

**MINUTES OF THE THIRD BOARD MEETING OF THE EU EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA
(EUTF FOR AFRICA) – BRUSSELS, 30 JUNE 2017**

The European Commission convened the third meeting of the Board of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa) which was attended by European Commission services (DG DEVCO, DG NEAR, DG HOME, DG ECHO), the European External Service (EEAS), the EU Special Representative for the Sahel, donor countries including EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway, partner countries, concerned regional organizations and representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The meeting was chaired by the Director General of DG DEVCO, Mr. S. Manservisi.

Introduction session

The Chair opened the meeting by presenting the agenda which was adopted.

In his opening remarks, the Chair reiterated that at its last meeting in December 2016, the Board had decided to be more selective in terms of programs to be funded, to be more effective, transparent in implementation, and to integrate policy dialogues with projects implementation. The Chair highlighted the most important policy outcomes of the first semester of 2017 and reiterated the need to match the EUTF for Africa with other available instruments to address migration challenges.

The Director General of DG NEAR, Mr. C. Danielson reiterated that the Central Mediterranean route continues to be a source of great concern in terms of migratory pressure on Europe and that Libya continues to be the main country of departure to Italy. He referred to the Joint Communication on *Central Mediterranean Route, Managing flows, Saving Lives* which outlined a number of additional measures as part of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the EU's work along this route, and guided the focus of intervention of the North of Africa window of the EUTF in the last six months including a comprehensive programme for Libya worth EUR 90 million.

Moreover, the Director General of DG NEAR indicated that following the conclusions of the June European Council, work with Italy has started to develop a comprehensive intervention, worth approximately EUR 45 million, aiming to develop the capacity of the Libyan Coast Guards and to improve border management at the southern borders of the country. He also indicated that work with Libya's neighbouring countries has been accomplished with the presentation of an important programme (EUR 60 million) aiming to address the root causes of irregular migration in Egypt, as well as a regional action which focuses on migration management at municipality level. Finally, he mentioned the approval of the first cross-window programme involving Morocco, Mali, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire.

The Deputy Managing Director for Africa, Ms. B. Markussen, highlighted that migration is an integral part of the EU's external action with partner countries and remains a top priority together with forced displacement; that the Partnership Framework is a valuable tool for engagement with countries; and that ownership, transparency and quality of deliveries are equally important; acknowledging that the challenge remains with disbursement and implementation on the ground.

The Director of DG HOME/C, Mr. L. Muschel, recognised the great progress achieved, and reiterated the need to deliver on each pillar of the Valletta Action Plan (VAP) including legal migration, return and reintegration.

SESSION I – Overview of political and policy developments and stock-taking of progress

The Chair made a wide presentation on the current state of play of the EUTF for Africa including approved programs, contracts signed with implementers and other operational matters, the indication of some preliminary results, as well as an overview of financial contributions to the Trust

Fund reiterating the call of the June European Council to provide underpinning resources in the migration area. He also highlighted that EU contributions the EUTF for Africa are increasingly scrutinized by the European Parliament and the Court of Auditors. The Chair indicated that some implementation challenges remain: (i) absorption capacity; (ii) delays in the "contractualization"; (iii) difficult coordination of migration policies in partner countries; and (iv) difficult geographic environments in which to operate. He called on MS Agencies implementing an important part of the EUTF projects to play their role and take measures to speed up implementation. In concluding, he emphasized that knowledge, evidence and managing results should be at the core of the Trust Fund's work while working under emergency situations.

The Director General of DG NEAR highlighted the challenge to work in an emergency context such as Libya with implementation difficulties and confirmed that a new program is under discussion with Italy.

The EEAS Deputy Secretary General, C. Leffler, indicated that most migration challenges are within African countries, that addressing root causes of irregular migration remains a priority, and that forced displacement brings smuggling, violence, and often radicalization and terrorism. He informed the Board of the support to the G5 to fight political distress in the region, and the decision to provide EUR 50 M for the Joint Forces. He also indicated the need to focus on areas of the Horn of Africa (HoA) hit by the drought and instability, as well as on Libya where great efforts to rebuild the Government structure and create stability are needed.

The Director of DG HOME/C announced an overall contribution to the EUTF for Africa of EUR 50 M in 2017 distributed as follows: EUR 30 M for the North of Africa, EUR 10 M for the Sahel/Lake Chad, and EUR 10 M for the HoA. EUR 5 M will be paid in 2017.

