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NOTE

From:	Commission Services
To:	Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration (EMWP)
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Subject:	Update on the state of play of external cooperation in the field of migration policy

Delegations will find attached an update on the state of play of external cooperation in the field of migration policy, issued by the Commission Services.

**UPDATE ON STATE OF PLAY OF EXTERNAL COOPERATION
IN THE FIELD OF MIGRATION POLICY**

January 2025

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The European Commission adopted the New Pact on Migration and Asylum on 23 September 2020, which contains a strong component on partnerships with third countries.

This document provides an updated overview of the main external migration dialogues and processes since 2019. The document is compiled for the information of the Working Party on the External Aspects of Asylum and Migration by the responsible European Commission and EEAS services.

This document also serves as a tool to follow-up the implementation of the European Council Conclusions (on external aspects of migration) as well as the outcomes of meetings of the Home Affairs and the Foreign Affairs Ministers.

This document was formally known as the Global Approach to Migration Management (GAMM) update covering dialogues and processes since 2005.

Part 1- Bilateral dialogues

A. AFRICAN COUNTRIES

CABO VERDE		
<i>In 2007, the EU and Cabo Verde agreed on a Special Partnership Agreement and a Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership with Cabo Verde was signed in 2008. In December 2014, a visa facilitation and a readmission agreement, entered into force. The visa facilitation agreement was jointly evaluated in 2017, and the text has been subsequently amended to include further mobility facilitation. The negotiations started in October 2019 and were concluded on 24 July 2020. On 18 March 2021, the amendment of the EU-Cabo Verde Visa Facilitation Agreement was signed in Brussels. The European Parliament voted on the amended agreement on 15 September 2021, and it was adopted by the Council on 7 October 2021. On 3 May 2022, Cabo Verdean authorities informed the Council that the ratification process had been completed and the amended agreement entered into force on 1 July 2022.</i>		
Key past and upcoming events		
10 September 2019	4th EU-Cabo Verde Joint Visa Facilitation Committee meeting – Brussels	Meeting confirmed the overall satisfactory implementation of the Visa Facilitation Agreement. The Commission requested the Council the authorization for opening negotiations to amend the EU Cabo Verde VFA (notably to adjust to Visa Code) and the Council adopted the mandate on the 24 October.
10 September 2019	4th EU-Cabo Verde Joint Readmission Committee meeting – Brussels	The meeting noted the improvement of Cabo Verde cooperation on readmission
28 November 2019	Formal opening of negotiations on amended Visa Facilitation Agreement – Brussels	
30 January 2020	Further round of talks on Agreement – Praia	
24 July 2020	Initialling of agreement text via email	

21 March 2021	Signing of amendment of the EU-Cabo Verde Visa Facilitation Agreement	
14 July 2021	Amended agreement text sent to European Parliament for vote of consent	All EP groups in favour except for one
29 June 2021	EU-Cabo Verde Ministerial in Lisbon	Migration and VFA on the agenda
15 September 2021	EU-Cabo Verde amended Visa Facilitation Agreement was voted in the Plenary session of the European Parliament.	
7 October 2021	The Council received the EP consent and adopted the amended Visa Facilitation Agreement on 7 October.	
3 May 2022	The Council received the Note Verbale on the completion of the ratification Process in Cabo Verde	
1 July 2022	Entry into force of the amended Visa Facilitation agreement	The agreement was amended to further facilitate the issuance of visas between the European Union and Cabo Verde
31 January 2023	EU – Cabo Verde Ministerial in Praia	Migration, mobility and VFA implementation on the agenda. In the final Joint Communique, the entry into force of the amended agreement is welcomed by both parties.
9 March 2023	5th EU-Cabo Verde Joint Readmission Committee meeting + 5th EU-Cabo Verde Joint Visa Facilitation Committee meeting – Praia	

CAMEROON

Cameroon is a country of origin, although not a main one. to the EU. Irregular arrivals doubled in 2023, amounting to 6 289, compared to a total of 3 032 in 2022 (and 1999 in 2021). As of September, the arrivals decreased to 1175, mainly via the Central Med route (72%) and to a minor extent via the Eastern Med (14%) and Atlantic route (7%).

Following the peak of arrivals in 2023, and on the occasion of the midterm review of the Multiannual Indicative Program, migration has been included among the priority sub areas (under the governance sector).

Cameroon has bilateral readmission agreements with ES, FR, BE. The number of voluntary returns of Cameroonian nationals managed by IOM has been increasing. The national migration policy is to be developed, with the support of the EU (flexible mechanism) including EU technical assistance that was made available to the Cameroonian administration in the beginning of 2024. The Government has strengthened interministerial coordination on migration and is making efforts to reintegrate its returned nationals (mostly from North Africa). The EU-Cameroon structured partnership dialogue under the Samoa Agreement, replacing the political dialogue, took place on 12 December 2024. Migration was one of the three points on the agenda and was discussed in a comprehensive way. Following the partnership dialogue, Cameroon sent a note verbale on 17 December, expressing its availability to discuss a comprehensive migration agreement. The country has expressed interest in circular mobility schemes.

Key past and upcoming events

1 April 2022	Meeting of EEAS MDA Africa Bernard QUINTIN and DDG HOME Johannes LUCHNER with Ambassador Evina ABE'E of CAMEROON, on returns and readmission (article 25a VC)	Follow up art. 25a Visa Code annual report.
1 June 2022	Meeting of EEAS MDA Africa Bernard QUINTIN and DDG HOME Johannes LUCHNER with Ambassador ABE'E of CAMEROON, on arrival of migrants and asylum seekers to Cyprus (article 25a VC)	Focus on specificities of the issue of migrants and asylum seekers in a MS and ways for increased Cameroonian commitment to improvement of cooperation.
23 May 2022	Cameroon participated in the launch of a structured dialogue between the EU and the group of African permanent representatives to the UN in Geneva.	In that framework, the ambassador of Cameroon said: « <i>migration is a central theme for the EU and Africa, built on the two pillars of solidarity and support</i> ».
08 July 2022	Structured political dialogue (SPD) EU-Cameroon, with migration high on the agenda	Creation of an SPD sub-committee on migration
03 November 2022	1st meeting of the SPD sub-committee on migration	Main conclusions: set-up of a national strategy on migration and mobility; fight against documentary fraud; improvement of the civil register; increased efficiency for issuance of documents; organising a “identification mission” to Cyprus.
17 February 2023	Meeting between EEAS MDA Africa Bernard QUINTIN and DDG HOME Johannes LUCHNER with Ambassador ABE'E of CAMEROON, on returns and readmission (article 25a VC)	Follow up art. 25a Visa Code annual report.

June 2023	Structured partnership dialogue (SPD) EU-Cameroon, with migration high on the agenda.	Political assessment/validation by the political level of the work by the SPD sub-committee on migration. Cameroonian party presented recent additional efforts to increase cooperation with EU/MS re returns and readmission.
Last quarter 2023	Next technical meeting of SPD sub-committee on migration, to be followed by next session of Structured Political Dialogue	Assessment of progress towards the formulation of a national migration policy with EU financial and OIM technical support. Assessment of continuous tangible cooperation in terms of return and reintegration.
7 March 2024	Meeting at technical level (DG HOME C1 and A3 EEAS) with Ambassador ABE'E of Cameroon to discuss irregular arrivals and readmission.	The Ambassador assured of Cameroonian authorities' willingness to discuss
10 July 2024	Working lunch HoDiv of EEAS Africa.4 HoD with Cameroonian Ambassador on various issues including migration, in particular returns and readmission.	The Ambassador reiterated the government's commitment to improve cooperation in this area and presented concrete progress made and main challenges ahead.
7 March 2024	Meeting at technical level (DG HOME C1 and A3 EEAS) with Ambassador ABE'E of Cameroon to discuss irregular arrivals and readmission.	The Ambassador assured of Cameroonian authorities' willingness to discuss
12 December 2024	Partnership Dialogue, DG HOME (A3) attended the dialogue upon the invitation of EUD and EEAS.	Exchange on 5 subareas: (i) readmission and reintegration, (iii) legal/circular mobility, (iv) role of diaspora in the development of the country, (v) irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, (v) protection. Willingness to deepen cooperation on all migration areas.

