



CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE: PROTECTING MIGRANTS AND MANAGING IRREGULAR FLOWS



September 2018

The European Union and its Member States have progressively put in place a comprehensive external migration policy and strengthened the work along the Central Mediterranean route. Saving and protecting the lives of migrants and refugees, breaking the business model of smugglers and traffickers and providing legal pathways, while addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement are at the very heart of the EU's policy.



Progress achieved

- Decrease in number of arrivals by 80%
- Over 43,500 people assisted to return to their home from Libya and Niger since January 2017
- Over 1,850 refugees evacuated from Libya in view of further resettlement



Inclusive approach

- Diplomacy
- Humanitarian assistance
- Development assistance and Trade
- Law enforcement and Security



Cooperation with partners

- African Union and United Nations are key partners



EU PRESENCE AT SEA

The EU has significantly stepped up its presence at sea, to save lives and fight trafficking and smuggling networks.



SAVING LIVES

Since February 2016, the EU has rescued with the European Border and Coastguard and EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia more than **290,000 lives**.

FIGHTING TRAFFICKERS AND SMUGGLERS

Operation Sophia was launched in 2015 to break the business model of traffickers and smugglers, who are taking advantage of people's despair. So far, the Operation has apprehended **151 suspected traffickers and smugglers and removed 551 vessels** from the criminal organisations. A Crime Information Cell, which combines EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies and Operation staff, will also optimise the use of information collected for crime prevention, investigation and prosecution.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Operation Sophia and the Seahorse project started training the Libyan Coastguard to **enhance their capacity to carry out search and rescue operations** in Libyan territorial waters, where most lives are lost. An essential element of the training is dedicated to international humanitarian law, and appropriate treatment of rescued persons, delivered jointly with IOM and UNHCR.

NORTH AFRICA – PROVIDING PROTECTION AND ENHANCE STABILITY

Cooperation on migration with North African partners has been significantly stepped up, and focusses on contributing to safe, secure and legal migration, from, to and within the region, while supporting a migration governance approach, based on human rights.



With EU funding, the IOM and UNHCR provide **emergency humanitarian assistance** to migrants and refugees at **13 disembarkation** points in Libya.



Providing basic support: In Libya, more than 52,200 vulnerable migrants have received blankets, cloths and hygiene kits, over 26,000 people had access to medical assistance and 4 primary health care centres received medical equipment. In Morocco, 7,414 female migrants have received social, medical and psychological support.



Legal pathways: Since January 2017, **over 43,500 people** have been **assisted to voluntarily return** from Libya and Niger **to their homes, where they receive reintegration support with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)**. Over **1,800 refugees** have been **evacuated from Libya, of which 1,500** under the Emergency Transit Mechanism with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in view of further resettlement.



Alternatives to detention: In Libya, 25 detention centres have been closed. Work will continue on alternatives to detention and pursuing the definite closure of detention centres.



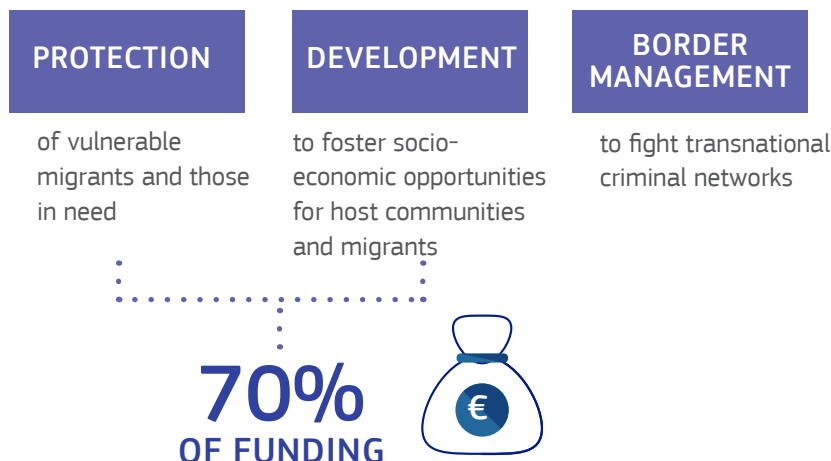
Border security: Proper border security and management is crucial in the fight against smugglers and traffickers. The EU Border Assistance Mission **EUBAM Libya** has jointly with the Libyan authorities agreed on a concept for a full border security and management reform in Libya. A programme worth €46 million is in place in Libya to support the capacity of relevant Libyan authorities, in the areas of border management, fight trafficking in human beings, search and rescue at sea and in the desert, with a particular attention to the respect of human rights.

STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing stability: a €50 million programme has been adopted, to further support 24 Libyan municipalities in providing basic services such as health, education, water, sanitation and social services for vulnerable people. Its geographical and financial scope expands across the country and in particular along the main migratory routes.

