



THE EU'S GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT TO COUNTER HUMAN SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING NETWORKS

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Fighting and preventing migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings is one of the priorities of the European Union and crucial in providing a comprehensive response to irregular migration. Criminal networks take advantage of people's despair and use land, sea and air routes to facilitate irregular migration, putting people's lives at risk and seek in every way to maximise their profits. While trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling are two different crimes and therefore subject to different legal frameworks they are closely interlinked. In recent years, the EU has put in place concrete actions and stepped up cooperation as well as joint work at EU level and in partnership with third countries and organisations.



INSIDE THE EUROPEAN UNION

Migrant Smuggling

The European Union has put in place effective policies and a solid legal framework to counter and prevent migrant smuggling networks while at the same time ensuring the protection of human rights of migrants. **The European Agenda on Migration, the European Agenda on Security** as well as the **EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling** are important and substantial means to prevent and to counter migrant smuggling and to guarantee the internal security of the EU.

EU ACTION PLAN AGAINST MIGRANT SMUGGLING – 4 PRIORITIES

As part of the EU Agenda on Migration, the EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling (2015-2020) sets out a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach.



Enhanced Police and Judicial Response

Since its establishment in 2016, the European Migrant Smuggling Centre has supported Member States in their operational cooperation to tackle migrant smuggling.



Improved Gathering and Sharing of Information

The information flow has been significantly improved at all levels, with the Information Clearing House within Europol being the latest output, aiming in particular at pooling information from law enforcement and military sources.



Enhanced prevention of smuggling and assistance to vulnerable migrants

The EU has been supporting several information and awareness-raising campaigns in key countries of origin and transit. Over €23 million has been devoted to information and awareness-raising activities since 2015.



Stronger cooperation with third countries

The EU has been focusing on operational cooperation with third countries through capacity-building projects, joint investigation teams, and better coordination of EU assets in third countries, in particular with the introduction of European Migration Liaison officers in key third countries.

Europol plays a key role in supporting Member States' operational cooperation through the secure **exchange of information, expertise and analytical support**.

As highlighted by the Council, in the operational measures approved in December 2018, disrupting smugglers' online communication can be of particular value. The number of **referrals of online content** by **Europol's EU Internet Referral Unit** to internet service providers has increased by more than 35% since last year, and the **success rate of removal has reached 98%**.

The European Migrant Smuggling Centre

The European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) was established in 2016 to support EU Member States in targeting and **dismantling** the complex and sophisticated **criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and document fraud**. It regularly deploys its European Mobile Investigation or Analyses Teams (EMIST/EMAST) to the field offering expertise, coordinating operational meetings, providing tailored analytical support and cross-checks against Europol databases. In 2018, to support Member State investigations, the EMSC supported 101 priority cases and 39 Common and Joint Action Days, leading to the arrest of 607 suspects. The EMSC has evolved into a hub of international cooperation against smuggling, hosting several liaison officers from the United States and conducting joint operations on the ground with the Member States.

The EMSC also hosts the Information Clearing House, with the participation of Interpol, EUNAVFOR MED Sophia, the European Gendarmerie Force, as well as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and key EU Member States. The Clearing House was set up in 2017 as a **'fusion centre-type' cooperation platform** aimed at improving Europol's intelligence picture on organised migrant smuggling and consolidating its support to partner law enforcement agencies with a focus beyond EU borders, on source and transit countries for migration.



OUTSIDE THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU has further enhanced financial, technical and operational assistance to third countries in view of supporting the development of national anti-smuggling strategies and legislation, building capacity of law enforcement and judiciary authorities for investigation and prosecution of criminal networks as well as for more effective management of flows and border control. To respond to the need for strengthening coherence and coordination of the EU's actions on migration in third countries, posts of European Migration Liaison officers (EMLOs) are now deployed in 12 priority third countries.

EU ACTION AT SEA



EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, was launched in 2015 to break the cruel business model of migrant smugglers and human traffickers and has played a decisive role in improving overall maritime security in the Central Mediterranean.

So far, the Operation has apprehended **151 suspected traffickers and smugglers** and removed **551 vessels** from the criminal organisations.