In the overall, Board members and observers expressed their appreciation and satisfaction for the work accomplished so far by the EUTF for Africa, but highlighted that the implementation pace remains quite slow, especially in terms of disbursements.

Several delegations reiterated that the regional and cross-regional approach of the EUTF Africa is a real asset and indicated that the balanced approach in contributing to the five pillars of the Valletta Action Plan (VAP) should be pursued further (**BE, DE, DK, IT, E, NOR**), with a special focus on youth (**DK, GUI, MAL**). Some delegations however, indicated that EUTF resources should be used in complementarity and not as a substitution to other EU financial instruments (**NL, A, BE**). Some MS suggested using the EUTF also to support cooperation and concrete results in the field of migration management, including return and readmission.

Several representatives of partner countries and of some donors requested a stronger involvement in the identification and implementation of projects at country level (**SEN, CAM, MAL, MAU, FIN, P, NL, NOR**) making the EUTF for Africa more demand-driven. Some partner countries also indicated that the refugee flow is unmanageable and that additional assistance and funding is required. **LIB** indicated the need to focus on cross-border cooperation and border security to better control inflow of migrants.

IT expressed concern for the recent increase in arrivals of irregular migrants on the national coasts, confirmed its commitment to respect international laws in this area and advocated for a collective EU response to such an emergency situation.

DE and **NOR** expressively requested regular updates on contracts signed and disbursements, greater transparency on tender processes, and wider opportunities for CSOs as implementers.

FIN expressed the wish to be more involved in project implementation despite the absence of a national development agency.

In concluding this section, the Chair stressed that:

- Disbursement pace needs to improve;
- Efforts are required to improve local ownership;
- Political dialogue is improving and so is the level of pertinence of EUTF interventions;
- Voluntary returns require more efforts;
- Regional and cross-borders cooperation needs to be strengthened further;
- The Refugee issue needs to receive increased attention.
- Interventions need to be progressively more targeted;
- EU MS not involved in implementation need to be more engaged;
- EU DEL and EU MS should coordinate more and ensure transparency on implementation of projects with CSOs.

At the end of Session I, the Chair invited the IOM Regional Director to, Mr.E. Ambrosi, to present the latest trends in migration flows and the results of the EUTF – IOM Initiative in the last 2 months:

- *Under the protection and voluntary return assistance chapter, 2110 stranded and vulnerable migrants helped to return from Libya, Mali, Mauritania and Niger;*
- *Under the Reintegration assistance chapter, 2694 migrants received initial counselling, post-arrival assistance and information on reintegration;*
- *Under the Information and Awareness Raising chapter, 5191 individuals reached through awareness raising activities in Niger;*
- *Under the Migration Data and Flow Monitoring chapter, 13 flow monitoring points were set up (more will be set up with additional donors funding)*

SESSION II – Review of tools for an effective implementation of the EUTF for Africa

The Director of DG DEVCO/D, Mr. K. Doens and Director of DG DEVCO/E, Ms. C. Montesi, presented the tools established to ensure an effective implementation of the EUTF for Africa, including a Research and Evidence Facility (REF) for the Horn of Africa and an IT-based monitoring platform for the three windows (AKVO). DG DEVCO briefly presented also the new website of the EUTF for Africa, currently under construction, which should be operational in September. The new website will represent a living tool to be used collectively, which will improve the visibility and transparency of the EUTF for Africa.

The Horn of Africa REF is contributing to policy and operational work of the Trust Fund in three areas: (i) developing policy approaches of the EUTF Africa in the region; (ii) guiding the identification and design of programs; and (iii) informing the policy dialogues at regional and bilateral level.

In the first semester of 2017, the three operational windows of the EUTF for Africa have increased their respective efforts to set-up effective processes and systems aiming at improving the monitoring and evaluation functions of the Trust Fund. The three operational windows are now using a common monitoring platform, AKVO RSR, which centralizes all projects and log frames and favours their monitoring and reporting. The North of Africa window monitoring and evaluation framework has notably become operational with a set of indicators targeted to its migration management strategy and enabling aggregation at regional level. Moreover, in the last few months, the three windows have developed and agreed on a list of 19 macro indicators which will be aggregated both in the AKVO platform and in the future website of the Trust Fund.

