

# **NINTH BOARD MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA**

**30 November 2022**

## **MINUTES**

The European Commission convened the ninth 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, Norway and United Kingdom; partner countries; and concerned regional organisations. The Acting Director for Africa of DG INTPA, Mr. Hans Stausboll, chaired the meeting.

### **Introductory remarks**

In his introductory remarks, Mr Hans Stausboll, Acting Director for Africa, **DG INTPA**, welcomed the participants to the ninth Board meeting of the EUTF for Africa. He highlighted that the aim of the meeting was to take stock of progress achieved by the EUTF for Africa since the last Board meeting held on 7 December 2021 and to present the latest results achieved by the different regions in the first semester of 2022. He reminded participants that no new operational project or programmes had been signed in 2022 in line with the end of the EUTF for Africa contracting period set for 31 December 2021. Mr. Stausboll recalled that programmes funded under the EUTF for Africa will continue being implemented after this date as scheduled until their completion date and up to 31 December 2025 while only administrative activities (monitoring, evaluation, audit and communication) can be contracted from January 2022 to December 2025. In conclusion of his introductory remarks, Mr. Stausboll emphasised that in the course of 2022, the EUTF for Africa has continued providing support to foster stability and address migration and forced displacement challenges and their root causes, in close cooperation with African partners.

The Deputy Head of the Migration Unit of **DG NEAR**, Mr Michele Amedeo, recalled that the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa was set up in 2015 based on the five pillars of the Valletta Action Plan which are still valid today: root causes; legal migration and mobility; protection and asylum; prevention of irregular migration, fighting trafficking and smuggling of migrants; and return, readmission and reintegration. Mr Michele Amedeo further stressed that migration is a normal phenomenon mostly characterized by intra-Africa migration flows rather than extra-continental migration toward the EU, and that the legal dimension in terms of regularisation should not be forgotten. Over the years, the EUTF for Africa has achieved a lot. It helped in building a stronger humanitarian development nexus and proved to be an effective financial and political tool to respond to emergency situations, building partnerships and pooling of funds to bring results in line with EUTF strategic objectives. It is the perfect example of an efficient coordination between EU services, Member States and partner countries. Since the launch of the EUTF irregular migration flows and missing persons in the

Mediterranean Sea decreased substantially from the 2016-2017 peaks. Despite the EUTF successful story and its many achievements, fundamental challenges remain such as a new rise in flows post COVID and a an increasingly complex geopolitical context. We therefore need to build on the success of the EUTF to ensure the transition to the new financial instrument and keep migration high on the agenda, with an increased focus on developing regular migration pathways and in addressing the root causes of irregular migration. With the end of the Trust Fund contracting period in December 2021, new programmes building on the work initiated since 2015 will be funded and implemented under the NDICI-Global Europe.

The Director for International and Horizontal Affairs of **DG HOME**, Mr Henrik Nielsen, recalled that since the Valetta Summit took place, the EUTF for Africa has been instrumental in supporting dialogues as well as providing tailored responses to foster stability and better migration management. Mr Nielsen further stressed that since 2015 strong progress has been achieved at political level, including the development of common migration priorities with the African Union, regional institutions and key partner countries in the frame of the High-Level Migration Dialogues. DG Home contributed with 135M to the EUTF for Africa. 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). Mr Nielsen further stressed that the Pact on Migration and Asylum highlights the importance of working with international partners. As such, DG HOME looks forward to continuing the close cooperation on priorities that are the same: victim protection and empowerment, resettlement, countering smuggling and trafficking, return and readmission and talent partnerships.

The Head of Division, of Pan-African Affairs of the **EEAS**, Mr Nicola Bellomo highlighted that while the EUTF for Africa came a long way, fundamental challenges remain the same as in 2015-2016. The last Commission to Commission meeting held two days earlier was an opportunity to exchange on these challenges. Mr Bellomo stressed that the EUTF for Africa complements other tools and has been able to achieve a lot, partly thanks to its flexibility. Mr. Bellomo noted that the policy dialogue with countries has developed on various topics linked to migration management, human rights or the struggle against organised crime among other. The EUTF for Africa has responded to many of the challenges and was also instrumental in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr. Bellomo underlined the importance to build on the success of the EUTF for Africa and to ensure a smooth transition to the new tools and funding instruments. He encouraged the EUTF for Africa to continue communicating on its activities, results and success stories and make them strategic communication tools.

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 presented

positive examples from the three windows of the EUTF for Africa. In the North of Africa, although humanitarian assistance is not included in the mandate of the EUTF for Africa, in Libya, the EUTF has managed to address the crisis and internal displacement issues via an emergency assistance on basic needs as response to migration crisis, including support for internally displaced people (IDPs) and hosting communities. 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. In the Horn of Africa, Mr Angelini stressed that the critical issue of refugees and IDPs has been addressed adequately. He continued giving the example of Uganda and Sudan and the support to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) which provides durable solutions to protracted situations. In Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti, the use of resources has been maximised and interesting results produced, which are to be followed by the new programming. Such examples should be replicated. In the Sahel and Lake Chad region, Mr. Angelini emphasised the joint humanitarian action in Nigeria, the emergency development program in G5 Sahel and the programme aiming at reducing malnutrition with the World Food Programme. 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.

