

EU approves €59 million to support peace, stability and job creation in the Horn of Africa

EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, **Neven Mimica**, said: *“This new package illustrates how the EU Trust Fund provides sustainable solutions to address instability and lack of economic opportunities, as they are two main root causes of forced displacement in the Horn of Africa. By promoting peace, stability and job creation, these new actions will help create alternatives for people to improve their lives to ensure that migration can become a choice for people, and not a necessity.”*

Fifth package of actions in the Horn of Africa under the EU Trust Fund

The package of actions announced today consists of:

- The regional project **“Promoting Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa Region”** (€40 million) covers all countries in the Horn of Africa and aims to contribute to achieving sustainable peace, security and stability to improve economic integration and development. The project will enhance the capacity of IGAD and national governments of the region in key areas of peacebuilding. This will be done for example by improving early warning and response mechanisms or by countering transnational organised crime such as trafficking and smuggling.
- The new **“Kenya-EU Partnership for the implementation of the Kenya CVE strategy ”** (€5 million) will support Kenya in improving the implementation of its recently adopted National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism. The aim is to prevent and counter violent extremism in an efficient and inclusive way, and in full respect of human rights.
- Two further projects build upon ongoing support to the people in Sudan. A project in North Darfur, **“Wadi El Ku Integrated Catchment Management Project (Phase 2)”** (€10 million), will directly target 80,000 smallholder producers and indirectly benefit the 700,000 people dependent on the Wadi El Ku catchment, by strengthening rural livelihoods through the inclusive and sustainable management of water resources.

A second project is a **“Technical Cooperation Facility for Sudan 2018 – 2020”** (€4 million) to provide monitoring, assessments, specific studies and other technical assistance to support the sound implementation of the [€100 million Special Measure for Sudan](#) channelled through the EU Trust Fund.

These actions build on previous packages of actions worth €606 million (approved in packages of [€253 million](#), [€117 million](#), [€66.5 million](#) and [€170 million](#)) committed under the EU Trust Fund since December 2015 aimed at providing regional sustainable solutions to irregular migration and forced displacement. They were approved by the operational committee of the EU Trust Fund for Africa.

Background

The European Commission launched an “[*Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa*](#)” at the [Valletta migration summit](#) in November 2015. The Fund amounts to €2.5 billion from the EU budget and European Development Fund, combined with contributions from EU Member States and other donors. The aim of the EU Trust Fund for Africa is to address the root causes of instability and irregular migration and to contribute to good migration management. The bulk of its resources are dedicated to the creation of jobs and economic development, especially for young people and women in local communities, with a focus on vocational training and the creation of micro and small enterprises

For More Information

[On the Trust Fund for Africa](#)

[Website of Commissioner Neven Mimica](#)

EU-Myanmar relations

Myanmar’s efforts in **combating forced labour**, acknowledged by the International Labour Organisation, have opened the way for the EU to reinstate preferential market access under the “*Everything But Arms*” scheme in 2013. As a result **bilateral trade reached €1.55 billion in 2016** up from €404 million in 2012. **Myanmar exports to the EU reached almost €1 billion**. Major exports from Myanmar to the EU were garments (more than 69% of total exports), rice (8%), and footwear (6%). According to Myanmar’s official statistics (as of January 2017), the **EU was the 4th largest foreign investor in 2016**. According to Myanmar’s official figures (end January 2017), cumulated existing investments originating from the EU amounted to USD 4.8 billion (or 8.2%), behind China (USD 18.4 billion or 31% of total), Singapore (USD 15.7 billion or 27%) and Hong Kong (USD 7.4 billion or 13% of total).

The EU is working towards concluding **an Investment Protection Agreement** to enable European businesses to realise the full potential offered by the country’s economy, while complying with the highest standards of corporate social responsibility and responsible investment.

The EU demonstrated its commitment to work with the government, the International Labour Organization and other partners (Denmark, the United States and Japan) **on labour rights** when joining the *Initiative to Promote Fundamental Labour Rights and Practices in Myanmar* in May 2015. The EU is also actively engaged to promote **responsible business conduct** and is funding a €9 million ILO/OECD project in this area in a number of Asian countries, including Myanmar.