ETHIOPIA

The Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) was signed by the EU and Ethiopia in November 2015. A Joint Declaration "Towards an EU-Ethiopia Strategic Engagement", including a sectoral dialogue on migration, was signed on 14 June 2016. Procedures for the identification and return of Ethiopian irregular migrants from Europe were approved by the Council on 29 January 2018. Since 29 April 2024, visa restrictive measures under Article 25a of the Visa Code are applicable to nationals of Ethiopia considering the unsatisfactory level of cooperation on readmission. The visa measures were proposed based on the Commission's fourth assessment report of cooperation in 2022. The Joint Working Group under the Procedures is planned for before the summer 2025.

Key past and upcoming events

24 January 2019	Visit of PM Abiy to Brussels	Meetings with President Tusk, President Juncker and the HR/VP
9 February 2019	EU-Ethiopia Ministerial Meeting, Addis Ababa	Co-chaired by the HR/VP and the Ethiopian MFA. Both sides acknowledged the need for further actions and cooperation, in particular to continue adequately implementing the Joint Valletta Action Plan. Both sides underscored the need for continued dialogue on migration between EU and Ethiopia.
13 May 2019	Joint Working Group on the implementation of Admission Procedures, Brussels	
8 October 2019	First Technical Meeting on the implementation of Admission Procedures, Addis Ababa	
26-28 February 2020	Visit of Commissioner Johansson to Addis Abba, as part of the College-to-College discussions with the African Union.	
9-10 February 2021	Finnish Foreign Minister Haavisto meeting with PM Abiy, at the request of HR/VP	
4-9 April 2021	Second mission of Finnish Foreign Minister Haavisto mandated by the HR/VP	
25 October 2021	Visit to Ethiopia by Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen	Meetings with PM Abiy Ahmed Ali, President Sahle-Work Zewde and Deputy PM, Minister for Foreign Affairs Demeke Hasen.
8-12 November 2021	Visit by the EUSR Annette Weber (as part of a series of her visits across the Gulf and the Horn of Africa)	Meeting with PM Abiy Ahmed Ali
8-9 February 2022	Visit by EUSR Annette Weber	Meeting with DPM Mekonnen
30-31 March 2022	Visit by EUSR Annette Weber	Meetings with PM Abiy and DPM Mekonnen

27-28 April 2022	Visit by EUSR Annette Weber	Meeting with DPM Mekonnen
2 June 2022	Technical meeting on migration and returns in Addis	
14-15 September 2022	Joint visit MD Africa Laranjinha and EUSR Weber to Ethiopia	Meeting with DPM Mekonnen
February 2023	MD Africa Laranjinha met the Ambassador in Brussels	Discuss readmission cooperation in the broader context of relaunching broader cooperation
April 2023	HOME DDG Luchner met Ethiopian Ambassador to the EU Hirut Zemene	Meeting on readmission.
September 2023	DDG Luchner had two phone calls with Ambassador Hirut to inform her about planned adoption of COM proposal	Follow up article 25a Visa Code
4 October 2023	Visit to Ethiopia by Commissioner Urpilainen	Meeting with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, signature of the MIP.
December 2023	HOME DDG Luchner call with Ethiopian Ambassador to the EU Hirut Zemene	Follow up article 25a Visa Code
February 2024	Third Joint Working Group with Ethiopia	
April 2024	Several bilateral exchanges with DDG Luchner, Head of Unit C1, EEAS MD Africa in the run up to the adoption of the measures (29 April 2024)	Follow up article 25a measures Visa Code
May 2024	DDG Luchner met with the Ambassador of Ethiopia to the EU, Hirut Zemene.	Discussions on overall EU and Ethiopia partnership including 25a
June 2024	MD Africa Rita Laranjinha met Ethiopian Ambassador	Follow up article 25a measures Visa Code
14 October 2024	Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen mission to Ethiopia, accompanied by MD Africa	Meetings with President Taye Atske-Selassie and with Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC).
November 2024	Fourth Joint Working Group with Ethiopia	
December 2024	MD Africa met with the Ambassador of Ethiopia to the EU, Eshete Tilahun	Discussions on overall EU and Ethiopia partnership including 25a
December 2024	DDG Luchner met with the Ambassador of Ethiopia to the EU, Eshete Tilahun	Follow up article 25a measures Visa Code

MAURITANIA

With the resumption of the irregular flows on the Atlantic route in 2019, followed by a sharp increase in 2020, the EU stepped up its engagement with Mauritania, particularly in relation to border management. Mauritania has been identified as a priority country for a closer cooperation with Frontex, in the form of a working arrangement and/or a status agreement, depending on Mauritania's needs and interests. The country previously showed some interest in both the status agreement and the working arrangement, but negotiations on the status agreement stalled after a few rounds in late 2022-early 2023. Discussions are ongoing with Frontex on the working arrangement (recent statements by Mauritania make it difficult to envisage a rapid agreement. A comprehensive approach addressing irregular migration through a multi-dimensional response, including enhanced support to the creation of job and training opportunities is pursued through the Joint Declaration that was signed on March 7th, 2024.

Under this new high level migration partnership, we aim to:

- Strengthen our collaboration to prevent and reduce irregular migration flows to the EU; ensure that Mauritania delivers on its commitment to reduce irregular departures (and return to the situation before December 2023). Also to recover its cooperation in returns.*
- Tackling the problems of forced displacement from Mali to Mauritania and reassuring them of our support to ease the pressure on the Hodh El Chargui region, which hosts the bulk of asylum seekers and refugees, and to foster social cohesion and inclusion, in line with the commitments made by the Mauritanian government at the Global Refugee Forum.*
- Improve governance and support democracy and stability in a fragile region where democratic backsliding is the dominant trend, and a presidential election is scheduled to take place in Mauritania on 22 June 2024.*
- Strengthen maritime and land border management, including search and rescue, to control and reduce irregular flows to the EU and better protect migrants and persons in need of international protection.*
- Strengthen cooperation with EU agencies within the overall migration management framework, in particular with Frontex. In this spirit, encourage Mauritania to continue negotiations on the working arrangement, which is part of the package.*
- Call on Mauritania to keep cooperation on migration management high on the African Union's agenda as Chair of the continental body for 2024-2025.*

The migration-related amount of the 210 MEUR package announced by President von der Leyen in February 2024 is now committed (except for 5 M EUR for protection and 2 M EUR on counter-smuggling, both under preparation). The budget support program (100 MEU) was signed on 19 December 2024 (first mission outside the EU of Commissioner Sikela) including the payment of the first tranche (23 MEUR). Departures from the Mauritanian coast towards the Canaries are continuing (half of the arrivals in the Canary Islands). The main nationality of arrivals are Malians. Both insecurity and dire economic conditions fuel forced displacement and economic migration from Mali to Mauritania. The new EU supported projects for Mauritania will contribute to improving the situation, once they are fully operational, but this will not be sufficient. It is important to tackle the problem upstream and resume pragmatic cooperation with Mali at technical level. Cooperation with Senegal is also relevant and seems to be improving under the new government.

Key past and upcoming events

July 2020	High level conference on anti-smuggling	Mauritania was invited along with North African countries
September 2020	Commissioner Johansson's visit to Mauritania	Joint visit with ES Minister of Interior Grande-Marlaska

November 2020	Senior technical VTC with Mauritania authorities	Follow-up technical meeting to identify needs, particularly on border management and anti-smuggling
November 2021	Frontex mission	Frontex presented its activities in relation to cooperation with third countries
March 2022	Mauritanian authorities visited Frontex Headquarters in Warsaw	Familiarisation tour with the participation of relevant Mauritanian border management authorities
12 May 2022	Meeting EEAS/HOME with Mauritanian ambassador in Brussels	Exploratory talks on possible options to deepen cooperation on border management
17-18 May 2022	Frontex follow-up mission	Discussion on the establishment of an Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) Risk Analysis Cell and on a structured form of cooperation with Frontex (in particular a Working Arrangement)
19-21 September 2022	Senior-level technical mission to Mauritania. Joint mission led by DG HOME, with the participation of Frontex and INTPA	The mission explained the content and the added value of a Status Agreement and explored Mauritania's needs and interests
December 2022	A new action (EUR 20 million) on Technical Vocational Education and Training, as well as facilitate access to employment and support entrepreneurship, for migrants and host communities was approved under the migration flexible mechanisms	The action includes the outcomes from the senior level technical mission last September and the recommendation and conclusion at MOCADÉM level
7 and 9 December 2022 December, 8 January, 8 March 2023	Discussions/negotiations sessions with Mauritania on the status agreement via VTC	Negotiations on a status agreement have stalled
11 October 2023	Visit by VP Schinas and the Spanish Minister of Interior to Nouakchott, Mauritania.	The Spanish Minister of Interior and VP Schinas met with the president of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould Ghazouani.
24 October 2023	European Commission President Von der Leyen and the Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani met in Brussels, on the eve of the Global Gateway Forum.	EU launched a Team Europe Initiative to develop green hydrogen in Mauritania and accelerate its energy transition.

