

EU Trust Fund for Africa adopts €90 million programme on protection of migrants and improved migration management in Libya

Today, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa has adopted a comprehensive €90 million programme to reinforce protection and resilience of migrants, refugees and host communities in Libya. The programme will also support improved migration management in the country.

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: *“For the European Union, Libya and the Libyans have been and stay a top priority. We are working to promote a political solution to the Libyan crisis and to support the Libyan authorities on the many challenges they have to face, including the managing of the migration flows. As the first donor for Libya, we already are providing a sizeable package of support worth €120 million to assist the authorities and the population. And while we are working to provide training and capacity building to the coast guard to save lives in the Mediterranean Sea, we are addressing the appalling situation the migrants stranded in Libya face, together with international organisations such as IOM and UNHCR. The additional €90 million we adopt today are aimed at protecting and assisting migrants in the country, and the people who host them. Our aim remains cooperating in protecting lives, and promoting peace and stability in Libya. The European Union is doing its part and the Libyan authorities, all of them, have to do theirs”.*

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** said: *“At the initiative of the European Commission, the EU Trust Fund for Africa is taking rapid action on a pressing priority for both the EU and our partner countries. By supporting actions in Libya, today’s newly adopted programme will address the needs of the migrants and contribute to a better management of migration flows. In addition, the projects will also support improved socio-economic conditions for all in Libya, and thus contribute to reducing the drivers of irregular migration and make the smugglers’ task more difficult”.*

The new programme addresses various aspects of the migration challenge in Libya and along the Central Mediterranean route: stepping up the protection of migrants and refugees, including the most vulnerable, in Libya; improving the conditions of host communities and of internally displaced persons, taking into account the difficult socio-economic conditions in Libya; and facilitating the voluntary return of migrants from Libya to their countries of origin. The programme activities will be implemented in the main areas of settlement or transit of migrants and refugees (Libyan Southern border, municipalities along the migratory routes and along the coastal area) and in areas of displacement of Libyans and places to which internally displaced

populations are returning.

The programme includes the following activities:

1. **Protection (€48 million):** assistance to and protection of migrants and refugees at disembarkation points, in detention centres and urban settings (e.g. primary health care, psychological first aid, identification of vulnerable persons – including children – access to food and non-food items); voluntary humanitarian returns and reintegration of migrants to their countries of origin (overall 15,000 envisaged); creation of 'Safe Spaces' as alternatives to detention (shelters providing 24/7 care and specialised services); assistance to migrants on the move in the form of information on viable options (including returns) and risks of irregular migration as well as food and non-food items; collection and analysis of data on mixed migration flows, routes and trends through a 'Displacement Tracking Mechanism' which will help better understand the migration dynamics.
2. **Socio-economic development at municipal level and local governance (€42 million):** activities to improve socio-economic development at municipal level and local governance, through strengthening capacities of local authorities to provide services and foster local development and stability, through provision and access to quality services for Libyans and migrants (including health facilities and education and rehabilitation of local infrastructures for example) and through local economic development and access to job opportunities (including through safe income for migrants and host communities in the South where smuggling and trafficking provide major revenues).

The programme will be implemented through five partners, selected on the basis of their capacity to surge swift operational deployment building on existing operations and presence on the ground: 1) the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2) the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 3) the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 4) the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and 5) the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ). Concrete implementation on the ground will start after finalisation of contracting with the partners.

Background

Migrants transiting or remaining in Libya are facing increasingly dire conditions. The programme addresses the priorities set out by the European Commission in its Joint Communication "Migration on the Central Mediterranean Route: Managing flows, saving lives" (25 January 2017), confirmed and further developed by the Heads of State or Government in the Malta Declaration of 3 February 2017. Further actions under the EU Trust Fund for Africa will address the remaining priorities identified in both documents.

The planned activities cover:

- reducing the number of crossings and saving lives at sea;
- stepping up the fight against smugglers and traffickers;
- development of local communities in Libya to improve their socio-

- economic situation and enhance their resilience as host communities;
- protecting migrants, increasing resettlement and promoting assisted voluntary returns and reintegration;
- managing migrant flows through the southern Libyan border;
- increased cooperation with Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria.

For More Information

[Communication of 25 January 2017: Migration on the Central Mediterranean route. Managing flows, saving lives](#)

[Annex to the Communication](#)

[Malta Declaration of 3 February 2017](#)

[‘North of Africa Window’ of the EU Emergency Trust Fund](#)

Protecting all children in migration: Commission outlines priority actions

While EU and Member States’ legislation provide a solid framework for protection, the recent surge in arrivals has put national systems under pressure and exposed gaps and shortcomings. This is why the Commission is today setting out actions to reinforce the protection of all migrant children at all stages of the process. It is necessary to ensure that migrant children are swiftly identified when they arrive in the EU and that they receive child-adequate treatment. Trained personnel need to be available to assist children during their status determination and children should be provided with sustainable long-term perspectives through better access to education and health care. Child protection is a central priority in the European Agenda on Migration and the Commission will continue to support Member States’ efforts through training, guidance, operational support and funding.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *“The number of children arriving in the EU with or without their families has increased dramatically. We need to make sure that children who need protection actually receive it. And we need to do it now. This is our moral duty as well as our legal responsibility. Children should be our top priority as they are the most vulnerable, especially when they have nobody to guide them. That is why today we are setting out a number of concrete actions to better protect, support and take care of the best interests of all children who are arriving in the European Union.”*

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship **Dimitris Avramopoulos** said: *“One in three asylum seekers in Europe is a child. Children are the most vulnerable migrants and ensuring their protection from the*

moment they leave their home countries should be mainstreamed in our migration policy. This means that we need a comprehensive and stepped-up response. Today we propose concrete actions to support our Member States in addressing the needs of all children at all stages of migration: to improve the identification of children, to train involved personnel, to step up relocation, but also to ensure swift family tracing in countries of origin and measures to enhance early integration. Both the Commission and our EU agencies stand ready to move forward to implement these actions."

Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra **Jourová** added: "*When speaking about child migrants, we should never forget that first and foremost they are children. Their best interests must be taken into consideration at all stages of the migration process. Child migrants, especially those who are unaccompanied, should be supported by guardians or foster families, as early as possible. The integration of these children into our societies depends on how fast they can go back to a more stable life. We will continue to support Member States to give these children the childhood they deserve."*

Drawing on expertise from all relevant policy areas, the Commission is proposing a number of priority areas for Member States to focus on, supported by the Commission and EU Agencies, to improve the protection of children in migration and ensure a closer link between the asylum and child protection services:

- **Swift identification and protection upon arrival:** A person responsible for child protection should be present at an early stage of the registration phase and in all reception facilities hosting children and **child protection officers should be appointed in each hotspot**. Member States should put in place the necessary procedures to systematically report and exchange information on all **missing children**.
- **Adequate reception conditions for children:** The needs of each child must be assessed as early as possible upon arrival and all children need to have **access to legal assistance, healthcare, psychosocial support and education** without delay and regardless of their status. For unaccompanied minors, the possibility of **foster or family-based care** should be provided. Everything must be done to provide **alternatives to administrative detention** for children.
- **Swift status determination and effective guardianship:** The role of **guardians** for unaccompanied minors should be strengthened. To this end, the Commission will establish a **European guardianship network** to exchange good practices. To support the implementation of **reliable age-assessment procedures** by all Member States, EASO will update its guidance shortly. Concerted efforts should also be made to **speed up family tracing and family reunification procedures**, within or outside the EU. In all procedures related to the migration process, cases with children should always be given priority. This goes for **relocation of unaccompanied migrants** from Greece or Italy as well.
- **Durable solutions and early integration measures:** The Commission will further promote the integration of children through **funding and the exchange of good practices**. Member States are called upon to **step up**

resettlement of children in need of protection and to ensure that **family tracing and reintegration measures** are put in place for those children who are to be returned.

- **Addressing root causes and protecting children along migrant routes outside the EU:** The EU has stepped up its work with partner countries on mainstreaming child protection in migration under the **Migration Partnership Framework**. Further efforts are needed to support partner countries in strengthening national child protection systems and in **preventing child trafficking**. A timely follow-up to the recently-renewed **EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of the rights of the child**, including in countries of origin and transit, should be ensured.

A **determined, concerted and coordinated follow-up** to the key actions set out in this Communication is required at **EU, national, regional and local level**, also in cooperation with civil society and international organisations. The Commission will closely monitor this process and report regularly to the Council and European Parliament.

Background

In the context of the migration crisis, the number of child migrants arriving in Europe has increased significantly. In 2015 and 2016, 30 percent of asylum applicants in the EU were children.

As children in migration are exposed to high risks of violence, trafficking or exploitation along migration routes or may go missing, or become separated from their families, they require a specific protection. Children have the right to be protected, in line with relevant provisions of EU law, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and with international law on the rights of the child. The **child's best interests** must be the primary consideration in all actions or decisions concerning children.

This Communication follows up on the [European Agenda on Migration](#) and the [Communication on the State of Play of Implementation of the Priority Actions under the European Agenda on Migration](#). It builds on progress made under the [Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors \(2010-2014\)](#) as outlined in the Staff Working Paper accompanying the Communication.

It also builds on the 10th European Forum on the rights of the child organised by the Commission in November 2016 and on the ["Lost in Migration"](#) conference from January 2017, which have underlined the need for urgent targeted actions to better protect children in migration.

For more information

Communication: [The protection of children in migration](#)

Commission Staff Working Document: [Implementing the Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors \(2010-2014\)](#)

Questions & Answers: [Protecting Children in Migration](#)

[Factsheet: Actions for the protection of children in migration](#)

[Necessity toolkit](#)

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[Open hearing on the proposed update of the ESMA Guidelines on the application of the endorsement regime under](#)

Article 4(3) of the Credit Rating Agencies Regulation

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) will hold an open hearing in the context of its [Consultation Paper](#) on the proposed update of the ESMA *Guidelines on the application of the endorsement regime under Article 4(3) of the Credit Rating Agencies Regulation*, published on 4 April 2017.

Endorsement is a regime under the Credit Rating Agencies Regulation, which allows credit ratings issued by a third-country credit rating agency, and endorsed by an EU credit rating agency, to be used for regulatory purposes in the EU. The Consultation Paper seeks the views of interested parties on a number of changes and clarifications to the existing guidelines relating to the obligations of the endorsing credit rating agency and ESMA's supervisory powers over endorsed credit ratings. Written responses to the [Consultation Paper](#) can be submitted until 3 July 2017.

This open hearing will be of interest to those who might be affected by changes proposed to the endorsed ratings system. Credit rating agencies which are currently benefiting from the endorsement regime or which may wish to benefit from the regime in the future might have a particular interest in attending the hearing.

The hearing will take place on Wednesday 17 May 2017 from 14:00 to 16:00 in ESMA premises.

Please register online to attend this hearing.