#### **ITEM I – 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 2022. The presentation provided information on overall resources, the share of each category of implementing partners<sup>1</sup> and communication activities realized in the course of 2022. During the presentation, Mr. Stausboll informed the participants that the EUTF for Africa website will move to a different platform in the first quarter of 2023 and stressed that every effort was made for the website to retain a similar level of information as the current one. Mr. Stausboll emphasized once more that the final date of implementation (FDI) of the Trust Fund has been set at end of 2025 and that from January 2022 until the end of the EUTF for Africa only contracts related to administrative activities such as audits, evaluations, monitoring and communication can be signed. Mr. Stausboll also informed the participants that the European Court of Auditors has planned to organise a performance audit of the EUTF for Africa. The audit should start early 2023 and be completed in 2024. He further mentioned that a final evaluation of the EUTF Africa may take place most likely by the end of the EUTF implementation, although the details on such evaluation have not yet been discussed and agreed upon.

Mr. Stausboll stressed that the decision not to continue the EUTF for Africa was in line with the objective of mainstreaming migration-related programming and avoid setting up parallel

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<sup>1</sup> In terms of implementation, 31% of the amounts contracted are implemented by EU Member States agencies; 18% by international and local NGOs (the share being higher if we consider sub-contracts signed with NGOs by other implementing partners); 31% by UN Agencies; 9% by international organizations and private sector entities; and nearly 11% by partner countries through budget support

systems, which can raise governance issues. Mr. Stausboll indicated that 12% are earmarked for sub-Saharan Africa on migration-related aspects, under DG INTPA and NDICI-Global Europe (NDICI-GE) for the adopted programming, exceeding the 10% target.

## **ITEM II – Results achieved in the three regions**

The Trust Fund Manager for the Horn of Africa of **DG INTPA**, Mr. Enrique De Loma-Ossorio Friend, made a presentation of the major achievements in the Horn of Africa and Sahel/Lake Chad regions up to the end of June 2022, providing figures on the first semester 2022 and cumulative figures. A document reflecting these results in the two regions had been sent to all participants Board members and observers ahead of the meeting. The presentation showed that the EUTF for Africa has made substantive progress in the different areas of work in the course of the last year. In addition, the presentation included the summary of examples of outcome analyses per window on completed programmes. Additional information on the latest results and outcome analyses will be available in the upcoming Report of the Monitoring and Learning System of the EUTF for Africa that will be available soon on the website.

Mr. Stausboll took the floor to present the future support on migration related issues, indicating that provisions have been made on the regional programming and some national indicative programmes for countries most concerned by migration and displacement. These programmes are meant to continue the work of the EUTF for Africa. Mr. Stausboll recalled that an informal migration coordination group has been set up to discuss migration-related issues with Member States. The proposed programmes are discussed in this coordination group and presented and approved in NDICI Committees (for projects funded under the regional or national indicative programmes) which are similar to the EUTF for Africa Operational Committee. Mr. Stausboll further presented some of the regional programmes that have been approved in 2022, highlighting that interventions through national indicative programmes come on top of these regional initiatives.

The Head of the Migration Unit of **DG NEAR**, Mr. Michele Amedeo made a presentation of the results achieved by the EUTF for Africa in the North of Africa region. Activities in the North of Africa region, are entirely focussed on the strategic objective 3 of the EUTF for Africa “migration management”. On this basis, we are working along four strategic priorities proposed by the board in 2018. The financial allocations in the region were based on needs. The priorities we funded most are Priority 1 – Protection and community stabilisation (total of €523 million with €333 million for Libya) and Priority 2 – Border management and combatting migrant smuggling and trafficking in Human Beings (total of €285 million with €175 million for Morocco). In addition, the EUTF is also supporting interventions under Priority 3 – Labour migration and mobility (for €35 million) and Priority 4 – Migration governance, voluntary return and sustainable reintegration (for €43 million).

Improvements have been made along all EUTF priorities, increasing the number of migrants protected and considerable achievements in voluntary humanitarian returns with the help of IOM and emergency evacuations with the help of UNHCR. Protection has been the biggest chunk of the support under the EUTF (500M euros, a bit more than half of the EUTF envelop

in North Africa) and will continue to be an important priority in the future. Border management has also been improved with important steps to fight against traffickers and smugglers in Morocco, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt. On labour migration we are working towards increased cooperation with the private sector and coordination with EU Member States.