11 December 2023	High level meeting on Migration in Brussels with Mauritania	Discussion on the migration dialogue.
08 February 2024, Nouakchott	Joint visit of European Commission President Von der Leyen and Spanish Prime Minister Sanchez to Mauritania	Announcement of additional support on migration EUR 100 million individual measures that has just been approved (covering migration, addressing root causes, economic development). 90% of this amount will be disbursed through budget support. EUR 60 million under the Flexible Mechanism, earmarked for migration, notably support to refugees and host communities, border management and search and rescue, fight against migrant smuggling
7 March 2024, Nouakchott	Signature of the Joint Declaration establishing a Migration Partnership with Mauritania – signed by Commissioner Johansson and the Mauritanian Minister of Interior and Decentralisation, Mohamed Ahmed Ould Mohamed Lemine	
18-19 December 2024	Visit to Mauritania by Commissioner Sikela	Signature of the EUR 100 M Budget Support (which includes migration-related indicators).
21 January 2025, Nouakchott	Migration Dialogue	
17 January 2025, Nouakchott	Political Dialogue	

MALI

Since the second coup in May 2021 the political and security situation continues to deteriorate, with high level of insecurity and a growing authoritarian tendency of the military regime, which is consolidating its position and which the EU does not recognise. Given the political context and the complex relation with the Malian transitional government, the EU has adapted its partnership avoiding actions that could legitimize or empower the military government. No direct funding is provided to the authorities; no budget support; security programmes have been suspended. The Common Operational Partnership on counter-smuggling was not renewed. The EU is engaged in Mali through a prudent, pragmatic approach for the direct benefit of the population, socio-economic development and to defend EU interest.

In 2024 Malian nationals were the top detected nationality to the Canary Islands (more than one third of all arrivals have seen an increase of more than 150% in applications for international protection in 2024 compared to 2023, more than 60% in Spain, where IP recognition rates are above 95%. In 2023 in the EU, the rates were 60%.); pressure on the Atlantic route is expected to remain high in 2025. There are an estimated 250,000 Malian refugees in Mauritania, with the number doubling by 2024 due to the difficult political and economic situation and Malian and Wagner military incursions in the area. On this basis, the EU support to Mauritania (transit country of Malians towards the EU), though remarkable, will not be enough (also due to limitations in Mauritanian absorption capacity) unless it is accompanied by measures upstream, in Mali. The EUCAP SHAEL Mali ends in January 2025. It will be important this year to develop a strategy for Mali that is integrated into the Sahel strategy and that allows for a response to migration and security challenges. Exchanges within the Commission and with EUMS have pointed to an interest in resuming cooperation on migration with Mali with all necessary caveats. On this basis, the regional MISPEAC project (HOME funded project concerning cooperation on counter-smuggling between intelligence services) was extended to Mali. This was a very small (300.000 euro) but significant step forward. It is now important to make a step further and consider the possibility of resuming pragmatic cooperation on migration, including as concerns border management, counter-smuggling and creation of socio-economic opportunities.

Key past and upcoming events

11-13 September 2024	Joint EEAS/INTPA mission at HoU level to Bamako to identify, among others, the areas where the EU and Mali can find a win-win partnership.	The area of migration was discussed with Member States and identified as an essential EU interest.
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NIGER

High-Level Dialogue on migration launched on 18 September 2015. The EUCAP Sahel Niger mission was enlarged in July 2015 including a new objective on migration. The EUCAP field office in Agadez opened April 2016. Since November 2017, refugees have been evacuated in a humanitarian evacuation scheme from Libya to Niger via the Emergency Transit Mechanism in Niger. An Action Plan on Niger has been elaborated in EMWP, in December 2021. An action file on Niger was discussed in MOCADDEM in February 2022. On 15 July 2022, an Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership was launched. Following the coup on 26 July 2023, the cooperation with Niger authorities was put on hold. The projects implemented by international organisations in the benefit of the migrants, asylum seekers and refugees continue. However, the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) that allowed resettlement solutions to be found for refugees (mostly from Libya) has also been paralysed by the Niger authorities.

Key past and upcoming events

January 2019	Sherpa visit to Niger	Visit to the border with Algeria and meetings with the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Plan as well as implementing partners and local authorities.
July 2019	HR/VP visit to Niger	Meeting with Nigerien authorities in the context of the Sahel tour on occasion of the G5 Sahel Ministerial in Ouagadougou.
16 June 2021	EUSR visit to Niger	Meeting with Nigerien authorities in the context of his end of man-Date
13 July 2021	Meeting Minister of Interior with Executive Director of EUAA	
06 August 2021	6th meeting of Migration Cooperation Forum with the government of Niger (Cadre de Concertation sur la Migration (CCM))	First meeting since 2019.
6-9 September 2021	CIVOPS Commander and MPCC Director, Francisco Perez ESTEBAN (CivOpsCdr) and an FPI delegation visited Niger.	The visit allowed to have a dialogue with national authorities including the Minister of Internal Affairs on the activities of the EU- CAP Sahel mission, whose man- date also covers support to migration and border control.
19-24 September 2021	An EUAA mission visited Niamey	The main objective was to present the regional pilot project for North Africa and Niger, and to consult on the development of the pilot project with Niger, within the frame- work of the UNHCR Asylum Capacity Support Group (ACSG).
28 September 2021	First meeting of the Steering Committee of Niger's National Migration Policy in Niamey.	The EU participates as observer.

11-14 October 2021	(New) EUSR visit to Niger	Meeting with Nigerien authorities in the context of her mandate as new EUSR
13 October 2021	EU-Niger Political Dialogue	The first post-Cotonou EU-Niger Partnership Dialogue addressed migration issues around the theme: Migration: Overview of migration trends — political and strategic perspectives on migration management.
14-15 February 2022	Commissioner Johansson’s visit to Niger	Discuss the outline of an anti-smuggling operational partnership with Niger, including reinforced cooperation with Frontex and related border management and security issues
29 March 2022	Commissioner Urpilainen’s visit to Niger	
11-12 April 2022	Follow-up visit to Niger	The purpose of this visit by senior officials from DG HOME and Frontex was to take forth further discussions on an anti-smuggling operational partnership and explain the substance of a working arrangement with Frontex.
18 May 2022	Commissioner Johansson meeting Hamadou Adamou Souley, Minister of Interior	Meeting in the margins of the IMRF in New York
15 July 2022	Launch of the ASOP Signature of a Frontex-EUCAP Sahel Niger working arrangement	
05 August 2022	“Cadre Concertation Migration”	The political meeting of the 7th Migration dialogue Framework (Cadre de Concertation sur la Migration). This forum brought together the Nigerien government with international partners, including the EU and its Member States, and discussed recommendations which will be submitted to the National Migration Policy Steering Committee for implementation in the frame of the Migration Action Plan for 2020-203. The EU delegation presented ASOP.

28 September 2022	“Table Ronde pour le financement de la Politique Nationale de la Migration du Niger”	EU DEL discussed about the continuation of JIT Niger and the funds for the Emergency Transit Mechanism (committed EUR43M to migration). At the conclusion of the Round Table, the Minister of the Interior recalled that Niger is a champion in the fight against illegal and irregular migration and has assumed its responsibilities by formulating a serious National Migration Programme.
November 2022	EUCAP SAHEL in EMPACT 2023	EUCAP SAHEL Niger participation in EMPACT OAP Migrant Smuggling 2023
December 2022	Europol – EUCAP SAHEL Working Arrangement	It features on the list of priority partners to conclude Working Arrangements with Europol but, in agreement with DG HOME, this has been put on hold for the time being, due to political situation.
January 2023	Visit of acting DG ECHO Michael Koehler to Niger	Representing the EU at the 3 rd high-level conference on the Lake Chad, acting DG ECHO met Foreign Minister Hassoumi Massoudou and Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Magagi Laouan to discuss, among others, the Emergency Transit Mechanism
7-9 February 2023	Launch of EUAA-Niger Roadmap	Ministry of Interior officials (Abdou Salam HAROU, Director for refugees; Rawi Malam Habou, Head of Administrative Division for finance and procurement; Attahirou Mahamadou Maidouka, Head of communication and sustainable solutions division) visit Malta to launch the EUAA-Niger action plan
15 February 2023	President Bazoum visits Brussels	Lunch with PEC Michel to discuss migration, among others, meetings with HRVP and Commissioner Urpilainen, Commissioner Johansson (tbc)
March 2023	Signature of the third phase of the Joint Investigation Team with Niger for the fight against criminal networks linked to irregular migration, trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants	implemented by agencies from FR and ES. Funded under the Flexible Mechanism (Regional MIP 2021-2027), €13 million.

15-16 May 2023	Technical visit DG HOME to Niger	Discussions with NE authorities, OIM and UNHCR on migration related issues, including options for further cooperation
6 June 2023	First migration cluster meeting in ‘Team Europe’ format at EUD Niamey	EUD and MSs committed to have regular meetings in a ‘migration cluster’ format
5-6 July 2023	HRVP + EUSR visit to Niger	Visit to Agadez, commitment to fund €15M under AAP 2023 on governance and socio-economic development in Agadez
26 July 2023	Coup d'état	The bilateral cooperation with Niger authorities was put on hold.
26 November 2023	Repeal of the anti-trafficking law by <i>de facto</i> authorities	Cooperation with Niger still on hold

NIGERIA

A Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) was signed on 12 March 2015. On 19 October 2023 a Strategic dialogue took place between the EU (Commissioner Urpilainen in the lead, associating Commissioner Simson) and Nigeria (Minister for Budget and Economic Planning + 5 Ministers) that also addressed migration management. After 13 rounds of negotiations of the EU Readmission Agreement negotiations, the Nigerian Ministry of Justice informed the EU Delegation of its green light on the document in a May 2024 meeting, while Nigeria would still like to clarify for itself the relationship of the EU RA with the bilateral Nigeria-MSs RAs. In a May 2024 IMEX meeting, some MSs signalled they would not support a local outreach to ask for a swift conclusion of the agreement as they did not support some of the EU RA provisions as negotiated. Nigeria signed the EU-OACPS Partnership Agreement (Samoa Agreement) on 28 June 2024.

Nigeria features on the list of Frontex priority partners to conclude Working Arrangements, although at the moment the Agency is not entering into any new negotiations, due to the ongoing revision of its external strategy.

An Action Plan on Nigeria has been elaborated in EMWP, in December 2021. An action file on Nigeria was discussed in MOCADDEM in March 2022.

As outlined in the Communication on Attracting Skills and Talent to the EU published on 27 April 2022, the Commission has started assessing the feasibility of launching a Talent Partnership (TP) with Nigeria as one of the key components of a reinforced migration management cooperation with this country. Nigeria's agreement to the readmission agreement is the first step towards a comprehensive partnership, of which the Talent Partnership would be a component.

Should it not be possible to finalise the EURA, it could be worth to be pragmatic and consider alternative ways to increase cooperation on readmission, including revamping the CAMM signed in 2017, and link steps to the launch of the TP with practical (quantifiable) improvements on Readmission.

Key past and upcoming events

16 November 2020	Bilateral VTC between Commissioner Johansson and Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs	To discuss migration and security prior to the Ministerial meeting, including testing the political will to relaunch the readmission negotiations.
18 November 2020	EU-Nigeria Ministerial Summit	Relaunch a comprehensive dialogue for cooperation and launch of a strategic partnership. Ministerial also allowed for relaunching of stalled readmission negotiations.
28 January 2021	Resumption of the negotiations on the readmission agreement (6 th round)	
18 February 2021	7 th round of the negotiations on the readmission agreement	Discussion on the provisions of the text
25 February 2021	8 th round of the negotiations on the readmission agreement	Discussion on the provisions of the text

2 March 2021	9 th round of the negotiations on the readmission agreement	Discussion on the provisions of the text
18 March 2021	10 th round of the negotiations on the readmission agreement	Negotiations referred to political level; a number of outstanding issues remain unresolved
17- 22 June 2021	Commissioner Urpilainen's discussion with the Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Onyeama.	The Ministerial roadmap and the readmission negotiations were addressed.
30 June 2021	Letter from MFA Onyeama to HRVP on Ministerial Roadmap	MFA indicated Nigeria's commitment to resume readmission negotiations.
September 2021	Meeting MFA Onyeama and incoming EU Ambassador	
26 October 2021	Chief negotiators' phone call on way forward on readmission.	
3 March 2022	Meeting between MD Laranjinha, DDG Luchner and Nigerian Ambassador Onowu	Discussion on comprehensive relations with Nigeria, and on a way forward in cooperation on return, including on the readmission agreement.
21 March 2022	Meeting between the EU DEL and 18 EU HoMs with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Geoffrey Onyeama	Discussion on cooperation on return and readmission and the need to quickly conclude the negotiations of the readmission agreement
11 April 2022	Meeting EU Ambassador + Heads of Missions of MS with Nigeria's Permanent Secretary, MFA	As part of outreach on the Team Europe Initiative on the Atlantic & Western Med route.
5-8 July 2022	11 th round of negotiations of the EU-Nigeria Readmission agreement, Abuja	
13-16 September 2022	12 th round of negotiations of the EU-Nigeria Readmission agreement, Abuja	
14 September 2022	First Frontex-led charter flight	40 Nigerian forced returnees were readmitted from 4 MS (DE, AT, IT, NL).

10 February 2023	Article 8 Nigeria-EU Human Rights Dialogue	Including a point on migration at the request of Nigeria.
05 January, 24 February, 17 March, 22 May 2023	Meetings DDG HOME and Nigerian Ambassador/authorities	Meetings to discuss the negotiations
20 March 2023	Meeting Commissioner Johansson and Nigeria MFA	EU-Nigeria Readmission Agreement
22-23 May 2023	13 th round of negotiation of the EU-Nigeria readmission agreement in Brussels	
6-8 October 2023	Senior Officials Meeting and technical meetings on the EURA in Nigeria	
18-19 October 2023	Visit to Nigeria of Commissioner for International Partnership Jutta Urpilainen and Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson	EU-Nigeria Strategic Dialogue: including migration.
25 October 2023	Meeting between Commissioner Johansson and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yusuf Tuggar in Brussels	
25 November 2023	Second Frontex led charter flight	51 returnees (IT, CY)
March 2024	Meeting with chargé d'affaires of the Nigerian Embassy	
8 May 2024	HoD meets Minister of Justice in Abuja, who confirms his agreement to the RA	No further reaction since form MoFA
27 May 2024	IMEX meeting -> MSs ask DG HOME to relaunch RA negotiations as they disagree with several parts of the RA as negotiated until then	

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

There is no structured dialogue on migration between the EU and the Republic of Congo (RoC). Due to the low numbers of immigrants from RoC into the EU, migration is not included among the issues raised in bilateral meetings or political dialogues. On readmission, apart from the ACP- EU Cotonou Agreement, to which the RoC is party (replaced by the Samoa Agreement, signed on 15 November 2023 and that is now provisionally applicable), there is no other cooperation instrument or process in place at the EU level. Among MS, only France has a relevant bilateral agreement in place. In the context of article 25a of the Visa Code, the EU has reached out to RoC's authorities in order to explore ways to improve cooperation.

The EU Delegation prepared a table jointly with the Congolese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and shared it with DG HOME (in 2023) to ensure that all readmission requests from MS could be addressed correctly to the accredited Congolese embassy. The EU Returns Liaison Officer in Kinshasa covers also Congo-Brazzaville and in 2024 held several meetings with the Congolese authorities, including with the structure of the Ministry of the Interior that has to clear readmissions. The issue of readmission was raised several times by EUDEL with Congolese authorities, as well as by MS bilaterally (FR and IT).

Key past and upcoming events

17 February 2023	Meeting of EEAS MDA Africa Bernard QUINTIN and DDG HOME Johannes LUCHNER with Ambassador Leon Raphael Mokoko of RoC, on returns and readmissions (article 25a VC)	Follow up art. 25a Visa Code annual report.
2 May 2023	Meeting EUDEL with Chief of Protocol of the MFA to raise the issue of readmissions.	In order to improve RoCs cooperation on migration and mobility issues, in particular on readmission.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

There is no structured dialogue on migration between the EU and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Due to the low numbers of immigrants from DRC into the EU, migration is not included among the issues raised in bilateral meetings or political dialogues. On readmission, apart from the ACP- EU Cotonou Agreement, to which the DRC is party (replaced by the Samoa Agreement, signed on 15 November 2023 and that is now provisionally applicable), there is no other cooperation instrument or process in place at EU level. Among MS, Belgium and France have signed a bilateral agreement with DRC on migration matters, which includes for example forced return and the possibility to organize Joint Return Operations (JRO). A EURLO is deployed in Kinshasa. There is a project on signing “Best practices” with Frontex, which will allow also to make returns to DRC more smoothly. The EU will continue to reach out to DRC’s authorities in order to explore ways to improve cooperation.

Key past and upcoming events

03 June 2022	Meeting of EEAS MDA Africa Bernard QUINTIN and HOME Director Henrik NIELSEN with Ambassador Christian NDONGALA, on the issue of the increased arrivals of migrants crossing the Green Line in Cyprus.	As part of a global outreach on this issue
03 March 2023	Meeting of EEAS MDA Africa Bernard QUINTIN and DDG HOME Johannes LUCHNER with Ambassador Christian NDONGALA, on returns and readmissions (article 25a VC)	Follow up art. 25a Visa Code annual report.
28 May 2024	Meeting EUDEL and representatives from FR, IT, GE and BE with the Head of Protocol of MFA to discuss visa, legalizations and readmission issues.	In order to improve RoCs cooperation on migration and mobility issues, in particular on readmission.

SENEGAL

Partnership compact launched by visit of Commissioner Avramopoulos in Dakar on 26 July 2016.

Political dialogue with the EU on migration started in 2016, progress on returns and readmission from Europe remains limited. In 2022 the Commission put forward a proposal for restrictive visa measures towards Senegal under Article 25a of the visa code. As part of the enhanced engagement with Senegal on readmission, 4 technical dialogues have taken place so far (December 2022, May 2023, December 2023 and September 2024). The last technical dialogue on readmission took place on 19 September, back-to-back with discussions on prevention of irregular migration and border management, in view of the high number of irregular arrivals from Senegal in 2023 and 2024, notably to the Canary Islands. In these discussions, the Senegalese authorities expressed clear needs on sea, land and river border management. This has led to the approval of a 30 MIL EUR package, most of it contracted by the end of 2025. A delivery of 15 boats is planned by mid-2025. The proposal under Article 25a remains on the table in the Council.

Due to insufficient cooperation on readmission, Senegal was proposed for Visa Restrictive measures under article 25a of the Visa Code in November 2022. In September 2022, Senegalese authorities accepted the principle of a regular dialogue on migration, (one or two times a year), and agreed to a readmission related indicator in the budget support for 2023, which however was not fulfilled – the reference period has been extended for another year. In 2022 Senegal agreed in 2022 to add 5 budget support indicators on migration. Out of those, two were fulfilled (Strategy and action plan on migration) in 2023, while one on data management was not met in 2023 and therefore not paid. The indicators referring to readmission (on the production of the manual of procedures and an action plan on readmission) due for 2024 are currently being on hold as the rest of the budget support programme due to issues related to the general conditions (misreporting issue with IMF and macroeconomic instability) due to a general misreporting issue on the budget support. Currently the Commission is waiting for the decision on the IMF. of the IMF and for positive prospect on macroeconomic stability.

In 2020, Senegal has pleaded for more legal pathways towards the EU. Following the significant increase of irregular flows towards the Canary Islands, as well as several shipwrecks and incidents which affected Senegalese nationals, Senegal has asked the EU and relevant EUMS to enhance joint efforts in reducing irregular flows, fighting migrant smugglers and saving lives at sea.

Following the Joint High-level visit of the President of the Commission and several Commissioners, in February 2022, technical discussions are ongoing on ways to strengthen cooperation with Frontex on border management.

Following VP Schinas visit in October 2023, Senegalese authorities organized an internal coordination meeting to reply to FRONTEX proposal on the working arrangements, no response has yet reached the Commission.

As outlined in the Communication on Attracting Skills and Talent to the EU published on 27 April 2022, Senegal is indicated as one of partner the countries for which a Talent Partnership could be considered, as one of the key components of a reinforced migration management cooperation with this country and part of a comprehensive approach, pursuing on all relevant migration areas. It is considered that the timing to launch a talent partnership is not ripe, considering the overall level of cooperation, including on readmission.

Key past and upcoming events		
15 May 2019	Meeting in Brussels between Commissioner Avramopoulos and M. Mamadou Diagna Ndiaye, President of the National Olympic and Sport Committee of Senegal	Senegal is looking for financial support for the Youth Summer Olympic Games 2022. They see the event as an opportunity to create jobs and address the root causes of irregular migration.
12 June 2019	Frontex and Senegalese authorities inaugurated the Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) Risk analysis cell in Senegal	
9 July 2019	EBCGA's mission to Dakar	To finalise the Working Arrangement (with the DG of National Police) and the Umbrella agreement (with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The finalisation is still pending.
13 – 14 April 2021	Meetings of Commissioner Johansson and Commissioner Urpilainen with President of Senegal M. Sall	The commitment of both sides to step up cooperation in a balanced and comprehensive way was noted.
9-12 February 2022	Joint high-level mission, led by President von der Leyen - included EVP Vestager, Commissioners Johansson, Urpilainen, Simson and Breton	To strengthen cooperation on all aspects of migration, including anti-smuggling and border management. The EU also offered to step up Frontex cooperation through a working arrangement and/or a Status Agreement. A follow-up technical mission is scheduled for end of May/beginning of June.
17-18 February 2022	Visit of President Sall to Brussels	As AU chair at the EU-AU Summit
31 May 2022	Political Dialogue on Migration with Minister of Foreign Affairs	To discuss all aspects of a comprehensive EU-Senegal migration and mobility partnership
31 May 2022	DDG HOME mission to Dakar with Minister of the Interior, Minister of Defence, Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Secretary for Senegalese from abroad	1. To negotiate a Frontex working arrangement; 2. to discuss the concepts of an operational anti-smuggling as well as of a talent partnership; and 3. to pass a (strong) message on the need to improve cooperation on readmission and return.
1-3 June 2022	HOME/Frontex mission to Dakar, with the participation of DG INTPA	HOME DDG Luchner & Frontex travelled to Dakar to discuss working arrangement/status agreement with Frontex, as well as anti-smuggling and readmission. Discussions on the WA, for which

		Senegal expressed interest, are ongoing.
13 September 2022	Meeting EU Delegation with SN authorities (MFA -General Direction of the Senegalese Abroad/DGASE)	SN committed to enhance cooperation on readmission, together with all other dimensions of migration, and agreed to establish a framework for a regular dialogue on migration (first dialogue scheduled in November)
9 November 2022	Commission proposal on visa restrictive measures adopted	
5-7 December 2022	HOME senior level mission (DDG Luchner) to Dakar for the first technical dialogue on readmission	Readmission cooperation was discussed in the framework of the continuous engagement under Article 25a of the Visa Code.
21 December 2022	DG Pariat met with Senegalese Ambassador in Brussels	Senegalese ambassador confirmed commitment at the highest level to improve cooperation on readmissions, as well as his role in coordinating Senegalese embassies/consulates efforts on readmission in the EU.
21 March 2023	Commissioner Johansson met the Senegalese Minister of Foreign Affairs	
31 March 2023	DDG Luchner met with Senegalese Ambassador in Brussels	
3 May 2023	HOME senior level mission (DDG Luchner) to Dakar for the 2 nd technical dialogue on readmission	Readmission cooperation was discussed in the framework of the continuous engagement under Article 25a of the Visa Code.
31 August 2023	DDG Luchner met with Senegalese Ambassador in Brussels	Readmission cooperation was discussed in the framework of the continuous engagement under Article 25a of the Visa Code.
26 September 2023	VP Schinas Visit to Senegal to follow up on the Lampedusa 10 points action plan.	Senegal political engagement on an agreement with FRONTEX and enhanced cooperation on returns and readmission.

