres across the country (Benghazi, Tripoli, Misrata and Sabha) and supporting the development and sustainability of civil society organisations.

**Humanitarian support**

The European Commission provides humanitarian assistance to those in need, through UN agencies and other international organisations, in full respect of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. All EU funding is strictly monitored.
The EU provided humanitarian funding worth **€10 million in 2017** and **€10.8 million in 2016**. Assistance goes to Libyans displaced by conflict and helps the most vulnerable gain access to primary health care and emergency medicines, education in emergencies, psychosocial support, food assistance and other essential support.

**Cooperation on migration and protection of migrants**

The EU main priority regarding migration is to protect migrants, refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) in Libya and to support local communities to cope with the challenge.

The EU's support to Libya on migration focusses on programmes that facilitate access to basic services, support to host communities by providing employment opportunities for both the local population and for migrants, and assistance and protection to vulnerable migrants. It also aims at helping to improve conditions for migrants and refugees at disembarkation points and in detention centres, as well as assisting voluntary returns of stranded migrants to their countries of origin and support the evacuation of those in need of international protection.

The EU **has mobilised €286 million on migration-related projects**; €266 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) implemented by UN agencies, EU Member States and NGOs, and €20 million as bilateral assistance.

In the margins of the EU – African Union Summit in November 2017, the EU together with the African Union, and the United Nations set up a joint Task Force to accelerate both the programme of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for assisted voluntary returns and the emergency transit mechanism of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Leaders also adopted a **Joint Statement on the Migrant Situation in Libya**. The Taskforce has already contributed to freeing thousands of people from detention centres and is working to expand cooperation and information exchange in the fight against traffickers and smugglers of human beings.

Since 2017, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa contributed to the voluntary humanitarian return of more than 32,000 vulnerable migrants to their homes, supported with reintegration assistance in their countries of origin. Also the emergency transit mechanism through the UNHCR has been launched and allowed for the evacuation of almost 2,082 people up to date.

With support from the EU, the IOM and the UNHCR are also carrying out protection and assistance in detention centres, disembarkation points and in communities. Within this support, local families are also benefitting from assistance provided by these organisations. More than 61,300 migrants have been provided essential household items (such as blankets and mattresses) and hygiene kits and over 89,000 migrants have received medical assistance outside and inside detention centres and 14,600 children received learning supplies. In an effort to improve community stabilisation, the EU has supported the rehabilitation of 16 social infrastructures across the country.

**CSDP Missions and Operations**

The EU is engaged in providing focussed support to Libya through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations: EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia, EUBAM Libya and the EU Liaison and Planning Cell (EULPC). The CSDP actions in Libya complement and are coordinated with those in the Sahel. The respective mandates of CSDP activities in Libya, due to expire on 31 December 2018, are currently being reviewed by EU Member States.
EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia

EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia was launched in June 2015 as part of the EU's broader action to provide a comprehensive response to the global migration and refugee crisis. It aims at countering human trafficking and smuggling by taking action against the criminal networks and disrupting their business model. Operation Sophia has so far contributed to the apprehension of over 151 suspected smugglers and traffickers and has neutralised close to 551 assets. While operating off the coast of Libya on the high seas, Operation Sophia has also been involved in rescuing over 44,900 lives.

In June 2016, Operation Sophia's mandate was broadened to include two supporting tasks, namely capacity building and training of the Libyan Navy and Coastguard, and contributing to information sharing and contribution to the implementation of the UN arms embargo in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2292. This addition to the original mandate was underpinned by the objective to contribute to the return of stability, both off and along the coast of Libya. On the one hand, the contribution to the fight against weapons smuggling on the high seas, as defined under UNSCR 2292, aims at preventing the security situation from deteriorating further. On the other hand, the decision to support the building of a Libyan coastguard capacity aims at enhancing the Libyan Navy and Coastguard's ability to disrupt smuggling and trafficking activities, perform search and rescue activities and improve overall security in Libyan territorial waters.

In view of complementing broader efforts to disrupt the business model of the smugglers and traffickers both on land and at sea, on 25 July 2017, the Council prolonged Operation Sophia for a further 17 months until 31 December 2018 and amended the mandate to set up a monitoring mechanism of trainees, aimed at ensuring long-term efficiency of the training provided; to conduct new surveillance activities and gather information on illegal trafficking of oil exports from Libya in accordance with UNSCR 2146 (2014) and 2362 (2017), as well as to enhance the sharing information on human trafficking with Member States' law enforcement agencies, FRONTEX and EUROPOL.

To date, Operation Sophia has been able to provide training both at sea and in Member States facilities for a total of 237 Libyan personnel.

In July 2018 the Crime and Information Cell (CIC) was launched, a pilot project to reinforce information exchange among specialised EU agencies - Europol, FRONTEX and the European Border and Coastguard Agency - and Operation Sophia. The cell, located within Operation Sophia, contributes to make work on disrupting criminal networks more effective and efficient.

EUBAM Libya

EUBAM Libya was initially launched in May 2013 as an integrated border management mission in Libya. The mission was downsized in 2014 due to the deteriorating security situation in the country and relocated to Tunis. In February 2016, its mandate was amended to provide for a possible civilian capacity building and assistance crisis management mission in the field of security sector reform, focussing on police, criminal justice, border security and migration.

On 17 July 2017, the Council extended the mandate of EUBAM Libya until 31 December 2018 to plan for a possible non-executive CSDP mission providing advice and capacity building in the fields of border management, law enforcement and criminal justice. This potential future civilian mission would be conducted at the request of and in full ownership of the legitimate Libyan authorities.
EUBAM Libya has also been mandated to progressively engage with and assist the Libyan authorities in a number of priority areas on border management, law enforcement and criminal justice. EUBAM Libya co-operates closely with, and contributes to, the efforts of UNSMIL, liaising with the Libyan authorities and other relevant security actors.

The mission has established a light presence in Tripoli since December 2017.

**EULPC (EU Liaison and Planning Cell)**

UNSMIL leads international efforts to support the peace and security process in Libya. The main objective for the EULPC is to support UNSMIL on operationalising all those military and police aspects of the Libya security track, working closely together with the UNSMIL Security Institutions Division (SID). The EULPC is providing vital military planning and intelligence capacity to the UNSMIL SID currently focussing on the implementation of the Tripoli Security Plan, the Presidential Guard and support to further activities to perform once UN’s relocation to Libya will be completed. As the main security analysis provider for the International Community in Tunis with a high level of situational awareness and knowledge of politico-security dynamics, the EULPC is also tasked to inform planning for a potential CSDP/Security engagement in Libya.

The EULPC consists of eight military planners under the lead of the Security Expert to the Head of the EU Delegation to Libya.

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[1] EU Stabilisation Facility funding amounts to €12 million for 2016-2019. It aims notably at supporting the rehabilitation of sewage systems, hospitals, schools and universities.

[2] The UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) has been internationally recognised as the sole legitimate government of Libya, and endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolutions 2259 and 2278.

**See also**

- EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA
- EUBAM Libya
- Delegation of the European Union to Libya
- Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)
- www.eeas.europa.eu

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