The Operation is also closely following the evolution of broader smuggling and trafficking activities: it has conducted **more than 2,400 hailing** and **160 friendly approaches** as part of its mandate to disrupt weapons smuggling, thereby allowing for a better understanding of how routes can be used by criminal networks on the high seas.

Operation Sophia also trains the Libyan Coastguard and Navy to enhance their capability to disrupt smuggling and trafficking in Libya and to save lives and improve security in Libyan territorial waters.

More than **325 personnel** of the Libyan Coastguard and Navy have been trained so far.

A **Crime Information Cell (CIC)** has been established as a hub within Operation Sophia. It was set up aboard EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia's Force Flag ship by deploying liaison officers from Europol and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) to facilitate cooperation and timely information exchange between the Operation, Europol and the EBCGA on issues relating to crime prevention, investigation and prosecution.

SANCTIONS



The **European Union** introduced in 2017 **restrictions** on the export or transit of **inflatable boats** and **outboard motors** to Libya.

On 14 June 2018 the Council of the EU transposed into **EU law sanctions** adopted by the UN, imposing a **travel ban and asset freeze on six human traffickers and smugglers** operating in Libya. This was the first time that the UN imposed sanctions against human traffickers and smugglers.

PROVIDING SUPPORT AND ENHANCING SECURITY

Effective **border management** and **security** are key to prevent migrant smugglers and traffickers. The EU's **civilian Common Security and Defence Policy missions** along the Central Mediterranean Route are actively contributing to the fight against criminal networks, and dedicated projects and programmes, including under the EU's **Emergency Trust Fund for Africa** have been launched to this end.

North Africa



The civilian EU Border Assistance Mission EUBAM Libya advises the Libyan government on border management, law enforcement and criminal justice, to further operationalise and expand its engagement to contribute to the fight against criminal networks.

Under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, programmes worth **€91.3 million** are in place in Libya to support the capacity of relevant Libyan authorities in the areas of **border management, fight smuggling and trafficking in human beings, search and rescue at sea** and in the **desert**.

A **regional programme** worth **€15 million** implemented with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, will support national actors in the areas of **law enforcement** and **criminal justice** in the North of Africa, through capacity building and light equipment (such as IT tools) to dismantle organised criminal groups involved in migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

The successful partnership under the **AU-EU-UN Joint Taskforce to Address the Migrant Situation in Libya** allows for close cooperation with key origin, transit and destination countries to build a stronger security architecture in the region.

In 2018, the EU mobilised **€140 million** to strengthen the capacities of Morocco's border management authorities to protect vulnerable migrants, addressing irregular migration, and dismantling cross-border criminal networks involved in human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

Sahel



The EU is fighting smuggling activities also by providing capacity building, training and advice to local security forces through the CSDP missions **EUCAP Sahel Niger** and **Mali**. The transfer of know-how through training and advice by **EUCAP Sahel Niger** and **EUCAP Sahel Mali** supports the development of the national internal security forces on their path towards modern security providers that work within the framework of human rights and rule of law. 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 2017, EUCAP Sahel Niger organised 198 training events for more than 3,400 people on issues such as public order, crisis management or trafficking.

Through regional projects under the EU Trust Fund, such as **AJUSEN** (Appui à la Justice, Sécurité et à la Gestion des Frontières au Niger) and the **Joint Investigation Team**, the EU is helping the Niger authorities apprehend and prosecute more criminals and thus crack down on smuggling and trafficking. Against this background, a common operational partnership (COP) to address smuggling and trafficking in a comprehensive manner and dismantle criminal rings is being set up in Senegal. **Search and rescue missions** in Niger supported by the EU Trust Fund have **rescued more than 13,000 stranded migrants** since 2017.

The Joint Investigation Team (JIT) - a team of French, Spanish and Nigerien officials, financed by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa with €6 million, has been deployed in Niger to investigate and prosecute smuggling and trafficking networks. Thanks to constant peer-to-peer dialogue, training and mentoring, the Nigerien law enforcement authorities are investigating criminal networks and have secured 200 prosecutions. In addition, 33 international criminal networks have been dismantled since its inception in 2017.

