

# European Agenda on Migration: Consolidating progress made

With the total number of irregular crossings along the main migratory routes having decreased by 63% in 2017, collective efforts to protect the EU's external borders, cooperate with partner countries to tackle the root causes of irregular migration, improve the protection of migrants and win the fight against smugglers are showing concrete results. Looking ahead, and noting that external and internal engagements on migration are closely interlinked, the Commission and the High Representative are calling for further concerted action by the EU, Member States and partner countries to advance in parallel and to maintain the intensity of the EU's efforts on all fronts and thereby better manage migration together.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"Since 2015, we have made real progress through our joint work to manage migration better in a comprehensive way. However, we are not there yet and this issue will stay with us for some time. So we must continue our comprehensive and joint efforts with even more energy and determination to consolidate our achievements and deliver the full European Agenda on Migration. Migration remains the top concern of our citizens and it should also remain our top priority."*

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: *"In the last two years, our energy has been dedicated to tackling, in a humane and effective way, one of the most challenging phenomena of our times. We have been supporting the IOM and UNHCR in helping people in distress and assisting voluntary return. We have put in place the External Investment Plan that will mobilise €40 billion in private investments. We have been working with our African friends in addressing the root causes of migration. Cooperation and partnership have always been and will remain our approach."*

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"We are exiting crisis mode gradually and we are now managing migration in a spirit of partnership and shared responsibility, inside and outside the EU. With over 34,400 new resettlement pledges received so far, I welcome the strong commitment shown by Member States to reduce irregular and dangerous routes and enhance safe and legal pathways, showing solidarity with host countries outside the EU."*

Addressing root causes and saving lives

Since September, the EU has continued to step up its support to address the root causes of migration:

- In Turkey, the EU is well on track to contract the €3 billion under the **Facility for Refugees** by the end of 2017. Since October, one million of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees now receive monthly electronic cash transfers.
- Two years after its launch, the **EU Trust Fund for Africa** is increasing

stability and resilience by supporting economic development and migration management in countries facing crises of different natures and emergency situations, with programmes worth almost €2 billion having been approved so far.

- Increased focus has been put on improving the often appalling conditions faced by migrants in **Libya**, in close cooperation with the UNHCR, UNICEF and the IOM. Almost 4,000 migrants and more than 2,000 displaced Libyan families have received medical assistance and basic support, while medical help and assistance is being delivered to migrants, including in detention centres.

As well as addressing smuggling and saving lives in the desert and at sea:

- The EU Trust Fund for Africa supports work by the IOM and the Nigerien authorities to carry out **search and rescue missions** in the desert with over 1,100 migrants having been brought to safety after being abandoned by smugglers in 2017.
- Over 15,000 migrants, including over 10,000 from Libya, have already benefitted from **assisted voluntary return**, and projects are in development to step up work with Libya's neighbours to help more migrants return home from Libya.
- With 13 assets deployed, **EU operations Triton and Sophia** have continued to support Member States' actions at sea to save lives and apprehend suspected traffickers and smugglers. In Niger, EU support to the Nigerien authorities has led to the arrest of over 100 suspected traffickers and smugglers.\*

EU solidarity and support with refugees and host countries

The **EU resettlement scheme** adopted in July 2015 is due to be successfully completed and resettlements under the **EU-Turkey Statement** are continuing at a steady pace – in total, **over 25,700** persons have been resettled since the launch of the schemes. In September, the Commission launched a **new scheme** to resettle at least 50,000 of the most vulnerable refugees, in particular along the Central Mediterranean route, by October 2019. So far, over **34,400 pledges** have been received from 16 Member States.

Two years on, and with only around 750 persons in Greece and 3,100 in Italy left to relocate, the **EU relocation scheme** is successfully coming to an end. **Over 31,500 persons** have been relocated so far. Whilst almost all Member States have respected their legal obligations, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland have so far not taken any measure to address the grievances included in the Commission's reasoned opinion from July – the infringement procedures therefore remain ongoing.

Delivering on return and readmission

With the conclusion of an agreement on **Standard Operating Procedures** on return with **Bangladesh** in September, progress has been made on a key element of the EU's approach to better managing migration. The EU will continue pursuing **structured practical cooperation** with other key countries under this new approach. Engagement with Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Mali will be stepped

up, and the ongoing readmission negotiations with Nigeria and Tunisia should be finalised as soon as possible.

By November, new operational steps to support Member States on return operations will be put forward by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, which will be serving as a focal point on return at EU level.

Next steps towards a stronger, more effective and fairer EU migration and asylum policy

For the **Africa Trust Fund** to continue supporting programmes, in particular in Libya and North Africa, Member States need to increase their financial contributions.

On **resettlement**, Member States should continue pledging to reach the target of at least 50,000 places in order to start the planning of concrete resettlement processes, including supporting the evacuation mechanism from Libya in cooperation with UNHCR, and endorse the Standard Operating Procedures for the Voluntary Humanitarian Admissions Scheme, finalised by the Commission and Turkey.