5 December 2023	3 rd Technical Dialogue on readmission at senior level (DDG Luchner, VTC)	Readmission cooperation was discussed in the framework of the continuous engagement under Article 25a of the Visa Code.
20 March 2024	DDG Luchner met with Senegalese Ambassador in Brussels	Readmission cooperation was discussed in the framework of the continuous engagement under Article 25a of the Visa Code.
21 May 2024	DDG Luchner met with Senegalese Ambassador in Brussels	In preparation of the 4 th technical dialogue on readmission
19 September 2024	4th Technical dialogue with Senegal on Return and Readmission, back-to-back with discussions on cooperation on migration prevention of irregular migration and border management, with key Senegalese authorities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence).	Readmission cooperation was discussed in the framework of the continuous engagement under Article 25a of the Visa Code.
15-16 October 2024	Former Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen's mission to Senegal.	Migration was one of the discussions point of the mission agenda. Announcement of a package of EUR 30 million on the prevention of irregular departures, following the discussions on 19 September.

CHAD

There is no structured dialogue on migration between the EU and Chad. Due to the low numbers of immigrants from Chad into the EU, migration is not included among the issues raised in bilateral meetings or political dialogues, but the Sudan crisis has been discussed in political dialogues, including refugee movements from Sudan, Chad, with a population estimated up to approximately 20 million citizens, is hosting approximately 1.7 M of forced displaced persons, of which around 1.2 M are refugees (1 million from Sudan). Their number is likely to continue increasing in the nearest future, depending in particular on the war dynamics in Sudan. On readmission, apart from the ACP- EU Cotonou Agreement, to which Chad is party (replaced by the Samoa Agreement, signed on 15 November 2023 and that is now provisionally applicable), there is no other cooperation instrument or process in place at EU level.

Key past and upcoming events

October 2024	Fact finding mission INTPA and HOME (HoU level)	Focus on refugee situation and dynamics following the situation in Sudan and possible movements towards EU.
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GUINEA

Guinea is a country of departure and transit for migration. Guinea moved from 11th place in 2019 to 1st place in 2023 among African countries of origin of irregular migration in Europe. Guineans are the 3rd main nationality arriving in the EU via the Central Mediterranean route, accounting for 11% of all arrivals. 2nd nationality departing from Tunisia in 2024 and the biggest year-on-year increase (+ 789% compared to the previous year on 26 June 2023).

Initially marked by cultural, professional and political motivations, Guinean migration has gradually been triggered by economic factors: youth unemployment remains a major challenge for the country, particularly in rural areas. With 64% of the Guinean population aged under 25, there is a constant influx of young people seeking employment in urban areas and outside the country. Irregular migration is also facilitated by weak border management by national authorities (weak controls, corruption, lack of resources, etc.), which fosters the rise of organised crime, including trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants. In addition, the country has to deal with returning migrants, both voluntary and not from Europe (285 returns in 2023 from Europe) or African countries along the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean route/and the Central Mediterranean route without having the capacity to do so.

Until December 2023, the authorities' capacity to respond to the reintegration needs of migrants was satisfactory. EU support to the Ministry of Youth allowed to put in place action protocols for the reintegration of returnees. However, improvements are necessary regarding the flow of information between the relevant structures, and in the implementation of integration and job creation policies. No formal political dialogue between the EU and the Republic of Guinea took place after the 2021 coup until autumn 2023. Commission Vice-President, Mr. Schinas, met Guinean authorities on September 26 (2023) during a visit to Conakry, relaunching the formal dialogue between the two parties, especially on migration-related issues. Since April 2022, the Frontex European Reintegration Programme is being implemented in Guinea.

A follow-up visit by the Guinean Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Morissada Koyate, took place in Brussels on October 23, 2023, during which the Minister met with Vice President Schinas, the EEAS Director General for Africa and the Director of INTPA for Africa. In November 2023, the EU and Guinea launched a joint project to support integration and decent employment through vocational training, for an amount of 26.5 million euros. On 12 December the 5th EU-Joint Working Group to follow the implementation of the EU-Guinea readmission arrangement took place (the previous one had taken place in 2019, before the coup and COVID). The EEAS Director General for Africa visited Conakry in April 2024 where the Prime Minister confirmed the commitment of Guinea to improve their cooperation in terms of returns. In June 2024, EEAS Director General for Africa, together with the DDG Luchner met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Brussels to reaffirm the engagement of the Prime Minister to improve their returns policy. The 6th EU-Guinea Joint Working Group took place in Brussels in July 2024 followed by the 7th JWG in Conakry on 19th of December 2024

With the resumption of high-level political dialogue on the migration issues, the need for progress in terms of returns/readmission was reiterated. The implementation of Guinean migration policy is among Guinea's political priorities.

There is no structured dialogue on migration with Guinea; discussions are focused mainly on returns via the EU Guinea Joint Working Groups whereby DG INTPA/EUDEL provide an update on programming/ongoing projects if required. Support to the national authorities on reintegration and fighting irregular migration, including smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings is being envisaged.

Key past and upcoming events

25/09/2023	VP Schinas Visit to Conakry	Main objective was to discuss about cooperation on migration in particular control of irregular departures and cooperation on returns
23/10/2023	Guinean MAE visit to Brussels	

12/12/2023	5th EU-Guinea Joint Working Group	
13 – 19/04/2024	Visit of the DG Africa of the EEAS, Ms. Rita Laranjinha to Guinea	This mission was an opportunity to reiterate the need for the Guinean authorities to strengthen their cooperation on illegal migration, particularly on return and readmission.
03/05/2024	Meeting in Brussels between the President of the Guinean National Transition Council and the DG Africa of the EEAS, Ms. Rita Laranjinha	This meeting was a follow-up meeting of Ms. Laranjinha's visit to Guinea in April, when it had not been possible to hold a meeting with the President.
26/06/2024	Visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guinea to Brussels	Meeting addressing overall cooperation/relations with the EU including migration and return and readmission in particular.
9 July 2024	6th EU-Guinea Joint Working Group	
19 December 2024	7 th EU-Guinea Joint Working Group	

COTE D'IVOIRE

In 2023, Côte d'Ivoire ranked as one of the main countries of origin of irregular migrants from Sub Saharan Africa (17 905 Ivorian nationals in 2023, 1 042 in Jan-Sep 2024). Migration is a sensitive issue, Ivoirian identity issues and land conflicts involving migrants' access to land are one of the root causes of conflicts. For this reason, Côte d'Ivoire is included in the Team Europe Initiatives on the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean Route, and on the Central Mediterranean route.

Côte d'Ivoire often raised the point that 26% of the total population in Ivory Coast is not Ivorian (mainly from Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Benin) and underscored the importance of tackling irregular migration and the fight against migrant smuggling, as well as trafficking in human beings.

Joint document of the Government of the Ivory Coast and the European Union on the procedures for identification and readmission of migrants presumed to be Ivorian nationals staying irregularly in the European Union (2018), as well as the holding of regular follow-up meetings. Regular dialogues since 2019.

5th meeting of the EU-Côte d'Ivoire Joint Working Group on the implementation of the readmission arrangement (Joint document) Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire 28 September 2023.

Cooperation on migration is positive and additional funding through the Flexible Mechanism has been validated, in the area of Civil registry – Document Fraud and Reintegration. Individual measure in favour of West Africa for 2025 adopted in December 2024 will support reintegration, the fight against the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, as well as root causes of irregular migration

Key past and upcoming events

24/25 September 2023	VP Schinas visit	frank dialogue with the authorities and the commitment to better identify irregular migrant arriving in
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		Europe; the need for new sensitization campaigns has been ascertained and can be supported by the EU.
28 September 2023	5 th Joint Working Group meeting	
28 November /11/2023	Commissionaire Ylva Johansson had a bilateral with General Vagondo Diomande, Minister of Interior and Security of Côte d'Ivoire	Meeting in the margins of the International Conference on a Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling, organised by the European Commission. Discussions on cooperation on returns.
24/25 April 2024	Visit of President Charles Michel to Ivory Coast Cooperation on migration, security and geopolitics addressed during the visit.	Cooperation on migration, security and geopolitics addressed during the visit
15 October 2024	6 th Joint Working Group meeting	

THE GAMBIA

With a population of 2.3 million, The Gambia is one of Africa's smallest countries. Migration plays a significant role in Gambian society. The Gambia is a country of origin in terms of irregular arrivals to the EU (9247 persons in 2023, compared to 1326 in 2022), and thus a priority country in terms of migration.

