

Progress under the European Agenda on Migration: Press conference by Commissioner Avramopoulos

Dear all,

With all our partners inside and outside Europe, we are working hard to deliver both on the internal and external dimension of our common migration policy.

All our actions are based on three fundamental principles: respect, responsibility-sharing and solidarity. All elements are interlinked and we cannot move on one without the other.

Today we celebrate 30 years of Erasmus Plus. More than 9 million students have participated so far already. They are the ambassadors of Europe, living and building our openness, further fostering a European consciousness.

It is the duty of our generation to consolidate and uphold these European values, which are now unfortunately at stake and put into question, particularly in the field of migration.

But on migration, we have come a long way as a Union.

What is essential now, is to sustain and further enhance this progress, at all levels, and by everyone.

Let me start with the EU-Turkey Statement: despite sometimes challenging circumstances it continues to deliver steady results. The number of arrivals remains low. Returns from Greece to Turkey need to be accelerated, in full respect of EU and international law, in order to reduce the migratory pressure on the Aegean islands.

As regards the Partnership Framework, one year after we launched it, we have made tangible progress in building stronger relations with five African priority countries: Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Ethiopia. In the last months, we have started to engage with additional important countries of origin not only in Africa but also in Asia.

We are discussing with all these countries on how to address the root causes of irregular migration more effectively and to rapidly improve our cooperation on all aspects of migration management.

Niger is a symbolic example of what can be achieved under the Partnership Framework. With our coordinated engagement with the Niger authorities, controls and police actions have been stepped up leading to the arrest of migrant smugglers.

Meanwhile, many stranded migrants have been assisted to voluntarily return to

their countries of origin. We should expand this model of cooperation with other transit countries in the region.

In parallel, following up on the Malta Declaration, we continue to work with Libya and the neighbouring countries in North Africa to stem the irregular flows in the Central Mediterranean and prevent the loss of life at sea.

The Italian Coast Guard is helping the Libyan Coast Guard to improve its operational capabilities for Search and Rescue. For this purpose we awarded yesterday Italy with EUR 1.8 million in additional emergency assistance.

In addition to the support provided to the Libyan Coast Guard, we have started to provide assistance to migrants and refugees stranded in Libya. Thanks to our cooperation with international partners on the ground, more than 3,300 migrants have returned from Libya to their countries of origin: This is more than the number of migrants returned from Libya in the entire year of 2016.

We will be able to provide more support also to our Member States on returns: with the full roll-out of the European Border and Coast Guard steadily continuing, already the pace of return operations from Europe continues to grow, with more than 6,500 returns in 2017 so far organised by the European Border and Coast Guard.

I call on Member States to rapidly increase their use of the Agency's capabilities on return but also to urgently address the gaps in human resources and technical equipment, in particular for the ongoing operations.

Ladies and gentlemen, We also have to make progress to better manage migration inside the European Union. We cannot and will not leave Member States at the external border on their own.

All those eligible – a number that is much lower than 160,000 – should be relocated in the coming months. We can achieve this objective if all Member States take their fair share.

I want to commend and thank those Member States that have continued relentlessly with their efforts so that in May we almost had 2,400 relocation transfers. In total, almost 20,300 asylum seekers in clear need of protection have been relocated.

But relocation is not a choice. It is a legal decision, with legal obligations, agreed on collectively, and which has to be carried out collectively, without exceptions.

There have been enough delays, and there have been enough discussions. It is time for action.

I regret to see that despite our repeated calls to pledge and relocate, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland have not yet taken the necessary action. For this reason, the Commission has decided to launch infringement procedures against these three Member States.

We have to be fair towards those Member States that do fulfil their obligations. I sincerely hope that these Member States can still reconsider their position and contribute fairly.

On resettlement we see positive and continued progress, with more than 16,000 persons resettled so far from Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

This is almost 75% of the agreed total of 22,504 people to be resettled before September. Resettlements under the EU-Turkey Statement reached a new record high in May 2017 with almost 1,000 Syrian refugees being provided with safe and legal pathways to Europe.

Dear all,

What this shows, is that it is entirely feasible to show solidarity to both the people in need as well as countries under pressure, who are hosting them – whether it is for resettlement or relocation. What it takes is political will and a spirit of commitment to our European obligations.

Europe is not only about requesting for funds or ensuring security. Yes these are all important. But Europe is also about sharing difficult moments and challenges as well as common dreams.

In other words, Europe is about sharing. And political will means political responsible leadership.

But let me be clear once again: we only relocate or resettle people in clear need of protection. These are people who have been very thoroughly identified, screened and fingerprinted.

In fact, it is precisely by not facilitating relocation or resettlement that one contributes to secondary flows and to irregular arrivals – and this in turn contributes to security risks.

Only by relocating and by resettling, by following the procedures, can we effectively and jointly reduce irregular and secondary migration flows, and any potential security risks.

It is now high time for everyone to deliver.

Thank you.

Partnership Framework on Migration:
Commission reports on results and

Lessons learnt one year on

The report shows that the Partnership has stimulated partner countries in Africa to better tackle irregular migration and to fight smuggling networks. Joint efforts have helped increase assisted voluntary returns of stranded migrants, and supported job creation and social projects. Increased efforts have also taken place along the Central Mediterranean Migration Route since the adoption of the [Joint Communication on the Central Mediterranean Route](#) and the [Malta Declaration](#). This has led to a more efficient cooperation with partner countries and international partners such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Better coordination between the EU and Member States has increased the EU leverage on partners. However, it should be further stepped up to improve delivery, notably on reducing the irregular arrivals of migrants to the EU and enhancing cooperation between the EU and partner countries to ensure returns and readmission.

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: *"One year ago, we launched the Partnership Framework based on the conviction that managing migration requires partnership and a comprehensive approach, based on the protection of the rights of migrants, on the fight against the traffickers of human beings, on the work on the root causes starting from poverty, conflicts and climate change. We have been working on a daily basis with the five priority countries and many others in the Sahel region, in West Africa and in the Horn of Africa. This common work has brought tangible progresses, among others on the fight against traffickers. And on assisted voluntary returns: since the beginning of 2017 more than 4,000 migrants voluntarily returned from Libya to their countries of origin, under the programme run in cooperation with IOM. We will keep working to increase even further cooperation with our African partners, to ensure that lives are saved, migrants are treated in dignity, and to make sure that we eradicate together the business model of those who exploit human despair."*

Results under the Partnership Framework

One year after the launch of the Partnership Framework, tangible progress has been made with the five African priority countries Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Ethiopia. **Niger** is emblematic of what can be achieved under the Partnership Framework: the EU and Member States have closely coordinated their actions and cooperation, together with Nigerien authorities. Border controls and action against trafficking in human beings have been stepped up leading to the arrest of smugglers and a significant increase in Assisted Voluntary Returns of migrants from Niger to countries of origin.

Cooperation with all partner countries has significantly intensified, including through the presence of European Migration Liaison Officers in 12 partner countries. The EU has now a well-established partnership with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Steps have been taken to facilitate returns and readmission of irregular migrants, but work on this front needs to be

accelerated. Cooperation in the field of migration management has also been stepped up with a broader set of countries, in North and West Africa and Asia.

The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa has backed up the EU's political engagement by providing support to projects for job creation, access to education or border management in key countries. 118 projects have so far been approved. The overall level of resources available across the three regions covered by the Fund has increased to around €2.8 billion and its reach has been expanded to include Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Steps taken along the Central Mediterranean Route

To respond to the ongoing crisis along the Central Mediterranean Route, the EU has deepened its work with North African partners and with Libya in particular. A €90 million package has been adopted under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, to reinforce the protection and resilience of migrants and refugees (including in centres), and the host communities in Libya. In cooperation with the IOM, the Assisted Voluntary Returns and Reintegration programme has continued. In Libya alone, so far in 2017 more than 4,000 migrants returned to their countries of origin, which constitutes more than the number of migrants returned from Libya in the entire year of 2016. The three Common Security and Defence Policy activities, [EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia](#), [EU Border Assistance Mission Libya](#) and the EU Liaison and Planning Cell continue to contribute to the EU's fight against smuggling networks and engage with Libyan authorities.

In addition, the EU has increased its interaction with the Sub-Saharan neighbours of Libya, to address the northbound irregular migratory flows. On 5 June 2017, the EU announced its intention to support the operationalisation of the G5 Joint Force (composed by forces from Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Chad) for securing sensitive border regions with up to €50 million.

Next steps

Work through the Partnership Framework will continue with increased political and operational intensity, taking into account that migration is a long term challenge. Available instruments and resources should be expanded, Member states' commitment and the number of Member States actively engaged in the common efforts should increase. The EU will continue to step up efforts in the field of return with partner countries, aiming at stable arrangements on return and readmission.

Given that the push factors for migration to Europe remain, delivering on all objectives of the Partnership Framework remains a key priority in the coming months and will require a continued and increased effort from all stakeholders involved. The European Council on 22-23 June will take stock of results achieved and give further guidance on the way forward.

Background

The Partnership Framework on migration with third countries under the [European Agenda on Migration](#) was launched one year ago as the EU's comprehensive approach to address the challenges of irregular migration and its root causes as part of the broader cooperation with third countries.

In parallel, complementary work continues under regional initiatives such as the Rabat and Khartoum processes, as well as on the implementation of the Joint Valletta Action Plan.

The Commission is presenting today also three progress reports on measures taken under the European Agenda on Migration. The pace of relocation has significantly increased in 2017 and resettlement is well on track, the EU-Turkey Statement continues to deliver results and progress in fully rolling out the European Border and Coast Guard has continued over the past months. However, the Commission is calling on Member States to step up their efforts to comply with their legal obligations and contribute fairly and proportionally to the EU relocation scheme, fill remaining gaps in manpower and equipment for the European Border and Coast Guard and ensure full implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement.

For More Information

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

[Annex 1](#)

[Annex 2](#)

[Questions and Answers: Commission reports on results under the Partnership Framework on Migration and progress achieved along the Central Mediterranean Route](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Factsheet on EU – Libya relations](#)

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

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 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.

[**61/2017 : 13 juin 2017 – Arrêt de la Cour de justice dans l'affaire C-591/15**](#)

On 23 June 2016 citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the UK formally notified the European Council of its intention to leave the EU by...

Over the past 20 years, the European Union has put in place some of the highest common asylum standards in the world. And in the past two years, European migration policy has advanced in leaps and...

‘Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.’ Robert Schuman 9 May 1950 On 25 March 2017,...

In response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of a neighbouring sovereign country, the EU has imposed restrictive measures against the Russian Federation. Overview...

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivered his annual State of the Union speech at the European Parliament on 14 September 2016, just two days ahead of the informal meeting of 27...

Enlargement is the process whereby countries join the EU. Since it was founded in 1957, the EU has grown from 6 member countries to 28. Any European country that respects the principles of liberty,...

Statement by the Spokesperson on the response to anti-corruption

The detention of hundreds of peaceful demonstrators and violence used against them by the Russian authorities in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and other cities across the country today threatens the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and assembly in the Russian Federation. These fundamental rights are enshrined in the Russian constitution and we expect them to be protected, not eroded.

We expect the Russian authorities to abide fully by the international commitments Russia has made, including in the Council of Europe and the OSCE, to uphold these rights, and release without delay peaceful demonstrators or those people who intended to exercise their fundamental rights.