



CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE: PROTECTING MIGRANTS AND MANAGING IRREGULAR FLOWS



March 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 are at the very heart of the EU's policy.



Progress achieved

- Decrease in number of arrivals by 80%
- Over 43,300 people assisted to voluntarily return to their home from Libya, Niger and neighbouring countries since May 2017
- Over 3,100 refugees evacuated from Libya in view of further resettlement



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 presence at sea, to save lives and fight trafficking and smuggling networks.



SAVING LIVES

Since 2015, the EU Operations active in the Mediterranean have helped to rescue **almost 730,000 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 the 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 ENHANCING 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.



Supported by EU funding, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) together with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) provide **emergency humanitarian assistance** to migrants and refugees at **13 disembarkation** points in Libya.



Alternatives to detention: In Libya, 25 detention centres have been closed. Work continues on alternatives to detention to overcome the current system and pursue the definite closure of detention centres. The opening of the Gathering and Departure Facility by UNHCR, with EU funding, is a clear step in this direction.



Providing basic support: In Libya, more than **61,300 vulnerable migrants** have received blankets, clothes and hygiene kits; almost **90,000 people had access to medical assistance**; and 16 social infrastructures have been rehabilitated or equipped (e.g. health care centres, clinics and schools).



Assisted voluntary returns and legal pathways: Since January 2017, **over 37,000 people** have been assisted to **voluntarily return** from Libya **to their homes**, where they receive **reintegration support** through the IOM. Over **3,100 refugees** have been **evacuated from Libya**, of which **almost 2,500 to Niger** under the **Emergency Transit Mechanism** with the **UNHCR** in view of further resettlement.



Border security: Proper border security and management is crucial in the fight against smugglers and traffickers. The EU Border Assistance Mission **EUBAM Libya**, with its new mandate, continues its support to the Libyan authorities in developing an integrated border management strategy for Libya. The EU Trust Fund has so far mobilised €91.3 million on **border and migration management in Libya** supporting the capacity of relevant Libyan authorities, with a particular attention to the respect of human rights.

STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing stability: The EU supported better access to **healthcare** and **education** for **1.2 million people** in Libya while more than **100 entrepreneurs** were trained to start their own business.

Mobilising €92 million, the EU is assisting **24 Libyan municipalities** across the country and in particular along the main migratory routes in providing basic services such as **health, education, water, sanitation** and **social services** for vulnerable people, nearly 15,000 **school-age children** were provided with learning kits to enable their **access to learning opportunities**, and **around 350 teachers received** teaching kits to ensure **quality-learning opportunities for children**. Furthermore **more than 250 people were assisted** to develop **economic income-generating activities**.

In North African countries, **23 programmes** under the EU Trust Fund for Africa worth €582 million are in place, 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 host communities and migrants

BORDER MANAGEMENT

to 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 enhanced its work with countries of transit.



With EU funding, the **IOM** 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. Also voluntary return is being provided: over **43,300 people** have been **assisted to return to their home from Libya and the Sahel and Lake Chad region** since May 2017.



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, their activities have led to more than **200 prosecutions**.

Saving lives in the desert:



Over 13,000 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. An EU – AU and G5 Sahel co-hosted conference on 23 February 2018 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. At the International Conference of Donors and Partners of the G5 Sahel in December 2018, the EU pledged a further contribution of €125 million. As part of the **regionalisation process**, 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 supports almost **10,000 micro, small and medium enterprises**.



In all, **92 programmes** under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, worth around **€1.7 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:



- €4.2 billion funding mobilised
- 188 programmes approved for around €3.6 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 **58 programmes** under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, worth around **€1.14 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**: over 5.3 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 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 62,000 returnees have received reception support and immediate assistance, while over 49,000 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.