SESSION III – Future perspectives of the EUTF for Africa

The Chair presented the funding situation of the EUTF for Africa indicating that out of the operational resources amounting to EUR 2.68 billion almost EUR 1.9 billion has already been allocated to projects

across the three regions, leaving less than EUR 800 M available for new initiatives. The Chair indicated also that additional resources are expected to be transferred soon to the EUTF for Africa for a total amount of approximately EUR 400 M (including the DG HOME pledge) bringing total available resources to over EUR 1.1 billion. These resources, however, would not be sufficient to fully fund the pipelines of projects which are currently considered by three regional windows (approximately EUR 1.6 billion).

In view of the above, the Chair presented for discussion two possible options: (i) continue focussing on the EUTF objectives and replenish the Trust Fund with resources from EU MS, international organizations, foundations, non EU donors, etc.; (ii) focus on a selected number of areas of work. Simply phasing-out EUTF operations was not considered an option in light of the recent Conclusions of the European Council.

The EEAS highlighted that it would be preferable to focus on pillar 2 and 5 of the VAP, having pillar 1 (addressing root causes of irregular migration) funded by other financial instruments. Priority should be given to Libya and its neighbouring countries. The EU Special Representative for the Sahel reiterated its satisfaction for projects implemented in the Sahel, mentioned the EU strategic partnership with the G5, and reiterated the need to focus on smuggling of migrants and human rights violations.

The Chair presented the strategic priorities of the 3 windows:

Horn of Africa

- To improve the management of refugees in the region (which hosts over 3 million refugees, the largest number on the continent)
- To prevent and fight trafficking and smuggling, including along the Central Mediterranean Route
- To increase stability in peripheral areas

Sahel/Lake Chad

- Supporting on-going migration dialogues by targeting actions to prevent irregular migration and facilitate better migration management, returns and reintegration
- Supporting stability by building a comprehensive approach for security, resilience, dialogue and access to basic services in sensitive areas

North of Africa

- Tackle the drivers of irregular migration
- Improve information and the protection of vulnerable migrants along the migratory route
- Migration Governance
- Advance mutually-beneficial legal migration and mobility

In the overall, Board members supported the strategic priorities of the three windows. Some stressed the need to replenish the EUTF with EU, EU MS and other donor's resources and to keep the current level of flexibility (short and long-term tool) of the Trust Fund by focusing on implementation challenges. Others felt that more time was required to make a firm decision as to the future path of the EUTF for Africa.

E and **PT** highlighted their willingness to further enlarge the geographical scope of the EUTF.

ECOWAS stressed the need to keep focussing on regional programs and the new eligible countries, while **IGAD** requested to keep a focus on human trafficking and radicalization.

CONCLUSIONS

In the overall, the Board recognized the valuable efforts made by the Commission since the establishment of the EUTF for Africa in November 2015, as well as the results achieved in terms of programs approved and activities launched across the three concerned regions.

The Commission presented a clear picture of the current financial situation of the EUTF for Africa highlighting that available resources will not be sufficient to fund programs which have been tentatively identified for approval under the three regions. The Chair reminded the Council Conclusions of the June European Council for an additional financial support.

The Chair concluded to:

- Keep focusing on implementation by collectively stepping-up operations with implementing actors;
- Keep applying a balanced approach in the allocation of resources among the different strategic objectives of the EUTF for Africa and pillars of the Valletta Action Plan;
- Pursue an integrated and coordinated approach;
- Apply the following criteria in selecting future programs:
 - (i) Programs embedded in policy and political dialogues, which ensure country ownership and responsibility, notably formulating a national migration policy, cooperating on readmission of irregular migrants, and organising synergies with bilateral programs;
 - (ii) Focus on regional and cross-regional programs;
 - (iii) Increasing focus on Libya and on Libya's southern neighbours;
 - (iii) Special attention to refugees and stranded migrants;
 - (iv) Special focus on "sensitive zones" (poor governance conditions, lack of State, desperate economic conditions);
 - (v) Allow new eligible countries (Ghana, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire) to catch-up;
 - (vi) Look at mobility schemes beyond Erasmus Plus including labour migration;

The Chair recalled that the situation is constantly evolving and that therefore the Board will keep discussing these issues at each meeting.

A round of Operational Committee meetings to adopt new programs will be planned in October-November 2017 while the next Board Meeting will likely be held in December 2017.