



## Commission calls for accelerated delivery under the Migration Partnership Framework and further actions along the Central Mediterranean Route

Brussels, 2 March 2017

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Ahead of the European Council meeting next week, the Commission and the High Representative/Vice-President are reporting for the third time on the progress made under the Migration Partnership Framework and are presenting the first steps taken to implement actions along the Central Mediterranean Route, as laid out in the [Malta Declaration](#) of 3 February and the [Joint Communication](#) from 25 January. Tangible progress has been made with the five African priority countries, Ethiopia, Niger, Nigeria, Mali and Senegal but efforts need to be stepped up to deliver results. Along the Central Mediterranean route, work is taken forward to better manage migration, continue saving lives, step up the fight against smugglers and traffickers and offer protection to migrants in need and increase resettlement and assisted voluntary returns, fully abiding to the EU's humanitarian imperative and the respect of human rights.

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission **Federica Mogherini**, said: "*Partnership is a key word in all policies of the European Union: together with our partners we tackle the main challenges of our times. Through the Partnership Framework and the steps foreseen in the Malta Declaration, we have established a truly comprehensive migration policy, based on partnership and with the necessary investments and resources that will allow us to keep working together to save lives, dismantle criminal networks, provide people with better opportunities, manage together migratory flows in a sustainable, respectful and human manner.*"

### **Accelerating operational delivery under the Partnership Framework**

Since the launch of the Partnership Framework in June 2016, a number of important results have been achieved. Action to combat migrant smuggling and trafficking and provide assistance to migrants is taking shape. For example, in **Niger**, the number of migrants supported in centres operated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) doubled in 2016, to over 15.000. Almost 5.000 people were assisted with voluntary returns to their communities of origin, and nine projects under the EU Trust Fund for Africa are supporting Niger's overall development. Negotiations with **Nigeria** on a readmission agreement continue, with the aim to conclude the readmission agreement by June 2017. Additional projects for **Senegal** and **Mali** in support of reintegration and the creation of employment opportunities have been adopted. Further programmes to support refugees and host communities for **Ethiopia** are in the pipeline and European Migration Liaison Officers have been deployed to all five priority countries.

A total of 42 new programmes worth €587 million were agreed in December 2016 under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, bringing the total number of adopted projects to 106, worth over €1.5 billion. The EU Trust Fund operates in 26 countries, with a current allocation of more than €2.5 billion, including €152 million pledged so far by EU Member States and other donors.

### **Actions taken along the Central Mediterranean route**

Work on the Partnership Framework is being complemented by an increased focus on the Central Mediterranean Route. The proposed actions are taken forward through an Implementation Plan by the Maltese presidency of the European Council, in close coordination with the Commission, High Representative and the Member States.

Priority is given to the **management of migration** flows along on the Central Mediterranean route, with €200 million being mobilised in 2017 for migration-related projects, in particular in **Libya**. The aim is to reduce the number of crossings and continue saving lives at sea, stepping up the fight against smugglers and traffickers, protecting migrants, increasing resettlement and promoting assisted voluntary returns and managing migrant flows through the southern Libyan border. Coordination has

been intensified with international partners, such as the UNHCR and the IOM. For example, the IOM has been contracted under the EU Trust Fund for Africa to implement the **humanitarian repatriation and reintegration** of an initial target of 5 000 migrants in Libya. In 2017, so far, return assistance was offered to 560 stranded migrants.

Continued and increased cooperation with Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria is key, including through regional initiatives like the Seahorse Mediterranean network. CSDP operations and missions, in particular EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia and EUBAM Libya are instrumental in the implementation. Operation Sophia has completed a first training package for 93 Libyan Coastguard and Navy personnel and started a second package. The Commission complements this with the expansion of specialist training for the Libyan Coastguard and Navy conducted through Operation seahorse, with 15 new training courses planned until July 2017.

### **Next steps**

The EU will continue to engage with third countries through the Partnership Framework, using all available policies and tools at its disposal, such as return policy, legal migration and operational tools, including the increased use of EU agencies, European Migration Liaison Officers and financial instruments. Synergies between the Partnership Framework and the new initiatives in the context of the Malta Declaration will be further developed in the next months, particularly in the Sahel belt and southern side of the Libyan border, as well as to facilitate the swift Assisted Voluntary Return of migrants stranded in Libya. Stock will be taken in the June report of the Partnership framework, a year into its implementation.

### **Background**

Since the launch of the Partnership Framework in June 2016, EU institutions and Member States have – in close cooperation with partner countries – been working relentlessly to more effectively manage migration in all its forms. Complementary work continues in parallel through regional initiatives, such as the Khartoum and Rabat processes, as well as taking forward the Valletta Declaration and Joint Valletta Action Plan. The Valletta Senior Officials Meeting on 8 February provided an opportunity to evaluate the results achieved so far. Through the European Agenda on Migration, the EU introduced a comprehensive approach to better manage migration and address its root causes, linking the internal dimension to work done with third countries in this regard. In this context, this report is also closely linked to the renewed Action Plan on a more effective return policy and the Recommendation on the implementation of the Return Directive adopted today in parallel.

### **For more information**

Third Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration

Annex

[Q&A](#)

Factsheet: [Migration Partnership Framework](#)

Factsheet: [Mali](#)

[Senegal](#)

[Ethiopia](#)

[Niger](#)

[Nigeria](#)

[EU-Libya relations](#)

Factsheet: [EU Trust Fund for Africa](#)

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Press contacts:

[Nabila MASSRALI](#) (+ 32 2 296 92 18)

[Esther OSORIO](#) (+32 2 296 20 76)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)