

# **THE EUROPEAN UNION EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA**

## **TENTH BOARD MEETING**

**5 December 2023**

### **MINUTES**

The European Commission convened the tenth meeting of the Board of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa). The meeting was attended by Commission services (DG INTPA, DG NEAR, DG HOME and DG ECHO); the European External Action Service (EEAS); donor countries, including EU Member States, Switzerland and the United Kingdom; partner countries; representatives of the European Parliament; and representatives of the European Court of Auditors. The Acting Director for Africa of DG INTPA, Mr. Hans Stausboll, chaired the meeting.

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

In his introductory remarks, the Chair, welcomed the participants for joining the Board Meeting and highlighted the developments since the last meeting held on 30 November 2022:

- (i) Overall financial resources have not changed, remaining at EUR 5 billion (EUR 4.4 billion from the EU and EUR 0.6 billion from MS and other donors);
- (ii) The number of approved programmes has reached 248 for a total of more than EUR 4.9 billion, and signed contracts are now amounting to the same amount;
- (iii) In terms of implementation, 31% of the amounts contracted are implemented by EU Member States agencies; around 18% by international and local NGOs; 31% by UN Agencies; 6% by international organizations and private sector entities; and nearly 11% by partner countries, mainly through budget support;
- (iv) No operational projects or programmes were signed in 2023, in line with the end of the contracting period for operational activities set for 31 December 2021; between January 2022 and the end of 2025 only financial commitments related to administrative activities such as audits, evaluations, monitoring and communication activities are possible;
- (v) The final date of implementation for all projects and programmes is 31 December 2025.

The Head of the Migration Unit of **DG NEAR**, Mr Francisco Gaztelu Mezquiriz, highlighted that:

- (i) In North of Africa, the EUTF has proven to be a successful instrument to frame a coordinated response by the EU and its Member States and reinforce positive dialogue with its partners in North Africa. Recent data confirm a great number of challenges in the region, hence maintaining a flexible approach remains important

and allowed to address the impact of the Sudan crisis on Egypt and changing needs in Tunisia in 2023.

- (ii) DG NEAR is committed to step up our efforts on building partners' capacity on border management, fight against smuggling networks and in stepping up assisted voluntary returns, while we keep addressing protection needs on the field: all areas to which the EUTF contributed considerably.
- (iii) While approaching the end of implementation, the work under the EUTF is still ongoing and delivering results. A total of 44 contracts are currently being implemented (EUR 378 million or 42% of the total EUTF portfolio in NoA) with the majority running until end of 2025. This is also an opportunity for lessons learned to be channelled in the implementation of complementary programmes funded by NDICI.

The representative of **DG HOME**, Ms Gisela Spreitzhofer, underlined how the EUTF for Africa has been instrumental in ensuring flexibility and effectiveness in supporting migration governance. DG HOME contributed with EUR 135 million to the EUTF for Africa through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), and the last tranche of this contribution was paid in 2023. To improve cooperation on the ground, jointly with EU MS, DG HOME contributed to the deployment of EU migration liaison officers (EMLOs) in partner countries. DG HOME has furthermore funded the implementation of complementary programmes to the EUTF (for instance: the Common Operational Partnerships (COPs) to fight against migrants' smuggling and trafficking; the Regional Development and Protection Programmes (RDPPs) enhancing protection mechanisms and facilitating resettlement of refugees in North Africa and Horn of Africa, and the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF), supporting among others pilot projects on legal migration). Ms Spreitzhofer further stressed that the Pact on Migration and Asylum foresees working with international partners to continue the close cooperation on priorities such as resettlement, countering smuggling and trafficking, return and readmission and talent partnerships; the objective being to forge stronger and more sustainable migration partnerships built on trust and mutual interest.

The Head of Division, of Pan-Africa Affairs of the **EEAS**, Mr Nicola Bellomo highlighted that while the EUTF for Africa came a long way, migration is still one of the top challenges for the European Union. He praised the flexibility of the EUTF in responding to several emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and its role in enhancing the dialogue with partner countries on migration management, human rights and the fight against organised crime. Despite the fact that the EUTF is coming to an end, many activities are still ongoing and the good practices and success stories should be communicated effectively. Mr Bellomo also insisted on the importance to build on the EUTF experience for the new programmes funded under the NDICI-Global Europe instrument.

The Head of Unit for West and Central Africa of **DG ECHO**, Mr. Giuseppe Angelini, fully appreciated the continued collaboration in the design and work on actions and underlined how the EUTF for Africa strengthened the nexus approach. Mr. Angelini further highlighted

successful examples in the health sector or in education where education in emergency programming becomes another nexus opportunity and has started addressing structural needs. Mr Angelini concluded that the challenges remain and the risks are high, driven by a complex mix of causes from conflict to climate change or natural hazards.

### **State of Play of the EUTF for Africa**

The Acting Director for Africa of **DG INTPA**, Mr. Hans Stausboll, made a presentation on the state of play of the EUTF for Africa as of end of November 2023. The presentation provided information on overall resources, the level of participation of the different categories of implementers in programmes implementation, and communication activities realized in the course of 2023.

