



European Commission

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE: PROTECTING MIGRANTS AND MANAGING IRREGULAR FLOWS



“It is easy to forget how far we have already come. EU operations at sea help save lives in the Mediterranean. We have created a European Border and Coast Guard. We now help train the Libyan Coast Guard to save lives in their own waters and support protection of migrants in Libya. We are helping to address the root causes of migration by improving opportunities in countries of origin, stepping up investments in partner countries and ensuring legal pathways to Europe for those in need of international protection. We should not shy away from stating these facts. Nor should we hide that there is still a lot more to do.”

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker

“The strategy we have put in place to tackle migration in partnership with key countries, UN organisations and the African Union is delivering. With the Joint AU–EU–UN Task Force, we assisted more than 15,000 people to return from Libya to their homes and start a new life, and we evacuated over 1.300 refugees for further resettlement. Cooperation and shared responsibilities are key to effectively address this global challenge.”

High Representative / Vice-President Federica Mogherini



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.

At the heart of the EU's policy



**Saving and protecting the lives
of migrants and refugees**



**breaking the business model of
smugglers and traffickers**



**providing legal pathways
of migration**

While important progress has been achieved and the number of deaths at sea has significantly decreased, a large number of crossings still happen along the Central Mediterranean route and many migrants are faced with dire conditions along their journeys. The EU has already made enormous effort, and cooperation with partners, such as the United Nations and African Union, is essential to effectively take work forward. Close cooperation with countries of origin and transit continues, to tackle the root causes of irregular migration and provide opportunities for people at home. Effective cooperation on readmission and return of irregular migrants is ongoing, as well as on establishing legal pathways of migration.



AU-EU-UN TASKFORCE: A PARTNERSHIP THAT DELIVERS RESULTS

The successful co-operation under the African Union – European Union – United Nations Taskforce which was set up in November 2017 in the margins of the AU-EU Summit continues to deliver results. It aims to save and protect lives of migrants and refugees along the routes, in particular inside Libya, accelerate the assisted voluntary returns and the resettlement of those in need of international protection, fight trafficking and smuggling networks, as well as expand and accelerate the on-going work with countries of origin. It reinforces ongoing EU efforts in Libya and along the Central Mediterranean route. From the start of scaled up operations in November 2017, until February 2018 over 15,000 people were assisted to voluntarily return home from Libya via the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and 1,300 persons to be evacuated under the Emergency Transit Mechanism with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

The work of the Joint Taskforce continues. Following a high level African Union – European Union – United Nations mission to Tripoli in February, key next steps are discussed on a regular basis with the Libyan authorities, together with the IOM and UNHCR: These include facilitating the humanitarian evacuation operations; full registration and identification of all migrants disembarked; increasing access to migrants and refugees in detention centres and improve the conditions they face; the shift towards the establishment of alternatives to detention and the closure of the detention centres in their current form; as well as considering of alternatives to the criminalisation of irregular migrants.

A new €50 million programme, has been adopted under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa in March 2018, 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.

Saving lives



Since February 2016, more than **290,000 migrants have been rescued** by EU operations at sea in support to the Italian Coastguard.



So far in 2018 over **6,200 migrants have been rescued** in the desert in Niger.



Since May 2017 in Libya, more than **12,000 vulnerable migrants** and more than **11,100 refugees and asylum seekers have received medical assistance and consultations** at disembarkation points, in detention centres and in host communities.



Almost **37,000 vulnerable migrants have received blankets, mattresses and hygiene kits**.

FIGHT TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING

Criminal networks are taking advantage of people's despair along the migratory routes. To break their business model, the EU and its Member States launched **Operation Sophia** in 2015, which has so far helped to apprehend more than 139 suspected smugglers and traffickers and neutralised 537 vessels used by criminals. A Crime Information Cell, which combines EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies and Operation staff, should also optimise the use of information collected for crime prevention, investigation and prosecution. Operation Sophia, the Italian Coastguard and Operation Seahorse, are engaged in training the Libyan Navy and Coastguard to enhance their ability to perform search and rescue activities, disrupt smuggling and trafficking activities, and improve the overall security in Libyan territorial waters. Operation Sophia also contributes to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2292.

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.

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 7 national and 12 international criminal networks so far.

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 raised €414 million 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 **Training Mission in Mali**.

SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES IN PARTNER COUNTRIES

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

Through the **Emergency Trust Fund for Africa**, with its three geographical windows (Sahel and Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and North Africa) the EU supports initiatives aimed at providing protection and assistance to those in need, as well as offering assisted voluntary return and reintegration support. Programmes also aim at boosting economic development, improve migration management, as well as fighting migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. Initiatives under the Trust Fund also 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. Such projects for example improve good governance, help to create jobs and provide vocational training. The Trust Fund supports an effective management of migration flows that protects human rights and contributes to community stabilisation. Creating employment opportunities, fostering a more robust development path and

supporting local authorities to restore essential service delivery will be crucial to improve the resilience of both migrant and local population, notably in Libya and to prevent irregular migration flows originating from countries in the region, such as Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt.

Current available funding will however not be sufficient to match needs identified across windows of the Trust Funds and up to €1.2 billion will be needed to continue the work in 2019.

Emergency Trust Fund for Africa



- 147 programmes approved for €2.6 billion
- Around €1.2 billion of funding required to ensure work can continue

EU – IOM PARTNERSHIP – MIGRANT PROTECTION AND REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES

Vocational training and assistance to set up micro-businesses or cooperatives



Diallo Al Hamdou is one of the 377 returnees that have benefited from training in business creation thanks to the EU-IOM migrant protection and reintegration action.

His dream is now to open a restaurant and he has met people at the training with similar aims: *"We are now trying to set up a restaurant and grow together. In this training, they show us how to manage it, so that the activity becomes sustainable and we do not go bankrupt. We are putting together a team that will handle it well, so that in a couple of years the restaurant thrives."*

The EU-IOM action does not stop with the training, as the projects will also be monitored and financially supported, ensuring a sustainable reintegration in Guinea.

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 so they can re-establish themselves at home, through economic, social and psychosocial support. Local communities are also being involved in the projects – to foster sustainable inclusion in the reintegration process. So far, more than 27 100 people returned to their home countries since May 2017, have benefitted from reintegration assistance, such as trainings, or support to start a small business.

The **EU External Investment Plan** provides a framework to improve sustainable investments in Africa and the European Neighbourhood. It will support innovative financial instruments to attract public and private investments of up to €44 billion. The EU is providing €4.1 billion to this end. This ambitious initiative has attracted a lot of interest from partner financial institutions and the private sector. The response to the first invitation for investment proposals under the Guarantee Fund has been very encouraging. Additional Member States' contributions will be essential in order to respond to the high demand.