The EU is the largest supporter of the **G5 Sahel Joint Force**, which aims to tackle security challenges, including organised crime and the trafficking of arms, drugs and human beings. An EU – AU and G5 Sahel co-hosted conference on 23 February 2018 pledged €414 million, with €100 million from the EU alone. At the International Conference of Donors and Partners of the G5 Sahel in December 2018, the EU pledged a further contribution of €125 million from the Trust Fund for stabilisation efforts in the region.

Regional coordination is also strengthened through programmes targeting criminal organisations, including trafficking in human beings, in the countries of the [Gulf of Guinea](#), aiming at providing partner countries with the appropriate tools to protect migrants, prevent human trafficking and prosecute the criminals.

Horn of Africa



EU funding is being allocated under a wide range of instruments – such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) – to initiatives which include addressing smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings through, for example, awareness-raising campaigns, assistance, protection and reintegration programmes, national and regional strategies against migrant smuggling as well as meeting international legal standards in that regard.

A **Common Operational Partnership, worth €9 million**, with **Senegal** adopted under the EU Trust Fund for Africa in November 2018 will support the Senegalese authorities in their fight against criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings and enhance regional cooperation in this area.

BETTER MIGRATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (BMM) IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The BMM programme, worth €46 million, aims to tackle migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings in the region, empowering migrants by improving their rights and protection from violence, abuse and exploitation, to make migration in the region easier and safer. It works on four fronts:

1) Coordinating policies to counter human trafficking and smuggling

Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti are the main transit countries for people from the region on the Horn of Africa's migration routes. The BMM has trained national migration officers and border managers and organised regional conferences to work with governments on developing and expanding better migration policies.

2) Helping institutions combat human trafficking

From August to October 2018 alone, more than 100 representatives from the judiciary from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Djibouti received training in prosecution techniques focusing on protection and support for victims. Through a web platform supported by the BMM programme, legal aid workers will be able to find all necessary services provided by organisations and agencies, such as shelter, emergency medical care or family tracing, to better support victims of human trafficking in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somaliland and Djibouti.

3) Protection and support

The BMM programme helps to identify, assist and protect victims of trafficking in human beings and vulnerable smuggled migrants, especially women and children and other vulnerable groups. In Addis Ababa alone, over 200 boys and girls were rescued in just two months and are provided with shelter.

4) Providing information and advice on safe, legal migration routes and employment opportunities

So far, 16 public events for over 10,500 victims of trafficking, vulnerable migrants and potential migrants have taken place.

OFFERING ALTERNATIVES

Projects and programmes have been launched **providing economic alternatives** to individuals and groups in communities previously dependent on illegal migration, such as through support to the agricultural sector or by supporting the insertion of youth into the labour market.

In Niger, the **PAIERA** project offers **economic and employment opportunities** and alternatives to people who once acted, for example, as smugglers, making a living from irregular migration. They receive training and job opportunities in agriculture, the retail sector and others. Since the launch of PAIERA in June 2017, **371 people** have been assisted. More eligible projects will be funded when PAIERA enters its second phase, through the Project "Stabilisation et renforcement socio-économique des populations affectées par la migration irrégulière dans les zones de transit au Niger", adopted in November 2018.

Information campaigns: 6 information and awareness raising projects on the risks of irregular migration and possible alternatives kicked off in 2019 in Africa (Tunisia, Mali, Niger, The Gambia, Ivory Coast and Guinea Conakry) under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Several actions on awareness raising on irregular migration are also ongoing in the Horn of Africa (Sudan/Ethiopia/Somalia), Nigeria, the Middle East and Afghanistan.

GLOBAL ACTION TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AND THE SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS

The European Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are implementing a four-year (2015-2019) initiative worth **€11 million**, assisting **13 countries** (Belarus, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Lao PDR, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, South Africa and Ukraine) in six key areas to prevent and address trafficking and smuggling. These areas are: (1) national strategies and policies; (2) national legal frameworks; (3) criminal justice responses; (4) regional and trans-regional cooperation; (5) assistance and support programmes for victims; and (6) protection and assistance for children.