

Partnership Framework on Migration: Commission reports on results and lessons learnt one year on

Today, the Commission and the High Representative/ Vice-President presented the fourth Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration, which takes stock of progress achieved since its launch in June 2016. The report also looks into efforts undertaken along the Central Mediterranean Route. Moreover, the report provides an overview of the lessons learned over the past year and examines how the approach can be reinforced to sustain the efforts made and achieve the objectives set out by the European Council.

What is new?

Since the launch of the Partnership Framework in June 2016, a number of tangible results across the five priority countries, Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Ethiopia, as well as with regard to other priority **countries** in Africa and beyond have been achieved. Several partner countries have adopted or reviewed migration management strategies and legislation in cooperation with the EU and migration liaison officers are now present in 12 partner countries. An established partnership with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and closer cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have been secured to ensure better conditions for migrants and help Assisted Voluntary Returns in countries of origin. Steps have also been taken to facilitate returns and negotiations on readmission agreements have been launched.

Faced with an increase of arrivals via the Central Mediterranean route, rapid action has been taken to implement the Malta Declaration of 3 February. The report details actions to tackle the continuing high flows through this route.

The Report also reflects on the lessons learned over the past twelve months. They relate to the need of closer cooperation and coordination between the EU and Member States, but also with partner countries, notably in the field of returns and readmission. The importance of strong engagement, including financial, and of presence on the ground to achieve operational results are also underlined. Only tailor-made strategies can bring results. Finally, the Report confirms that, if necessary, the geographical scope of the Partnership framework will continue to adapt to new realities and include more countries.

Partnership Framework on Migration

What results have been achieved?

A detailed overview of results achieved and remaining progress to be made since the last reporting period can be found in the report itself. However,

some concrete results, in the five priority countries can be highlighted:

- As regards **Niger**, structural dialogues with the EU on migration management are in place both at national and local level, including the creation of a Joint Information Platform. Nigerien authorities have stepped up border control and enforcement action against trafficking in human beings, leading to the arrest of more than 30 people in 2017 so far. Assisted Voluntary Returns from Niger have picked up. By 9 June, more than 2640 migrants have been assisted to return to their homes, including 175 Nigeriens. The EU has further reinforced its presence with the deployment of a migration liaison officer that complete a previous reinforcement of the EU presence in Agadez through EUCAP Sahel Niger, as well as a liaison office. Nine projects under the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) have been launched, targeting agriculture, vocational training, youth employment and sustainable migration management. Political dialogue with **Nigeria** continues with High Level visits and meetings. Nigerian migration liaison officers have been deployed to Italy to facilitate the identification of irregular migrants. Negotiations on the Readmission Agreement, initiated in October 2016 are however stalled. From Niger and Libya, 1.786 people have been safely returned until 9 June 2017 to Nigeria under the Assisted Voluntary Returns programme. First results have also been achieved on rehabilitating water supply infrastructures for 5000 people and enrolment of 6000 adolescent girls to safe spaces.
- Political dialogue with **Mali** has intensified in recent weeks, including through the visit of the High Representative/Vice-President to Bamako on 5 June. Work is ongoing to implement an EU Trust Fund project, which includes action to raise awareness to prevent irregular migration and gives Malian authorities further technical and operational support for law enforcement against migration smuggling and to monitor transit routes. The authorities have engaged in efforts to facilitate the return of Malian from Niger and Libya and 404 migrants have been assisted so far. However, progress on cooperation on return with Mali needs to advance.
- The political dialogue on migration with **Senegal** continues with high-level visits and technical missions to EU Member States. Assisted Voluntary Returns have increased, reaching 823 from Niger and 528 from Libya until 9 June 2017.
- **Ethiopia** has expressed renewed political engagement to cooperate on migration management, including on returns, but the operation progress has been very slow. Ethiopia also remains a major host country, now hosting almost 843 000 refugees.[\[1\]](#)
- Enhanced dialogue and identification missions have taken place with **Cote d'Ivoire**, **Ghana** and **Guinea**, leading towards a more systemic approach on migration management, returns and cooperation against smuggling.

For more information on the individual updates, please see the country factsheets here.

What are the main lessons learned, which challenges remain and what is the way forward under the Partnership Framework?

The EU has been particularly effective when pursuing a coordinated and joined-up diplomatic and operational approach. However, a stronger coordination of actions and messages between the EU and Member States should be ensured so that respective strands mutually reinforce each other. Moreover, enhanced efforts would be necessary to speak with one voice, and on the use of different policies, tools, and instruments outside migration that could serve as incentives. The Partnership Framework has used formal approaches such as the negotiation of readmission agreements and more informal tools, such as Standard Operating Procedures and conducting technical and identification missions. The deployment of European Migration Liaison Officers in 12 partner countries and the involvement of the European Agencies, such as Europol or the European Border and Coast Guard, have had a positive impact and their expertise should be used to the full. Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations have proved useful to improve border management and strengthen the fight against organised crime. More emphasis needs to be placed is on communication both at the EU side, but also in view of assisting partners in communicating better to their citizens the various aspects and risks of the migration challenge.

Improving return and readmission has been a key objective under the Partnership Framework. Identification missions from partner countries to Europe have taken place, however only a fraction of the persons identified effectively returned. The Partnership Framework had also tested the use of Standard Operating Procedures, or other administrative arrangements in the absence of, or pending formal readmission agreements. Efforts need to be stepped up with partners and inside the EU, to continuously increase cooperation to make returns more efficient and effective. Overcoming resistances in the field of returns and readmission will require a more coordinated and wider use of the levers offered by all relevant EU policies to achieve results, such as the coordinated use of visa or legal migration policies.