The Chair informed the Board that as of May 2023 the EUTF website has been transferred to a new platform. The new website is continuously updated with results, reports and information about EUTF activities. The new “Library” page of the website will facilitate further dissemination of case studies, evaluations and lessons learned.

The Chair further underlined that since the adoption of the NDICI-Global Europe instrument the work of the European Commission to address the root causes of migration and forced displacement continues through national and regional programmes. He mentioned the launch of two Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) focused on the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean and the Central Mediterranean migratory routes to ensure joint efforts by Member States and the EU to address the migration challenges. A coordination group with Member States has been set up to discuss migration-related programmes funded under NDICI-Global Europe.

Finally, the Chair informed the Board that the European Court of Auditors is conducting a performance audit of the EUTF for Africa and that the final report will be available in the first semester of 2024. The European Commission is also planning to have a final evaluation of the EUTF for Africa at the end of the implementation period.

### **Latest results achieved by the EUTF for Africa in the three regions**

The Trust Fund Managers for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Enrique De Loma Ossorio Friend, and for the Sahel and Lake Chad, Ms. Nathalie Vernhes, updated the board on the latest results achieved by the EUTF in their respective regions for **DG INTPA**. The presentation went through the strategic objectives on economic and employment opportunities, resilience, migration management, governance and conflict prevention, showing the progress in the course of the year. The presentation included the summary of specific outcomes per window on completed programmes.

In the Horn of Africa region, Sudan and Somalia are the countries with most contracts still ongoing, while all regional contracts have been finalised. The conflict that erupted in Sudan in April 2023 caused a displacement of more than 1.2 million people to neighbouring countries. As a result, under Strategic Objective 3 (improved migration management), the

largest biannual output for migrants, refugees, returnees and IDPs assisted or protected was reported .

In the Sahel and Lake Chad region, since the beginning of 2023, violent events between various state and non-state armed groups in particular in Burkina Faso and Nigeria resulted in further displacement. The Protection West Africa programme assisted and protected 1,236 migrants, refugees, returnees and IDPs, while almost 3 million people were reached by information campaigns on migration.

The Head of the Migration Unit of **DG NEAR**, Mr. Francisco Gaztelu Mezquiriz, made a presentation of the results achieved by the EUTF for Africa in the North of Africa region in the four main priority areas: protection and community stabilization; integrated border management - including combatting migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings; labour migration and mobility; migration governance - including voluntary return and reintegration.

In the North of Africa, 2023 was marked by several unforeseen crises affecting countries in the region and their neighbours (including most recently the Palestinian territories), leading to continued political and economic downturn as well as further migratory movements. To date, EUTF programmes provided protection measures to a total of 267 463 migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs, supported 48 890 Humanitarian Voluntary Returns and assisted 5 327 persons of concern in the region.

A more complete document on results in the three regions had been sent to all participants Board members and observers in advance of the meeting. Additional information on the latest results and outcome analyses will be available in the upcoming Report of the Monitoring & Learning System of the EUTF for Africa that will be uploaded soon on the website.

In conclusion, the Chair provided some examples of EUTF programmes that have been continued under the NDICI-Global Europe instrument – such as the Better Migration Management, which aims at improving the management of safe, orderly, and regular migration, supporting national authorities in addressing smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings in the Horn of Africa. Overall, in the regional and national Annual Action Plans 2022 and 2023, over EUR 1 billion has been committed to programmes targeting migration and forced displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Interventions by delegations**

One delegation (**NL**) took the floor with a question on EUTF activities in the North of Africa, and specifically on the targeting of migrants versus host communities in Libya and on the Budget Support programme in Morocco.

In response to these questions, Ms. Heinke Veit, **DG NEAR** Trust Fund Manager for the North of Africa, replied that there are not pre-determined targets between migrants and host communities, since the situation evolves rapidly and such quotas might become quickly

obsolete. The core objective is to reach those in need and to ensure social cohesion: this is best achieved when interventions are not targeting a specific group but rather are beneficial for both migrants and host communities.

The Budget Support for Morocco is a 4-year programme that started in November 2022 under NDICI funding. Its main objectives are to strengthen EU-Morocco cooperation and dialogue on migration through a budgetary support contributing to the National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum (SNIA). The European Commission is currently launching a joint evaluation of this programme together with the EUTF budget support that ended in 2021.

## **AOB**

N/A

## **Concluding remarks**

In his concluding remarks, the Chair:

- (i) Thanked warmly Commission/EEAS colleagues and all Board Members and Observers for participating in the Board Meeting;
- (ii) Reiterated that the EUTF for Africa has demonstrated its added value as an innovative implementation tool; has contributed to reinforce political and policy dialogue with partners; strengthened the partnership with the EU and African stakeholders; pooled together resources and expertise from different sources; and more importantly, produced concrete and visible results;
- (iii) Reiterated that the EU will continue providing support to African partners by capitalizing on the work accomplished by the EUTF for Africa over the years, and that relevant EUTF-funded actions are being followed-up by new interventions funded under NDICI-Global Europe at country or regional level;
- (iv) Suggested to share the European Court of Auditors EUTF performance audit report with the Board once it will become available.

The Chair confirmed that as usual minutes of the Board Meeting will be circulated to Board Members for approval.