Overseas remittances of an estimated 118,000 Gambians living abroad is equivalent to over 20 per cent of the country's GDP, while rural-to-urban migration has led to increasing urbanization. Over the past few years, the pursuit for socioeconomic advancement—especially among the youth—has driven many to undertake irregular migration. Over 45 ,000 Gambians arrived in Europe by irregular means between 2014 and 2024 with many others in Africa along the Central Mediterranean Route opting for voluntary return.

In 2018 The EU and The Gambia agreed on a non-binding arrangement on return and readmission. The implementation of the readmission arrangement (Good Practices document) was almost immediately suspended by two return moratoria imposed by The Gambia between 2019 and mid-March 2022. In view of the insufficient cooperation in readmission and return, the Commission proposed restrictive visa measures under Article 25a of the Visa code, which were adopted by the Council in November 2021.

Despite the lift of the moratorium in mid-March 2022, the Gambia continued not to cooperate sufficiently on readmission. Given the lack of progress, the EU adopted second step of visa measures (increase of visa fee from 80€ to 120€) in December 2022.

An intense engagement at technical and political level took place continuously, including within the Joint Working Group under the readmission arrangement. In view of some improvements in on some steps in the cooperation, the Commission was in the position to propose to lift the second step measures (on 28 September 2023). The Council adopted the proposal on 12 April 2024. The first set of visa measures remains in place.

Cooperation with The Gambia in preventing and combating irregular migration and trafficking in human beings is good, including through the Common Operational Partnership project against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings (implemented by Spain and Germany and with EUR 1.4 million through the Internal Security Fund Police and soon under the Flexible Mechanism NDICI). Individual measure in favour of West Africa for 2025 adopted in December 2024 will support reintegration, the fight against the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, as well as root causes of irregular migration.

Key past and upcoming events

Banjul, 16 October, 2023	VP Schinas visit	Commissioner Schinas discussed with the Gambian authorities on the importance to cooperate on migration in particular he underscored the importance of addressing root causes, enhancing cooperation on returns and considering avenues to combat trafficking and smuggling in addition to enhanced cooperation with Frontex.
12 April 2024	Meeting between DDG Luchner and Ambassador Jorbateh	The call took place in preparation of the 4 th EU-GM Joint Working Group
4 September 2024	VP Schinas' call with the Minister of Foreign Affairs	The call took place upon request of the EU side in the context of the restrictive visa measures under Article 25a and to discuss and overcome the gridlock by ensuring the restart of cooperation on return flights.

21 January 2025	6 th Joint Working Group	
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SOMALIA

Cooperation on readmission with Somalia has been unsatisfactory and needs to improve. In view of the insufficient cooperation in readmission and return, the Commission proposed restrictive visa measures under Article 25a of the Visa Code in 2024.

The return of people who have no right to stay in the EU is an absolute priority for the Member States and sends a very clear message of discouragement to those taking the risks and bearing the costs of irregular migration.

Return and readmission are critical components of a functioning and credible migration management system. Migration is a key aspect of the Somalia Multi-annual Indicative Programme (2021-2027). Previously, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) was a key tool to address the management of mixed migration flows and displacement in Somalia and in the Horn of Africa. As part of the EUTF, the European Union supports programmes with a view to mitigating the effects of displacement and managing mixed migration flows in Somalia. With a total worth of 50 MEUR, the RE-INTEG Programme was launched in 2016 and has financed projects with the aim of supporting the reintegration of refugees, returnees and internally displaced people among host communities by supporting the provision of basic services and strengthening livelihood.

With regional EU funding, the regional Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme aims to strengthen the Federal Government of Somalia in pursuing a government approach to migration and border management to effectively address trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The programme also aims to support regional policy harmonisation and cooperation in accordance with the relevant international conventions and standards. The BMM Programme is currently funded by NDICI (but with a more limited budget a narrower scope of activities in Somalia).

The Regional Durable Solutions Programme has allocated €10 million to the “Xaldoon” Project, which is being implemented by IOM for a project covering South West State and Jubaland State. This initiative will provide early solutions to support recovery among people displaced by the recent drought and ongoing floods, while also assisting displacement-affected communities with longer-term support to improve access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. The project is implemented by the Danwadaag Consortium led by IOM.

The BREACH Programme, €35 million Boosting Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change (BREACH) Programme will provide €17 million to displacement-affected communities in South West State, Hirshabelle State and Somaliland. The programme also focusses on agricultural development, river basin management and land restoration, with the view to improve conditions in rural areas and prevent floods, which contributes to decreasing the risk of displacement. The durable solutions component of the programme is being implemented by Concern Worldwide in Afgoye (South West State), Norwegian Refugee Council in Jowhar (Hirshabelle State) and World Vision International in Burao (Somaliland) while UN-Habitat will support capacity development of local authorities on sustainable and inclusive urban development in the three locations.

The €55 million EU Trust Fund RE-INTEG Programme focusses primarily on achieving durable solutions to displacement and was implemented in all Federal Member States of Somalia (including Somaliland). The implementation of the programme started in 2016 and the action managed to improve access to basic services for close to 400,000 persons and supported more than 11,000 persons with jobs or income-generating activities. The programme was amended to add €5 million to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the projects have ended with the exception of two projects focussing on COVID-19 response.

Key past and upcoming events

Brussels, 28 November 2023	Meeting between DDG Luchner and (former) Minister of Interior Fiqi in the margins of the International Conference on a Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling	Readmission cooperation and instrumentalization (Somalis at the border with Belarus) were discussed.
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Brussels, 21 March 2024	Meeting of DDG Luchner and (former) Ambassador of Somalia H.E. Hashi	Discussion on cooperation on readmission in the framework of the continuous engagement under Article 25a of the Visa Code.
Brussels, 12 July 2024	Phone call of DDG Luchner with (former) Ambassador of Somalia H.E. Hashi	Discussion on cooperation on readmission in view of the upcoming adoption of the Commission's proposal for visa measures for nationals of Somalia (Article 25a of the Visa Code).
Mogadishu, 8 August 2024	Meeting of the EU Head of Delegation with the National Technical Return and Reintegration Committee (NTRRC) Meeting of the EU Head of Delegation with the National Technical Return and Reintegration Committee (NTRRC)	Discussion on cooperation on readmission
Brussels, 14 October 2024	Meeting of DDG Luchner with the Chief of Staff of the Office of the President of Somalia and the Ambassador of Somalia H.E. Ali	Discussion on cooperation on readmission and next steps were discussed in the follow up to the adoption of the proposal for visa measures under Article 25a of the Visa Code.
Mogadishu, 20 November 2024	1 st EU-Somalia Technical Dialogue on Readmission	Discussion on cooperation on readmission in the follow up to the adoption of the proposal for visa measures under Article 25a of the Visa Code.
Brussels, 9 December 2024	Meeting of DDG Luchner with the Ambassador of Somalia H.E. Ali	Discussion on immediate follow up to the 1 st EU-Somalia Technical Dialogue on Readmission held in Mogadishu on 20 November 2024,
May 2025 (TBC)	2 nd EU-Somalia Technical Dialogue on Readmission	

B. SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

MOROCCO

While the Western Mediterranean route remained steady, there was a decrease of migration from Morocco and of Moroccan nationals in 2024. Around 12 200 irregular border crossings took place from Morocco to Spain as of 31 October 2024 (compared to 19 664 during the same period in 2023; -38%) while 7 730 Moroccan nationals reached the EU between January and October 2024 (compared to 13 014 during the same period in 2023; -41%). This flow predominantly involves direct transit on maritime routes to mainland Spain and the Canary Islands and via land routes into Ceuta and Melilla.

The EU's cooperation with Morocco on migration is comprehensive and works well overall. It is framed by the EU-Morocco Association Agreement, which entered into force in 2000. There is a mandate to negotiate readmission and visa facilitation agreements since 2000 and 2013 respectively, as well as a Mobility Partnership since 2013. The EU supports the implementation of Morocco's National Strategy on Migration and Asylum.