Sustainable support: The EU has supported Tunisia and the Tunisian people on their path to a modern democracy, based on freedoms, economic development and social justice. Providing opportunities on the ground, the EU has for example provided over 61,000 young people with microcredits to start or grow a small business. In Morocco, 2,160 Migrants receive training in job search and entrepreneurship.

In North African countries, **19 programmes** under the EU Trust Fund for Africa **worth €466 million** are in place, implemented by international partners on the ground, such as the UN agencies, in particular the UNHCR and the IOM.



SAHEL - FIGHTING TRAFFICKING AND PROVIDING LIVELIHOOD

To address migratory flows effectively and ensure protection of people along the routes, the EU has significantly enhanced its work with countries of transit.



With EU funding, the **IOM** has put in place **transit centres** across the region, 6 of them in Niger, where people receive life-saving assistance and a range of support services, such as food or water, medical and psycho-social support, as well as access to information, counselling or family tracing. Also voluntary return is being provided: in 2017 alone, **over 15,900 people** from the Sahel and Lake Chad region have been assisted.



Criminal networks are taking advantage of people's despair along the migratory routes. To prevent migrants from being stranded in Libya, the EU is fighting smuggling activities further upstream along the route by providing capacity building, training and advice to local security forces through the CSDP missions **EUCAP Sahel Niger and Mali**. In Niger, the EU and Nigerien authorities set up a **Joint Investigation Team** which is arresting smugglers, bringing them before the courts and seizing vehicles. Their activities led to the dismantling of 23 national and international criminal networks so far.

Saving lives in the desert:



Over 7,840 migrants have been rescued by the IOM with Nigerien authorities in the desert



On a regional scale, the EU leads efforts to assist the Sahel countries in building up their own security. An EU – AU and G5 Sahel co-hosted conference on 23 February pledged €414 million, with **€100 million** from the EU alone, in support of the **G5 Sahel Joint Force**, which aims at tackling security challenges, including organised crime and the trafficking of arms, drugs and human beings. The EU has also provided expertise, training and advice through its military **Training Mission in Mali**.



In parallel, alternative job programmes have been launched in regions where trafficking used to be the main source of income. In West Africa and the Sahel, ongoing work targets the creation of 114,000 jobs and supports almost 10,000 micro, small and medium enterprises.



A total of **86 Programmes** under the EU Trust Fund for Africa are in place **for countries of transit and origin** in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, worth around **€1,549 million**, focussing on strengthening resilience, improving economic and employment opportunities, while providing protection for migrants along the routes and enhancing states' capacities to fight criminal networks.

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN – ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES AND SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES

The EU is cooperating with countries of origin to provide people with **opportunities at home** and **fight poverty, climate change, political instability and violence** – among the root causes of irregular migration.

Initiatives under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa strive to support all aspects of stability, and contribute to address destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration, in particular by promoting both resilience and security. Ultimately, the aim is to create the conditions for people to feel safe, and to live in a peaceful and stable environment. The EU Emergency Trust Fund also plays a vital role in providing people with sustainable employment opportunities.

Emergency Trust Fund for Africa:



- €4.1 billion funding mobilised
- 165 programmes approved for around €3.2 billion



Immediate assistance: protection programmes are in place in countries of origin to provide assistance to migrants, refugees and internally displaced people. For example, through the regional Better Migration Management programme, cooperation with NGOs has been put in place to ensure protection for unaccompanied minors, for example in Ethiopia or Djibouti, including to identify and save children from trafficking networks. In Addis Ababa alone, just in the first two months of 2018, over 200 boys and girls were rescued. In Djibouti, a mobile health clinic helps migrants along the route and protocols for health support to migrants are under development.



Fighting the root causes: over 4.8 million people receive basic social services, food security and nutrition programmes. 41,000 jobs have been created or facilitated and 40,000 people have benefitted from training and skills development activities.

A key element of the EU's comprehensive approach to migration is an effective and humane **return policy**: those who do not have the right to stay in the EU, need to be returned to their countries of origin, in full respect of fundamental rights. To increase return rates and improve the cooperation of our partner countries on readmission, the EU is collectively working on concluding readmission agreements or practical arrangements that can achieve concrete results. **17 Readmission agreements plus 6 new arrangements** have been agreed with countries across the world. The EU Member States now need to make use of them and return people who do not have the right to stay in the EU.

EU – IOM partnership – Migrant protection and reintegration of returnees

The EU-IOM initiative launched in December 2016 provides protection, assistance, awareness raising activities and voluntary returns for migrants along the routes. The Initiative also provides partner countries with capacity building to facilitate safe, orderly and responsible migration and mobility of people, through the implementation of planned and well managed migration policies. **Sustainable reintegration is also offered** to returning migrants, to re-establish themselves at home, through economic, social and psychosocial support. Over 47,000 returnees have received reception support and immediate assistance, while 32,000 received reintegration counselling. Assistance can include trainings, or support to start a small business. Local communities are also being involved in the projects – to foster sustainable inclusion in the reintegration process.