



EUROPEAN UNION

# EU MIGRATION POLICY AT A GLANCE

**Managing the global refugee crisis together with our partners remains at the top of the European agenda. Providing support and protection to people in need is a challenge that requires a global response.**

Today, over 65 million people are forcibly displaced across the globe, as refugees, asylum seekers, or internally displaced persons. Never have so many people been on the move for reasons beyond their free will. Conflicts and crises are an immediate trigger; however, the migration challenge has deeper roots: underlying trends in demographics, climate change, poverty, and globalisation of transport and communications have all played a part in the record numbers of international migrants worldwide. In order to exploit the opportunities movement of people offers and minimise the challenges it presents, global management is required. Countries of origin, transit and host countries, as well as State and non-State actors, need to work together in a balanced and human rights-compliant approach.

The European Union will continue to redouble its efforts and share the global responsibility to address this challenge. A year after the adoption of the UN Agenda 2030, the European Union is playing its part in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, protect the planet and to ensure prosperity and equal opportunities for all, thus also tackling the root causes of migration.

Over the last year, the European Union has sought to address both immediate and long-term challenges of managing migration flows by working towards a swift and coordinated European response. More than €15 billion of the EU's budget in 2015 and 2016 have been mobilised to enhance its action on migration both inside the European Union and beyond its borders, in support of our partners.

As laid out in the European Union Global Strategy presented earlier this year, we are seeking to overcome the fragmentation of external policies relevant to migration and to improve the nexus between our internal and external action.

## **EXTERNAL ACTION ON MIGRATION – A GLOBAL COALITION OF PARTNERS**

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Saving lives and providing humanitarian assistance, enabling migrants and refugees to stay closer to home and helping the development of third countries in order to address in the long term the root causes of irregular migration: these are our priorities.

To achieve these goals, the European Union is developing stronger links between humanitarian and development efforts through joint risk analyses and multi-annual programming and financing. Migration management will become an important dimension in the EU's foreign policies and instruments, ranging from diplomacy and Common Security and Defence Policy, to development and climate.

In this vein, a new EU Migration Partnership Framework has been launched, building on the European Agenda on Migration and the Valletta Summit Agreement to enhance cooperation with our African partners. The new Framework proposes to frame the relations with partner countries through compacts, tailor-made to the specific circumstances of the partner countries and making full use of the broad range of policies at the European Union's disposal.

The Valletta Summit last November brought together EU and African leaders to strengthen cooperation on migration between countries of origin, transit and destination. As a result, the European Union set up a €1.8 billion Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which addresses stability and the root causes of irregular migration and forcible displacement. To further enhance its action in this area, the EU has also proposed an ambitious and innovative External Investment Plan, which seeks to boost private sector investment and thus socio-economic opportunities in Africa and Europe's neighbourhood.

The European Union also engages in diplomatic efforts on a bilateral and a multilateral basis, to find a political solution to the crises in, for example, Syria and Libya and to combat the threat stemming from Daesh. Since the beginning of the war in Syria, the EU's humanitarian response has so far amounted to €6.8 billion from the EU's and Member States' budgets. A regional response to the Syrian crisis remains at the core of our efforts. The European Union is working closely with countries neighbouring Syria, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to help manage refugee flows and support the needs of the large refugee community hosted by these countries.

October 2015 saw a daily average of some 8,000 migrants and refugees taking the Western Balkans route to Europe. We have reoriented, in record time, our traditional cooperation instruments and worked to support the border authorities of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and of Serbia to manage the flows and ensure adequate and humane reception conditions for the refugees.

The European Union also tripled its presence in the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea. The Frontex Operations Triton and Poseidon, as well as Operation Sophia, helped save over 400,000 lives since the beginning of last year and disrupt smugglers' and traffickers' networks at the borders of Europe. To strengthen our external border and keep saving lives, we agreed to create a European Border and Coast Guard. The first operations will begin in autumn 2016.

## **ACTION INSIDE THE EU**

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An extensive series of proposals designed to equip the European Union's Member States with the necessary tools to respond and manage the large number of arrivals were introduced. Greece and Italy set up reception centres with the support of the EU to manage the flows of migrants arriving irregularly in Europe, register them and coordinate the return of migrants who do not qualify for international protection. EU Member States are showing solidarity by relocating and resettling asylum seekers. Last year, Member State governments agreed to relocate 160,000 people in need of international protection from Italy and Greece, and to resettle 22,000 displaced people from outside the EU. So far nearly 12,000 people have been relocated or resettled.

The EU is working with Turkey to stem the flows of refugees trying to cross into the Greek Islands with dangerous journeys across the Aegean, offering at the same time safe and legal paths to resettle into the EU. The EU-Turkey

Statement of 18 March 2016 is delivering results. The average number of daily crossings fell drastically and has remained low. We are also helping Syrian refugees in Turkey to live in dignity and build a new life through our Facility for Refugees in Turkey: €3 billion has been mobilised for 2016-2017 from the EU budget and Member States.

The EU is also working towards a reformed Common European Asylum System which can function effectively, in a fully efficient, fair and humane way, both in times of normal and high migratory pressure.

The European Union is further working to enhance and modernise its legal migration policies, reviewing the Blue Card scheme, examining a common resettlement policy, re-prioritising integration policies and fighting any forms of discrimination and racism within its society.

Only through collective efforts, joint responsibility sharing and solidarity we can improve the lives of so many human beings that are in need of protection and assistance. We look forward to a successful outcome of the High Level Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants.