

EUROPEAN UNION EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA
TWELFTH BOARD MEETING
3 DECEMBER 2025
MINUTES

The European Commission convened the twelfth 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 MENA, DG ECHO, and DG HOME); the European External Action Service (EEAS); Donor countries, including EU Member States; Partner countries in the three regions, (including from Algeria, Cameroun, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Somalia, Senegal, Kenya, Tchad, The Gambia, Tunisia, Uganda) and Representatives of the European Parliament. The Acting Director for Africa at DG INTPA Mr. Geza Strammer, chaired the meeting.

Welcome and Introduction

In his introductory remarks, the Chair, welcomed the participants, noted the good representation and explained that the purpose of this meeting is to take stock of the progress achieved by the EUTF since the last Board meeting on 17 December 2024; to present the latest results achieved by the EUTF in the three regions up to the first semester of 2025; to hear testimonials from EUD in the three regions and share some lessons learned.

The **Chair** highlighted that:

- i. This meeting marked the 10th Anniversary of the Valletta Summit on Migration, which brought together European and African heads of states and governments to strengthen cooperation and address the challenges and opportunities of migration.
- ii. The transformation in the EU's approach to migration since 2015, when more than 1 million migrants arrived irregularly to the EU (including 157,000 through the central Mediterranean route), has been impressive. This year, the total number of irregular arrivals from all routes and continents is well below that figure.
- iii. Migration governance has significantly improved, both in the EU where the Pact on Migration and Asylum is now being implemented, and in Africa, where legislative frameworks and policies have been developed with EU support at country, regional and continental levels.
- iv. Migration dialogues between EU and African countries are frequent and substantial and are now fully embedded in the EU external relations.
- v. The Valletta Summit was the beginning of this change, underpinned by the EU Trust Fund for Africa that is approaching its end on 31 December 2025.

The representative from **DG MENA** highlighted that:

- i. North Africa continues to face a range of structural challenges that contribute to migration pressures. At the same time, overall migration trends show some positive developments, with a decline in irregular migration observed along certain key routes. Notably, irregular departures from Tunisia have decreased significantly over the past two years.
- ii. These trends are primarily the result of enhanced migration cooperation at both regional and country levels, built around ambitious, targeted and well-funded partnerships with countries of origin and transit. This intensified cooperation on migration management, including on the prevention of irregular migration, has been a key factor in delivering these results, alongside broader strategic frameworks.
- iii. Migration policy and migration work cannot be seen in isolation but must be well embedded in overall policy frameworks.
- iv. In the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, approximately EUR 1.5 billion was allocated to migration work, with discussions ongoing for the upcoming MFF where the tangible positive results and the continued importance of this topic are recognized.

- v. Key lessons learned from the EU Trust Fund include: the value of being flexible and agile; the importance of strong coordination and joint programming; and the relevance of national ownership and alignment with national policies.

The representative from the **European Parliament** in his opening remarks outlined the following:

- i. The Parliament wishes to know more about how the end of the Trust Fund will happen, how much money remains, and how much unspent money will revert to the European budget;
- ii. Raised the questions whether concerns raised by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) 2024 special report with regard to the Trust Fund, have been addressed, namely: too broad scope and not enough focus, delays in delivery (programmes stopped in 2021 but implementation discussions persisted), and limited attention to human rights and local needs.
- iii. Requested the Commission to clarify how NDICI-Global Europe will continue the activities of the Trust Fund in 2026 and 2027, and how concerns that the Trust Fund has prioritized return migration and border management at the cost of addressing root causes of migration will be addressed.
- iv. Raised the questions about whether there will be less operational flexibility if the Trust Fund transitions to the EU budget, and whether this could lead to a reduction in contributions from Member States such as Germany and France.
- v. Concluded that the policies pursued by the Trust Fund are essential and should have a key part in the next MFF, building on the strong results and big impact achieved despite some of the criticisms raised.

The Chair thanked the European Parliament for its observations and confirmed that a great deal of work has been carried out by the delegations in conjunction with Member States working closely with the different countries involved. The combination of knowledge-sharing between delegations and various countries, along with the support from Member States and the flexibility of the Trust Fund, has been very useful. The Chair expressed emphasized that the EUTF deserves further study to understand what can be taken from it and used for the future programming.

State of Play of the EUTF Africa

The Acting Director for Africa at DG INTPA Mr. Geza Strammer, presented an overview of the state of the EUTF for Africa implementation to date including overall financial resources, number of programmes implemented to date and main achievements.

On the resources, the total funding of EUR 5 billion, comprises of EUR 4.4 billion from the European Development Fund and EU budget, complemented by EUR 600 million from Member States. To date, 248 programmes have been implemented for a total value of EUR 4.9 billion, representing implementation of almost all available funds. In the ‘Sahel and Lake Chad’ region, 114 programmes have been implemented for a total of EUR 2.2 billion; in the ‘North of Africa’ region, 40 programmes have been implemented for a value of EUR 0.9 billion; and in the ‘Horn of Africa’ region 94 programmes have been implemented for a value of EUR 1.8 billion.

The last day of implementation of the EUTF for Africa is 31st December 2025, with the final evaluation currently taking place and the closing period starting as of 1st January 2026. Currently, the Commission is implementing the four recommendations from the ECA performance audit; lessons learned from the EUTF implementation are being analysed and will be integrated into future programming; and a study by the Kiel Institute on the effect on migration aspirations has been finalised.

In terms of the key achievements, the Chair outlined that the Trust Fund represented the first implementation of the Team Europe approach, described as "ante litteram" (ahead of its time). Additional notable achievements and characteristics that enabled its success included:

- It was an innovative instrument whose focus on coordination led to constructive dialogue on migration between the EU, African countries, and other donors.

- EU delegations were in the driving seat, using their knowledge and dynamism to shape programmes with Member States and partner country authorities.
- Whilst tackling the root causes of migration was at the heart of the bilateral MIP, the EUTF tackled different aspects of migration; these combined approaches made the overall interventions more robust and sustainable.
- Flexibility was key - the Trust Fund could adapt both at the beginning and during implementation, including to coups d'état and other challenges.
- The Trust Fund allowed to keep migration high on the political agenda.
- Its holistic perspective allowed tackling complex problems through different approaches mixing humanitarian, security, and development interventions.
- Work was based on analysis, studies, and research, with research institutes feeding the Trust Fund's work and influencing its direction.

Recent Outcomes and Lessons learned by the EUTF for Africa in the three regions

The Trust Fund Managers for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Javier Fernandez Admetlla; the North of Africa, Mr. Martin Klauke, and Sahel and Lake Chad, Ms Nathalie Vernhes presented an overview of the operational projects and budgets. They also highlighted the cumulative data up to June 2025 of selected achievements for their respective regions. The EU Trust Fund Manager for the Horn of Africa also showcased some of the main reports and lessons learned produced in 2025. The EUTF manager for the Sahel and Lake Chad, focused her presentation on the 'Migration and Job Package for West Africa' programme. It was recognised that given the imminent closure of the EUTF programme, the number of contracts were mostly unchanged from the previous Board Meeting and results/achievements were naturally slowing down.

Each of the EUTF Trust Fund Manager presentation was followed by a testimonial from a EUD representative in each region; namely a testimonial on forced displacement in the Horn of Africa by Ms Myra Bernardi, EUD Somalia; a testimonial on migration in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region by Mr Amaury Hoste, EUD Senegal; and a testimonial on legal migration actions by Ms Lucia Santuccion, EUD Marocco.

As of June 2024, in the Horn of Africa region, the EUTF funded 231 operational contracts to implement programmes both at country and regional levels for a value of EUR 1.73 billion. The majority of implementing partners are UN agencies, NGOs, and Member State agencies. Selected cumulative results include the delivery of over 13 million health-related basic social services delivered; and assistance provided to over 700,000 people to develop income-generating activities.

In terms of sustainability, a 'continuity study' shows that 56% of projects achieved moderate to full continuity under NDICI or other Member State projects, demonstrating the relevance and value of the EUTF projects' content and approach. A JRC and EUTF Horn Of Africa collaboration produced several Policy Briefs on what worked within the window. Lessons learned show that a) the provision of direct assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs (equity subsidies, seed financing) was very effective in a region with widespread capital constraints; b) implementing a regional approach to migration governance proved very effective, including information sharing, common digital platforms, peer exchanges, and Joint Task Forces; and c) supporting community-based justice services, including alternative dispute resolution involving traditional and religious leaders, contributed significantly to conflict resolution.

Ms. Mayra Bernardi, Team Leader for Resilience at the EU Delegation to Somalia (previously at EU Delegation to Kenya), provided testimony on durable solutions for protracted displacement both in Kenya and Somalia.

In Kenya, a country which hosts around 850,000 refugees and asylum seekers, historically in Dadaab and Kakuma Kalobeyei camps, the EUTF for Africa approach of providing support to and actively encouraging integration between refugees and hosting communities has resulted in sustainable solutions

for protracted displacement. The support extended to improving health facilities and infrastructure serving both refugees and host communities and to engaging in joint farming activities between refugees and host community members that have now developed from subsistence to commercial level. The durability of the solutions is demonstrated by the fact that currently, both camps are in the process of becoming municipalities as part of the government-owned Shirika Plan; and Health facilities are now aligned with Kenyan national standards and integrated into the National Health Insurance Fund. An additional success factor is that multi-year investments (also funded by Member States, primarily Netherlands, Denmark, and formerly the UK) strengthened collaboration between national and local authorities.

In Somalia the focus has been on the integration of internally displaced populations (IDPs) due to climate shocks (flooding, droughts) and conflict. Building on its early investments in urban areas on health, education and TVET, the project is now working at a more systemic level by supporting urban planning in Johar integrating IDP settlements into the city, land title distribution for housing and property rights security, and flood prevention infrastructure. The EUTF approach added value to the project by encouraging implementing partners to move beyond humanitarian responses and build systems working with local authorities. This intervention work has been conducted primarily with Sweden, Denmark, and Germany on Team Europe initiative of migration.

The Sahel and Lake Chad region presentation focused on the Individual Measure which is a migration and job package for Western Africa', and an example of how the EUTF has influenced NDICI approach. Indeed, the EUTF proposed a comprehensive perspective to address migration challenges combining development, humanitarian and security interventions. The individual measure gives continuity to this approach with a comprehensive package of EUR 200 million for two complementary actions of EUR 100 million each.

The first action 'Managing Migration Better in Western Africa' includes two components, 'Reintegration' to build effective and inclusive nationally owned referral systems for returnees and enhance social cohesion measures in receiving communities and 'Anti-Smuggling and Anti-Trafficking' with the aim to strengthen prevention and combatting trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, as well as protection of and assistance to the victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants. The second action, Unleashing the Potential of Youth in West Africa also includes two components, 'Skills' to reduce the gap between the skills of young people, including potential migrants and returnees, and labour market and business opportunities in West Africa in the field of green economy and 'Access to Finance' to increase labour inclusion and entrepreneurship of young people, including potential migrants and returnees, in the field of circular and climate neutral economy with a particular focus on regions of departure and arrival. This package represents a comprehensive framework for addressing migration challenges through combining relevant humanitarian, development and security interventions. The package will cover 12 Western African countries, be implemented mainly by EU agencies and the UN, and importantly it initiates a change of paradigm on reintegration with transition from individual assistance through international partners to more sustainable systems handled by national authorities of partner countries.

Mr. Amaury Hoste (Head of Team for Governance and Stability, EUD Senegal) provided testimony on the added value of the EUTF approach in Senegal by highlighting that since 2016 immigration has become a key subject in the relations between the EU and Senegal, providing the right context to discuss a sensitive matter based on partnership, shared responsibilities, and mutual benefits. Moreover, the EUTF programme encouraged an integrated approach linking employment, immigration, local employment, human rights, and security; it acted as an institutional catalyst, allowing implementation of Senegal's immigration policy and boosting governance at many levels; it created a national network of reception officers to deal with migrants, making migration policy more territorial and bringing it closer to citizens; and it made Senegal a laboratory of collective EU action before it became institutionalized, paving the way for a more coordinated EU approach ("ante litteram"). As a result, security and stability are now addressed at regional level by boosting cross-border cooperation and state presence in peripheral areas; and immigration is now seen not as a problem to contain but as a lever to

promote development. Contributions include the support of Member States (France, Spain, Germany, Italy), and UN agencies (IOM, UNOPS).

The presentation of the results achieved by EUTF for Africa in the North of Africa region focused on four priority areas; namely protection and community stabilization; border management; labour migration; and return and reintegration. The EUTF funded around 90 operational contracts, (of which around 14 are still ongoing) for a total of EUR 0.9 billion. Libya has received the majority of funds, with smaller amounts being spent in Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt. Most programmes are implemented by the United Nations and Member States agencies.

Key lessons learned on labour migration highlight the importance of supporting mobility in conjunction with relevant policies development, data collection and analysis, and facilitating decentralized partnerships between EU Member State agencies and national public agencies in the southern neighbourhood. Whilst acknowledging constraints related to visa issuance that often slow down mobility schemes, it is important to recognise the role of public employment in recruitment and market analysis; the need to promote cooperation between training institutions for recognized skills easily applicable in mobility schemes; and the centrality of including proper support to integration in EU Member States (housing, integration support) as critical for long-term success.

Ms. Lucia Santuccione (EU Delegation in Morocco) presented the EUTF THAMM programme that supported legal migration from Morocco to Member States through a holistic approach to migration and mobility. The presentation encompassed the stages of the programme and its key elements and included a summary of its achievements with regards to strengthening of partnerships at national level; social dialogue; implementation of the mobility scheme; and institutional cooperation.

The presentation emphasised key elements of the programme implementation such as its horizontal work in support for a wide engagement in governance with relevant Moroccan partners; its vertical programmes encompassing implementation of pilot mobility projects towards Member States; the development of a strategy for promoting international mobility, National Information Systems, and operational plans for countries (including France, Spain, Italy); efforts on recognising professional qualifications and degrees; and integration of social partners and workers' rights as part of social dialogue. It also emphasised that such positive results would not have been obtained without a joint approach with Member States. The 3 EUTF THAMM projects, which ended in October 2023, provided 3 follow up THAMM Plus projects financed under NDICI ongoing today. To date, key partners include the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Germany (GIZ). Thanks to its demonstrable success, other Member States will join the THAMM programme in January 2026.

For Information

Item 1: Academic Study on Impact of EUTF on Migration Aspirations

Professor Tobias Heidland, Head of International Development Research Center at the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, presented a study conducted through the DYNAMIG research project financed by Horizon Europe in collaboration with Mr. Akim Al-Mouksit, now working for the International Monetary Fund in Comoros, on the overall effect of the EUTF on migration aspirations, which is a leading indicator predictive of actual migration behaviour. This study complements individual monitoring and evaluation projects with evidence from a macro-level quantitative quasi-experimental perspective. By combining data from the monitoring and learning system with representative survey data from over 600,000 respondents the study compares reported root causes changes in hundreds of sub-national regions across 26 countries. The study's main finding is that the EUTF is associated with a significant decrease of 3-5 percentage points in migration aspirations. In practice, this means that in a region with 1 million adults, 30,000-50,000 fewer people responded to aspire living abroad. Professor Tobias Heidland concluded that the results are exceptionally robust, using latest econometric and statistical methods; their credibility is rated as very high and that the study demonstrates the value of transparent data sharing, of monitoring and learning systems, and of early planning advanced impact evaluations.

The European Parliament asked about the political significance of 3-5% reduction. Professor Heidland responded that the study adds to the evidence that development cooperation can be a credible tool, especially by improving living conditions through better services and opportunities. The effectiveness of development interventions ultimately depends on an approach that combines improved service delivery with relevant and appropriate policies in areas such as migration management.

France's representative thanked the Commission for this evidence-based programming approach and for supporting such studies.

Item 2: Implementation of European Court of Auditors Recommendations

A summary of how the Commission is implementing the four recommendations issued by the European Court of Auditors in 2024 (ECA Special report 17/2024), was presented by Ms. Fiona Deuss Frandi who outlined the following:

With regards to recommendation 1 - *'Increase evidence-based targeting of geographical areas and beneficiaries'*: important initiatives have been put in place including a technical facility on migration and forced displacement to support headquarters and EU delegations improve targeting; training and studies on migration; and the development of sectoral guidance indicators in areas such as returns, integration, and irregular migration will be developed.

With regards to recommendation 2 - *'Include EUTF documents in central repository and expand lessons learned for action documents'*: significant work is ongoing including identifying, consolidating and creating an internal central repository for lessons learned; the Action Document template has been revised in January 2025 (with the revision of the Companion) in line with the recommendation.