In order to help European business to better tap Myanmar's vast economic and investment potential, Myanmar has been selected as a **European Economic Diplomacy** case study country. The recently established [Eurochamber](#) can play an important role in representing EU business interests in the country.

Steps have been taken to prepare for negotiations on a [Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement \(FLEGT VPA\)](#). Progress is however dependent on the outcome of the peace process since vast forest areas are located in ethnic areas. The EU attaches particular importance to the preservation of environment and biodiversity.

[42/2017 : 27 July 2017 – Opinion of the Advocate General in the case C-186/16](#)

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[41/2017 : 27 April 2017 – Opinions of the Advocate General in joined cases C-168/16, C-169/16, C-169/16](#)

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[New guidelines help citizens gain better and fairer access to their national courts on environmental cases](#)

Today the European Commission adopted a [guidance document](#) on access to justice in environmental matters which clarifies how **individuals and associations** can challenge decisions, acts and omissions by public authorities related to EU environmental law before national courts.

The Juncker Commission has taken a step forward with the publication of these guidelines, providing the necessary guidance to citizens for better access to

national justice systems. The guidance is intended to help individuals and non-governmental organisations to decide whether to bring a case before national courts. National courts can use it to help identify all the EU Court of Justice cases that they should take into account when they are faced with questions related to access to justice in environmental cases. With this guidance, national administrations are made aware of possible shortcomings in their justice systems and businesses are provided with greater clarity on what EU rights and obligations are at stake in the decisions, acts and omissions that concern them.

Frans **Timmermans**, First Vice-President responsible for the Rule of Law said: *“Legal certainty is a core principle for a Rule of Law based society, and it is important that we offer this guidance to all interested parties. Environmental law is at the forefront of our efforts to build a sustainable future for the EU, and everybody needs to have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities.”*

Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, said: *“Environmental laws are about protecting people and their health. When public authorities fail to respect the rights and obligations under these laws, the public can hold them accountable. The new guidance is an important step in empowering citizens to take matters such as the quality of air, water and waste management in their own hands. By bringing environmental cases to the national courts, citizens can help ensure the correct application of environmental law across the EU.”*

The EU Court of Justice has issued a number of rulings clarifying EU requirements on access to justice in environmental matters. Examples include:

- How national courts should address pleas that municipal **air quality plans** do not provide for sufficiently effective measures to reach the air quality standards laid down in EU air legislation;
- The role of the public, notably environmental non-governmental organisations, in helping to ensure that the obligations under EU **nature** legislation are respected in the Member States;
- Assessment criteria that national courts should employ to avoid that prohibitively high litigation **costs** prevent citizens and associations from exercising their role in upholding EU environmental law at national level.

Today’s guidance note brings all of these rulings together in a single text, making it easier for people to understand them and their implications by providing one comprehensive document.

The adoption of today’s guidance note will be followed by discussions with Member States which do not yet fully comply with their obligations, as interpreted by the EU Court of Justice. These discussions will also take place in the context of the process established through the [Environmental Implementation Review](#).

Background

Access to justice guarantees that individuals and environmental associations, under certain conditions, can have an independent national court examine whether a public authority acted lawfully in making a decision, act or omission affecting their rights. The principle guarantees consist of the right to be heard, a sufficient scrutiny by the national judge, measures to put matters right and measures to avoid prohibitive costs.

The guidance document is based on access to justice provisions in EU secondary environmental law and provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters ([The Aarhus Convention](#)), as interpreted by the EU Court of Justice. The scope of the guidance document is limited to access to justice in relation to decisions, acts and omissions by public authorities of the Member States. It does not address environmental litigation between private parties. Nor does it concern the judicial review of acts of the EU institutions.

For More Information

Factsheet: [Access to Justice in Environmental matters](#)

Info Sheet: [Environmental enforcement – What's in it for you?](#)