With **return** rates at EU level remaining unsatisfactory, this is an area which requires the commitment of all to ensure concrete progress is made. For their part, Member States are asked to collect and provide better data on returns to enable a better assessment of the effectiveness of returns and where the assistance of the of the European Border and Coast Guard could usefully contribute. The EU should also continue collectively exploring the mobilisation of all incentives and leverages to achieve progress on return, as endorsed by the European Council.

Under the **EU-Turkey Statement**, the Greek authorities need to step up the efforts and provide adequate resources to ensure effective returns to Turkey and deliver on this key element of the Statement. Only 1,969 returns have been carried out so far since March 2016.

## Background

Upon taking office, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker entrusted a Commissioner with special responsibility for Migration, Dimitris Avramopoulos, to work together with the other Commissioners, under the coordination of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, on a new policy on migration as one of the [10 priorities of the Political Guidelines](#) of the Juncker Commission.

On 13 May 2015, the European Commission proposed a far-reaching strategy, through the [European Agenda on Migration](#), to tackle the immediate challenges of the ongoing crisis, as well as to equip the EU with the tools to better manage migration in the medium and long term, in the areas of irregular migration, borders, asylum and legal migration.

Today's Communication presents the developments since early September and identifies key current issues requiring particular attention. It brings together, for the first time, the different work streams of the progress

reports on the EU-Turkey Statement, Relocation and Resettlement, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the Partnership Framework with third countries into a in a single report reflecting the comprehensive nature of the work to deliver the European Agenda on Migration,

For More Information

[Progress Report on the European Agenda on Migration](#)

[Annex 1: EU Trust Fund for Africa](#)

[Annex 2: Joint Action Plan on the Implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement](#)

[Annex 3: Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#)

[Annex 4: European Border and Coast Guard](#)

[Annex 5: Returns](#)

[Annex 6: Relocation](#)

[Annex 7: Resettlement](#)

[Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council – Progress report on the European Agenda on Migration](#)

[Factsheet: Resettlement – Ensuring safe and legal access to protection for refugees](#)

[Factsheet: Relocation – EU solidarity between Member States](#)

[Factsheet: Central Mediterranean Route](#)

[Factsheet: The European Border and Coast Guard Agency](#)

[Factsheet: Towards a more efficient and credible EU return policy](#)

[Factsheet: Financial support to Greece](#)

[Factsheet: Financial support to Italy](#)

[Factsheet: EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#)

[Factsheet: The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#)

[#MigrationEU](#)

*\* This information was updated on 15 November.*

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# European Agenda on Migration: Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos on consolidating the progress made

Dear all,

Today we present the consolidated progress that we have been making in managing migration on all fronts. The total number of arrivals along the main migratory routes has gone down by 63% compared to last year, and we are trying to gradually exit the crisis mode.

This does not mean that we should become complacent or that our work is over. The fact that migration flows have gone down should not make us forget that migrants are stranded in a terrible situation in Libya.

I fully share the concerns that are being documented about Libya. This is precisely why the EU is acting on all fronts. Our main priority is and remains to save lives and ensure the human and dignified treatment of all migrants, regardless of their status.

Right now, thousands of migrants in Libya are being provided with medical assistance and basic support by international organisations such as IOM and UNHCR, thanks to our €90 million under the EU Africa Trust Fund.

At the same time, we are working with Libya and neighbouring countries to avoid that migrants are stranded in Libya in the first place. To those persons who are in need of protection, we want to offer support and help to get resettled. I welcome the fact that the first group of 25 of the most vulnerable persons needing protection were evacuated from Libya to Niger last weekend, awaiting their further resettlement.

Now that the flows have gone down, we must all urgently invest more in legal pathways. This is why I am pleased to have received more than 34,400 resettlement pledges in response to my call last month from many Member States, and I urge the others to follow soon.

On top of this commitment, over 25,700 persons have been resettled to the EU since 2015. At the same time, to those who don't need protection, we want to offer help to return home, particularly if they are stranded in Libya.

So far, over 15,000 migrants, including over 10,000 from Libya, have already benefitted from assisted voluntary return, thanks to our support and in cooperation with IOM.

Projects are in development to step up the work with Libya's neighbours to help more migrants return home from Libya, in a safe and orderly way. We also

want to further crack down on the criminal groups that exploit the vulnerability of these desperate people.

For example, we already have clear results through our cooperation and support to Niger: over 100 suspected traffickers and smugglers have been arrested already in the first half of 2017.

We now want to expand this model to other countries. Apart from all our political and operational efforts, our financial commitments must continue too.

Two years after its launch, the EU Trust Fund for Africa is supporting economic development and migration management in countries facing crises of different natures, with programmes worth almost €2 billion having been approved so far.

In Turkey, the EU is well on track to contract the €3 billion under the Facility for Refugees by the end of 2017. One million of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees are now receiving monthly electronic cash transfers and almost two million will soon be able to benefit from healthcare.

Through all our actions, it is very clear: Europe is not a fortress and we remain a safe haven for those in need of protection. But to ensure that we can continue to live up to our standards, we can only provide protection to those who need it. Those who have no right to stay must be returned. Return rates at EU level however remain unsatisfactory still, in particular also under the EU-Turkey Statement.