With regards to recommendation 3 - *'Strengthen the identification of human rights risks and mitigation actions'*: important initiatives include:

- a. introduction of a formalized written internal procedure to handle complaints related to human rights in EU-funded projects which includes triggering of suspension or termination clauses if necessary;
- b. new guidance documents were developed and disseminated among EU staff, to support programme managers in the application of the Human Rights-Based Approach to the project cycle in specific sectors (such as migration and forced displacement), related eLearning modules will be developed;
- c. strengthening of standards clauses in EU contracts (including a clearer reporting obligation on partners and requiring more explicit undertakings on human rights when assets are transferred to a third party).

With regards to recommendation 4 - *'Improve the accuracy of reported achievements'*: measures include:

- a. strengthening of the 'contribution agreement manual' (in October 2025) which now defines relevant data sources;
- b. the revision of the Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) and evaluation methodology handbook is ongoing;
- c. a procedure has been developed to identify and analyse the ODA eligibility of EUTF projects, with no corrections to the OECD DAC Secretariat reports necessary given the notional approach.

The Chair confirmed that these recommendations are future-looking and will apply to NDICI-Global Europe.

Regarding human rights concerns in Libya raised by the European Parliament, DG NEAR responded that the situation is of continuous concern. Following ECA recommendations, the Commission adopted a human rights-based approach guidance document and standard operating procedure for addressing

complaints. Contractual relations with implementing partners ensure full application of human rights-based approach, with strengthened monitoring including dedicated monitoring contract for Libya.

Item 3: Administrative Expenses and Closing Procedure

Ms. Sandra Immers presented information on EUTF administrative expenses and closing procedure outlining that to date 1,042 contracts have been signed of which 871 contracts are now closed and 171 still need to be closed. In addition, as of 1 January 2026, 31 contracts, regarding audits and evaluations are ongoing, for an expected expenditure of approximately EUR 6 million. The administrative costs amount to 2.74% of the total EUR 5 billion contributions. Approximately EUR 18.5 million will remain unspent.

In terms of the Closing Timeline, indicatively between 1 January - 31 December 2026 all AMEC (audit, monitoring, evaluation and communication) contracts will be signed and final monitoring will be concluded. During 2026 reminders will be sent regarding all contract's completion and closure; additional work will be undertaken to follow up discussions with beneficiaries, follow up to audits, handling of disputes and disagreements, and if needed collecting recovery amounts. Finally, indicatively as of 1 January 2028 the final financial report will be produced including a donor decision with regards to unspent funds.

Regarding the unspent funds, as the EUTF is funded 88% by the European Development Fund (EDF) the corresponding percentage will go back to the EDF reserve. The remaining 12%, approximately EUR 2 million, will be divided according to the percentage of Member State contributions. In 2027, when the final figures are available, a decision will be taken on what to do with these remaining funds.

Germany (BMZ) asked practical questions about the ongoing 31 contracts and 171 unclosed contracts. In response it was explained that contracts can only be closed when everything is resolved, often pending audit conclusions or reimbursement of expenses considered unacceptable. The 31 are contracts already signed and ongoing, not new contracts to be signed.

For Agreement

Proposal by the Chair to schedule an additional Board meeting in 2026 following the same format but shorter, focusing on EUTF for Africa closure and remaining amounts.

The proposal for an additional Board meeting in 2026 was agreed by the Board members.

AOB

N/A

Chair's Concluding Remarks

In his concluding remarks, the Chair thanked all participants for attending the Board meeting hoping that participants appreciated having been presented a clear picture of the EUTF for Africa and its achievements. In addition, the Chair

- Emphasized the efforts of all involved to integrate to the extent possible all the recommendations from the Court of Auditors.
- Expressed the strong belief that lessons learned from the EUTF should be and will be used in future instruments.
- Thanked all delegations that have been implementing the EU Trust Fund, for their work and dedication.
- Acknowledged the efforts by Member States and partner countries to implement the Trust Fund in the best way possible.
- Expressed appreciation for the translation services provided during the meeting.

- Participants should send any additional questions to the inbox: INTPA-EUTF-AFRICA@ec.europa.eu.

Before declaring the meeting closed, the Chair confirmed that, as usual, the presentation will be shared with participants and the draft minutes of the Board Meeting will be circulated to Board members for review and final approval.