



CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE: PROTECTING MIGRANTS AND MANAGING IRREGULAR FLOWS

October 2019

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: these are the aims at the very heart of the EU's policy.



Progress achieved

- Decrease in number of arrivals by 52% compared to 2018
- Over 61,000 people assisted to voluntarily return to their home from Libya, Niger and neighbouring countries since May 2017
- Over 4,000 people in need of international protection evacuated from Libya



Inclusive approach

- Diplomacy
- Humanitarian and emergency 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 work to save lives and fight trafficking and smuggling networks.



SAVING LIVES

Since 2015, the EU Operations active in the Mediterranean have helped to rescue **over 760,000 people** at sea. **300,000** of them were rescued with direct support of the **European Border and Coast Guard Agency** to EU Member States and almost **45,000** by **Operation Sophia**.

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 criminal organisations. A Crime Information Cell, which combines EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies and Operation staff, optimises the use of information collected for crime prevention, investigation and prosecution.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The EU is training the Libyan Coastguard to **enhance their capacity to carry out search and rescue operations** in Libyan territorial waters. An essential element of the training is dedicated to international humanitarian law, and appropriate treatment of rescued persons, delivered jointly with the 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.



Protection of vulnerable migrants and refugees: Supported by EU funding, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) together with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) provide **assistance and protection services** to migrants and refugees at **disembarkation** points in Libya.



Alternatives to detention: The EU supports the Libyan authorities to find **safe and dignified alternatives and put an end to the current arbitrary detention system**. The EU has funded a number of safe spaces as alternatives to detention, including the Gathering and Departure Facility in Tripoli implemented by UNHCR.



Providing basic support: In Libya, over 185,000 core relief items (blankets, clothes, hygiene kits) have been distributed to refugees and vulnerable migrants. This is complemented with regular medical consultations, including psychosocial support which are provided to refugees and vulnerable migrants in Libya.



Assisted voluntary returns and legal pathways: Since January 2017, **over 49,000 people** have been assisted to **voluntarily return** from Libya **to their homes**, where they receive **reintegration support** through the EU-IOM initiative. Over **4,000 refugees** have been **evacuated from Libya**, of which **almost 3,000 to Niger** under the **Emergency Transit Mechanism** with the **UNHCR** in view of further resettlement. So far, 1,856 persons have been resettled by EU Member States.



Border security: Proper border security and management is crucial in saving lives and fighting against smugglers and traffickers. The EU Border Assistance Mission **EUBAM Libya** continues its support to the Libyan authorities in developing an integrated border management strategy for Libya. The EU has so far mobilised €91.3 million on **border and migration management in Libya** with the aim to reinforce the capacity of relevant Libyan authorities, including through trainings on human rights.

STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing stability: The EU supported better access to basic **healthcare** and **education services** for over **1.7 million people** in Libyan municipalities, while around 1,500 community members participated in cohesion promotion activities.

Mobilising €118.8 million, the EU is assisting **53 Libyan municipalities** across the country and in particular along the main migratory routes in rehabilitating or providing equipment to social infrastructures such as health care centres, clinics, schools and electrical substations, Nearly 15,000 **school-age children** were provided with learning kits to enable their **access to learning opportunities**. Furthermore, **over 800 people** have benefited from **job training** to develop **economic income-generating activities**.

In North African countries, **31 programmes** under the EU Trust Fund for Africa worth €659 million implemented by international partners on the ground, such as the UN agencies, in particular UNHCR and IOM.

PROTECTION

of vulnerable migrants and those in need

DEVELOPMENT

to foster socio- economic opportunities for both host communities and migrants

BORDER MANAGEMENT

to save lives and fight transnational criminal networks

70%
OF FUNDING



SAHEL – FIGHTING TRAFFICKING AND PROVIDING LIVELIHOOD

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



With EU funding, the **IOM** has established **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.



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**. The EU has also provided expertise, training and advice through its military **Training Mission in Mali**. In Niger, the EU and Nigerien authorities set up a **Joint Investigation Team**, which arrests smugglers, brings them to court and seizes vehicles. Up until now, this work has led so far to 202 judicial cases..

Saving lives in the desert:



Nearly 23,000 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. With a contribution of €147 million in support of the **G5 Sahel Joint Force**, the EU aims to tackle security challenges, including organised crime and the trafficking of arms, drugs and human beings. As part of the **regionalisation process**, the EU's three 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.



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 119,800 jobs and support for 10,000 micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises**.



In all, **101 programmes** under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, worth around **€1.95 billion**, are in place **for countries of transit and origin** in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. They focus on strengthening resilience and improving economic and employment opportunities, while providing protection for migrants along the routes and enhancing states' capacities to fight criminal networks.

HORN OF AFRICA – IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES AND MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND TRANSIT

The EU is cooperating with countries of origin and transit 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 help 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:



- €4.5 billion funding mobilised
- 210 programmes approved for around €4 billion



Immediate assistance: Protection programmes are in place in countries of origin to provide assistance to migrants, refugees and internally displaced people. 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, as well as to identify and save children from trafficking networks. In Addis Ababa, just in the first two months of 2018, over 200 boys and girls were rescued. In Djibouti, a **mobile health clinic** helps protect migrants on the move. So far, more than 47,400 **migrants or potential migrants** have been reached by **information campaigns on migration and the risks linked to irregular migration**.



In all, a total of **77 programmes** under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, worth around **€1.4 billion**, are in place in the Horn of Africa region. They focus on strengthening resilience, improving economic and employment opportunities, while providing protection for migrants along migration routes and enhancing governments' capacities to better manage migration and counter trafficking networks.



Tackling **root causes**: Under the Trust Fund as a whole, **6.7 million basic services** have been delivered and **2.3 million people** have received nutrition or food-security-related assistance. More than **40,000 jobs** have been created and **223,000 people** have been helped to develop income-generating 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 and practical arrangements that can achieve concrete results. **23 readmission agreements and 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 76,000 returnees have received reception support and immediate assistance, while over 57,000 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.