Mr. Amedeo further stressed that the EUTF for Africa was an emergency fund with an emphasis on meeting short term needs while contributing to longer term migration governance aspects. Under NDICI-Global Europe the emphasis will be on both, supporting partner countries in addressing short term needs and long-term challenges, in line with fundamental human rights principles. The regional Multiannual indicative programming (MIP) on migration for the Southern Neighbourhood for the period 2021-27 was approved at the NDICI committee of 18 October 2022. It will cover relevant country and regional interventions under four main priority areas: protection to forcibly displaced persons and others in need, support to migration governance and management, fostering cooperation on return, readmission and reintegration, legal migration and mobility. The two Team Europe Initiatives to be launched before the end of the year (one on the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean route and one on the Central Mediterranean migration route) will contribute to enhance coordination and cooperation between the EC, the EEAS and EU Member States in the various fora. The aim for the immediate future is to continue strengthening capacities on migration governance and management along the MIP priorities, develop a new regional program to fight against smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and revitalize the EU-AU task force on Libya.

### **Interventions by delegations**

Mr. Lewandowski MEP, Standing Rapporteur for the EUTF for Africa in the **BUDG Committee of the European Parliament**, presented the conclusions of joint missions (including EP BUDG and DEVE committees' representatives) to EUTF-funded actions. While the lack of accountability and transparency when defining and approving actions were noted, Mr. Lewandowski recognised the overall value-added of the EUTF for Africa. He further thanked the Commission for the support and scrutiny on programmes' implementation, which the EP acknowledges and appreciates.

Three delegations (**FR**, **IT** and **ECOWAS**) took the floor. **FR** and **IT** expressed their support and satisfaction for the promising results achieved over the years by the EUTF for Africa and by the visibility that it has given to migration-related matters. They highlighted the need to ensure a good articulation and transition between programmes funded under the EUTF for Africa and those funded under the NDICI-GE. For this purpose, they stressed that the planned evaluation of the EUTF is highly important and should provide qualitative and quantitative lessons learnt that can feed into future programming. They asked to receive a list of ongoing programmes indicating the state of play of payments. **FR** supported the Team Europe Initiative approach on the two main migration routes, seen as a flexible instrument that can adapt to different migration flows, which is considered pertinent. FR further raised a

question on the follow-up of the activities in Sahel and specifically in Mali, asking how the support and activities were continuing under the EUTF for Africa. **IT** emphasised that migration-related matters should stay high on the agenda and be addressed at continental level, in collaboration with partners. **ECOWAS** welcomed the impact of the EUTF on migration-related topics. They asked about the role of the Board of the EUTF in the future. **ECOWAS** further questioned how regional programmes for sub-Saharan Africa would be implemented at national level and take each country's specificities into account, in particular on protection and return/reintegration. **ECOWAS** finally raised the question of ownership/appropriation by partner countries if they are not part of the approval process.

In response to questions raised, Mr Hans Stausboll, **DG INTPA**, indicated that the EUTF for Africa is committed to circulate an updated list of ongoing programmes and agreed on the importance of carrying out an evaluation of the EUTF for Africa. The Commission fully subscribes to the Team Europe Initiative approach on the two migration routes and indicated that the launch of new programmes would take place on 12 December. On the situation in Mali, Mr. Stausboll indicated that the Commission is aligning to general policies of COAFR and does not work with the authorities in Mali. However, EUTF funded activities that serve the population continue being implemented, although with difficulties in the northern part of the country. Mr. Stausboll emphasised that the Commission will continue the dialogue to ensure ownership by African partners through *inter alia* Rabat and Khartoum processes. The first senior official meeting is indeed planned in Cadiz on 14 December on the Team Europe Initiatives on migration to have both political dialogue and operational discussion with representatives of all concerned countries. Similarly, the continuity between the EUTF for Africa and the NDICI-GE will continue being addressed and discussed in the migration working group. Mr. Stausboll confirmed that the Board of the EUTF for Africa will continue until the end of the implementation period. It will however have a monitoring role while general discussions on migration and to follow-up new programming will take place via other mechanisms.

On return and reintegration programmes, Mr. Stausboll explained that the programmes target in priority main return countries, in particular in the West African region. When a programme is funded through a national envelope, they are closely discussed with the partner countries and approved by the national authorities. For regional programming, sub-regional discussions will take place in the respective Team Europe initiative committees.

### **ITEM III – AOB**

Mr. Hans Stausboll indicated that a question on the use of uncommitted funds at the end of the contracting period (31 December 2021) had been raised by Board members. Mr. Stausboll stressed that only very limited un-committed funds remain at this stage while some of them will still be engaged in the coming years for administrative activities. As such the actual amount of unspent resources will only be available at the end of the implementation and closure of EUTF activities. The Commission will hence come back to the Board in 2024 and 2025 to discuss this question. As indicated in the EUTF Constitutive Agreement, the

remaining funds can be returned on a pro-rata basis to donors or donors may decide on the use of the funds.

### **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; and has a solid result framework on which it can report, showing concrete and tangible 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 looked forward to continued collaboration via regional and national programmes.

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