This brings me to another example where we cannot become complacent: Greece. I take this opportunity to express our deep condolences for the tragic losses in West Attica due to the floods caused by the extreme weather conditions. Our thoughts are with families of the victims and of course with all those people who are still battling an uneven fight against this unprecedented natural and human disaster.

Right now, at the same time, Greece is facing another situation of severe overcrowding on most of the islands. But we cannot have a repetition of last year. The EU is supporting Greece financially and operationally to expand adequate reception capacity on the islands.

Greece should also speed up its asylum and return procedures, and further cooperate with local authorities to expand reception facilities. The European Commission is offering and will continue to offer its full support.

Finally, I want to say a word on relocation. Member States have continued showing solidarity towards Italy and Greece with over 31,500 persons relocated so far. Right now, around 800 eligible persons in Greece and 3,000 in Italy are left to be relocated, and we urge Member States to fulfil their legal obligations as soon as possible.

As I have said before, this solidarity cannot stop and should continue beyond the current schemes.

Now that the situation is gradually more stable, the time has come to move forward and structurally improve our migration and asylum systems, for the future. The comprehensive reform of our asylum system and Dublin are essential.

I also welcome Member States' willingness to engage with us on developing specific labour migration pilot projects with key countries.

If anything is clear, it is that we are not closing our doors. But we want well-managed, orderly, safe and fair migration.

Thank you.

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## [EU report: Evaluation of Ukrainian reforms shows considerable progress but need to accelerate implementation to reap full benefits](#)

Progress in other areas has been less forthcoming, with accelerated implementation needed to bring about real change for the Ukrainian people.

*"Since last year's report, we have seen a number of long-awaited achievements. Our Association Agreement entered into force, and Ukrainian citizens were granted visa-free travel for short stay visits to the Schengen area. We now expect the implementation of reforms to be accelerated so that Ukrainian citizens can fully reap the benefits of our partnership. Ukraine can count on the European Union's continued support in order to make this possible",* said the High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini**.

*"We remain convinced of the fundamental commitment of the Ukrainian President, government and Rada to deep-seated reform of the country. Of course this has not been a straightforward process: corruption is deep-rooted and there are vested interests that need to be overcome; naturally there are setbacks along the way that we must contend with. We are at times critical, and we insist on certain conditions, yet we are aware of how much Ukraine has already changed, with much more having been achieved in the past three years than in the decades before that, and under very challenging circumstances. The European Union will stick with Ukraine",* said the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn**.

This 2nd Joint Association Implementation Report on Ukraine, which has been published ahead of the EU-Ukraine Association Council on 8 December 2017, sets out the state of play of Ukraine's commitment under the Association Agreement since the last meeting of the Association Council in December 2016.

It focuses on key developments and reforms undertaken in line with the strategic priorities agreed between the EU and Ukraine.

In the course of 2017, mechanisms for policy coordination, steering and monitoring of the implementation of the Association Agreement were being set up by the government, which led to uneven progress of implementation in various sectoral areas. The report stresses the urgent need to streamline various reform tracks in Ukraine and accelerate the pace of implementation in 2018.

The report outlines that Ukraine has pursued the implementation of structural reforms, generating positive trends in the economic and social spheres despite internal and external challenges. The year 2017 also witnessed important legislative developments in areas such as the electricity market, energy efficiency, environment, education and decentralisation. Furthermore, key reforms such as pensions, healthcare and food safety were initiated. Justice sector reform continued with the adoption of a new law on the Constitutional Court and the setting up of the new Supreme Court. The implementation of the Strategy on Public Administration Reform has advanced and the reforming of law enforcement bodies continues.

The report emphasises that Ukraine has continued to advance measures to tackle corruption, but that further steps need to be taken in order for these measures to have tangible benefits. The electronic declarations of assets submitted nearly a year ago by high-level public figures and officials, for example, have yet to be analysed. The number of convictions when it comes to high-profile cases of alleged corruption also remains low; the rapid establishment of an anti-corruption court, in line with the recommendation of the Venice Commission, would be essential in this regard.

The report acknowledges the continued, resolute policy actions taken by the Ukrainian authorities, supported by international partners, which resulted in a consolidated stabilisation of the economy. As a result, in September 2017, after four years, Ukraine returned to the international capital markets raising over €2.5 billion (\$3 billion) with a 15-year maturity. Thanks to the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, Ukrainian and EU businesses have received stable, preferential market access. Ukraine's overall trade with the EU increased by 28.4% in the period January–July 2017 compared to the same period in 2016.

The European Union continues to fully support Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. We condemn and do not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. The European Union also continues to support the diplomatic efforts to find a lasting peaceful solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine through the complete implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

**More information:**

[Full Joint Report](#)

[Factsheet on EU-Ukraine relations](#)

[Website of the European Union Delegation in Ukraine](#)

[EU-Ukraine Summit webpage \(12-13 July 2017\)](#)

[European Commission Support Group for Ukraine website](#)

[EU-Ukraine Trade relations website](#)

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