Resources for the EU Trust Fund for Africa have increased from almost €1.8 billion in November 2015 to around €2.8 billion. A clear commitment and financial support by Member States is crucial to ensure an adequate level of resources in the coming years, especially as regards the North Africa window.

What are the next steps under the Partnership Framework?

The EU and Member States remain jointly committed to continue translating the Partnership Framework into tangible results to the mutual benefit of the European Union and our partners. Thus, the substantial efforts already put into the Partnership Framework will be continued and enhanced.

For more information on the concrete next steps foreseen see here the factsheets for each country.

Central Mediterranean Route

**What are the first results achieved along the Central Mediterranean Route?
What are the next steps?**

Arrivals via the Central Mediterranean Route have increased over one third since the same period in 2016 and by the end of May the IOM has recorded 1 562 lives lost at sea. To respond to the ongoing crisis, a stronger focus has been placed on cooperation with North African partners and Libya in particular, directly following up on the Joint Communication on the Central Mediterranean Route and the Malta Declaration.

In **Libya** a renewed focus has been put to protecting migrants at disembarkation points as well as in detention centres whilst also increasing the development of alternatives to detention. A €90 million package was also adopted under EU Trust Fund for Africa in April to provide for socio-economic stabilisation at the municipality level, particularly for communities hosting migrants and displaced populations.

This adds up to already launched initiatives. The Commission and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) have [signed a joint initiative in December](#) 2016 for migrant protection and reintegration in Africa along the Central Mediterranean migration routes, worth €100 million. This will assist an initial 15,000 migrants in Libya to return to their countries of origin. So far in 2017, almost 4.043 migrants have already returned from Libya to their countries of origin by the end of May 2017, this is more than the number of migrants returned from Libya in the entire year of 2016. Reintegration will be provided to all returnees to countries supported by the Trust Fund.

The **EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Libya**, currently situated in Tunis, continues preparations for establishing a light presence in Tripoli, while staying active in maintaining and developing established networks with both Libyan authorities and partners, including engaging and assisting in a number of areas related to law enforcement, criminal justice and border management.

On the high seas, **EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia** continues its fight against organised crime responsible for migrant smuggling and trafficking of human beings. Until June 2017, Operation Sophia had apprehended 109 suspected smugglers and neutralised 444 boats used by smugglers.

EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia and the Seahorse programme have both already trained members of the Libyan Coast Guard. Operation Sophia has completed a training of 93 personnel and further 40 personnel have been trained in Crete and Malta. In parallel training, equipment and capacity building is also conducted by the Italian authorities, with four out of ten vessels that had been in maintenance already returned to Libya.

Cooperation with Sub-Saharan neighbours of Libya: Several actions are already being implemented, with the regionalisation of the Common Security and Defence Policy missions in the Sahel, which enables them to be active in different countries in the region, and implementation of EU Trust Fund projects with a cross-border dimension. This regional approach also builds on cooperation within the G5 Sahel.^[2]

HR/VP Mogherini announced during the third EU-G5 Sahel Ministerial Meeting on 5 June 2017 EU funding of [€50 million](#) for the **G5 Sahel Joint Force** to help

increase security and boost cross-border cooperation in the region. The EU has stepped up its cooperation in recent years with the G5 Sahel countries, i.e. Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad.

Increased cooperation with the neighbouring countries

The Partnership framework on migration was targeted to 5 priority countries. However, increased cooperation with Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria has been pursued in parallel. The well-established, close cooperation with Jordan and Lebanon continues. Taking into account the growing number of arrivals from Asia through the Central Mediterranean Route, dialogue and common work is also being stepped up with Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

What about the funding?

Partnership Framework

The EU is using a range of financial instruments to support the implementation of the Partnership Framework, most prominently the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). The EUTF operates in a total of 26 countries, with resources allocated amounting to around €2.85 billion, including €2.64 billion from the European Development Fund and several EU budget financing instruments, and €202.4 million pledged so far by EU Member States and other partners (e.g. Switzerland and Norway).

A total number to 118 projects worth over €1.8 billion have already been adopted by now – the bulk of which is 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.

The funds provided through the EU Trust Fund for Africa come in addition to traditional development cooperation. Together with its Member States, the European Union invests €20 billion of collective development assistance to Africa every year.

The EU Trust Fund has also been enlarged to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea as a demonstration of EU commitment towards the region and adaptation to the evolving situation.

Central Mediterranean Route

Following the Malta Declaration and the Joint Communication on the Central Mediterranean Route, a stronger focus has been placed on cooperation with Libya and its neighbours. €200 million have been pledged by the EU for migration-related projects in North Africa through the EU Trust Fund. This comes on top of other projects launched in 2016, focussing on providing protection to most vulnerable migrants and creating socio-economic opportunities at local level, as well as the €100 million initiative signed with IOM in December for migrant protection and reintegration in Africa, along the Central Mediterranean Route.

For more information

[Fourth Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration](#)

[Annex 1](#)

[Annex 2](#)

[Factsheet on the Partnership Framework on migration](#)

[Factsheet on work under the Partnership Framework with Mali](#)

[Factsheet on work under the Partnership Framework with Niger](#)

[Factsheet on work under the Partnership Framework with Nigeria](#)

[Factsheet on work under the Partnership Framework with Senegal](#)

[Factsheet on work under the Partnership Framework with Ethiopia](#)

[Factsheet on EU – Libya relations](#)

[\[1\]](#) UNHCR data as of 31 March 2017.

[\[2\]](#) Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.