Regarding border control, Morocco has implemented measures to improve border security, with physical barriers, surveillance technology and cooperation with neighbouring countries to prevent irregular migration and combat trafficking in human beings. This notably being done through the Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership (2022). It aims to cover support for border management, enhanced police and judicial cooperation (including possible joint projects/investigations), awareness-raising on the dangers of irregular migration and enhanced cooperation with EU agencies responsible for justice and home affairs. The relationship with FRONTEX is fluid, but no progress on the signature of a Working Arrangement for which negotiations are ongoing. Challenges linked to returns of Moroccan citizens who do not have a right to remain in the territory of Member States remain considering that Moroccans represent one of the top nationalities in this regard. Frontex is working with Moroccan authorities to organise the next Comité mixte that should take place early 2025. Negotiations on a working arrangement should continue and with the possible deployment of a Frontex Liaison Officer is scheduled to be deployed to Rabat in early summer 2025.

In addition to its regional influence through its participation in forums such as the Rabat Process, Morocco actively participates in bilateral and multilateral partnerships to manage migration flows.

When it comes to legal migration, Morocco is one of the countries included in the Talent Partnerships initiative (2023) that aims to address labour market and skills. The first roundtable took place in April 2023, followed by a second one in Rabat in October 2024.

The EU portfolio on migration with Morocco reached a total of approximately EUR 360 million under the MFF 2014-2020, out of which around EUR 234 million are drawn from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa-North Africa window. Under NDICI-GE for the period 2021- 2023, an overall amount of approximately EUR 193 million has been allocated to Morocco. This includes a budget support action of EUR 152 million aimed at supporting the National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum (SNIA) and the Operational Strategy Action Plan set out by the Moroccan Ministry of Interior. On top of budget support, Morocco also benefits from NDICI-funded regional and bilateral actions on protection, return and reintegration, as well as on legal migration and mobility (approximately EUR 41 million).

Further actions and related funding are being discussed for Morocco under the Annual Action Plan for Migration in the Southern Neighbourhood for 2024 (overall approximate amount EUR 208 million).

Key past and upcoming events		
16 January 2019	Positive EP vote on Agriculture Agreement and HRVP visit to Rabat to mark the relaunch of relations	
12 February 2019	Positive EP vote on Fisheries Agreement	
25 April 2019	Visit by Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Avramopoulos to Rabat to meet Senior Officials	
20-21 June 2019	Moroccan and EU Senior Officials Meeting (HOME/NEAR/EEAS) in Brussels	Relaunch of the mobility EU-Morocco dialogue under the Mobility Partnership of 2013 on cooperation on migration and security ahead of the Association Council.
27 June 2019	EU-Morocco Association Council	Joint political declaration that includes references to cooperation on migration and mobility
28/29 August 2019	Commission (NEAR/HOME) mission to Morocco	
31 October 2019	First Joint Committee EBCGA-Morocco in Warsaw	
10 December 2019	Operational Committee of the EUTF for Africa – North of Africa window	Additional package on border management and the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling
13 July 2020	Ministerial Conference of the Ministers of Interior of EU Member States and Partner Countries on countering Migrant Smuggling	Chaired by Italian Minister Luciana Lamorgese with the participation of Commissioners Johansson and Várhelyi
7 October 2020	Second Joint Committee EBCGA-Morocco (VTC)	
1-2 December 2020	Commissioners Johansson and Várhelyi's visit to Morocco	
8 February 2022	President von der Leyen's visit to Morocco	
9-10 March 2022	Commissioner Várhelyi's visit to Morocco to discuss overall cooperation	
17-18 March 2022	Senior Official Meeting on Migration	Inter-institutional mission led by DG Monique Pariat (DG HOME)
19 May 2022	Social Affairs and Migration Subcommittee	
8 July 2022	Commissioner Johansson's visit to Morocco; launch of the first-ever Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership with Moroccan MoI Laftit and Spanish MoI Grande-Marlaska	
21 September 2022	Technical meeting on various aspects of migration (ASOP, readmission and returns, Talent Partnership)	Meeting chaired on the EU side by DDG Luchner

		Launching technical discussions on the operationalisation of a Talent Partnership with Morocco
5 – 6 January 2023	HRVP Borrell’s visit to Rabat and Fez	Migration issues raised with the Head of Government Aziz Akhannouch
22- 23 February 2023	Commissioner Várhelyi’s visit to Morocco to discuss overall cooperation	Talent Partnership roundtable
26 April 2023	Talent Partnership roundtable	
8 May 2024	High Level Security Dialogue	
24 May 2024	Senior Official Meeting on Migration	meeting suspended on the request of MO
21 October 2024	Second Talent Partnership roundtable	
24-26 November 2024	Commissioner Várhelyi’s visit to Morocco to discuss overall cooperation	
Tbc (Jan-Feb 2025)	President von der Leyen’s visit to Morocco to resume the dialogue on overall cooperation	

TUNISIA

The EU-Tunisia Association Agreement entered into force in 1998.

A Mobility Partnership was signed on 3 March 2014 between Tunisia and the EU. In this context, the Commission has a mandate to negotiate agreements on Visa Facilitation and Readmission. The latest negotiation round took place in January 2019. Migration and mobility are part of the Strategic Priorities 2018-2020 adopted in November 2018.

In 2023, the EU and Tunisia agreed on an Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership to tackle migrant smuggling and combat trafficking in human beings. Tunisia signed a Working Arrangement with CEPOL in 2022. A draft Working Arrangement with Europol has been with the Tunisian authorities since 2021, despite repeated reminders of both the Agency and of the EU Delegation. Tunisia is a beneficiary of both regional capacity-building projects CT INFLOW and EUROMED Police, both managed by CEPOL (EUROMED Police is also supported by Europol). Additionally, the Council has authorised the opening of negotiations with Tunisia for an international agreement on the exchange of personal data with Europol as of 2018, but no particular interest has been shown on the Tunisian side and no formal negotiation round has been held.

The EU-Tunisia partnership is based on the Association Agreement, which covers a wide range of domains. Some areas of the partnership have been further operationalised by the implementation of the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding on a strategic and global partnership signed on 16 July 2023. It aims at strengthening cooperation over five priority pillars (macro-economic stability, economy and trade, green energy transition, people-to-people contacts, and migration and mobility). The migration pillar of the MoU includes EUR 105 million in projects funded from the 2023 budget on migration, building on ongoing programmes and reinforcing areas of mutual interest.

As outlined in the Communication on Attracting Skills and Talent to the EU published on 27 April 2022, Tunisia is among the priority countries to be engaged for the launching of a Talent Partnership. The first Talent Partnership roundtable took place on the 20th of June 2023. The second one took place on 21st June 2024.

The EUTF support to Tunisia (2016-2021) amounted to around EUR 87 million and focuses on assisting Tunisia in the implementation of joint priorities in the field of migration. These include mobilising Tunisians abroad for investment in the country; providing social and economic assistance to Tunisian returnees through a 'National Mechanism of Reintegration' (Tounesna); supporting young Tunisians prone to migration in regions most affected by emigration; supporting the national governance on migration to have reliable and representative figures on migration dynamics in Tunisia; supporting Tunisia in the development of an Integrated Border Management system; supporting Tunisia in the protection of vulnerable migrants and refugees; and supporting Tunisia in its Labour Migration Governance.

Under NDICI, the EU dedicated to Tunisia around EUR 175 million for the period 2021-2023, focusing on migration programmes in the area of border management, anti-smuggling, protection and socio-economic integration of Tunisian returnees. As part of this funding, Tunisia also benefits from regional actions in the areas of voluntary returns to countries of origin and, legal migration and anti-smuggling.

Key past and upcoming events

22-23 January 2019	Last round of negotiations for a Visa Facilitation Agreement and Readmission Agreement	
11 April 2019	EU-Tunisia Association Committee	Migration and Mobility on the agenda
17 May 2019	EU-Tunisia Association Council	Migration and mobility on the agenda

13 July 2020	Ministerial Conference of the Ministers of Interior of EU Member States and Partner Countries on countering Migrant Smuggling	Chaired by Italian Minister Luciana Lamorgese with the participation of Commissioners Johansson and Várhelyi
17 August 2020	Mission to Tunisia of Commissioner Johansson and Commissioner Várhelyi, together with MoI and MFA of Italy	
10 March 2021	Sub-committee on justice and security	
20 /21 May 2021	Mission to Tunisia of Commissioner Johansson together with Italian Minister of Interior Lamorgese	
4 June 2021	Visit of Tunisian President Kais Saied to Brussels; meetings with Presidents von der Leyen, Charles Michel, David Sassoli and President of the EIB	
9-10 September 2021	HRVP Borrell's mission to Tunis; meeting with President Kais Saied and Minister of Foreign Affairs Othman Jerandi as well as with political parties and civil society	
28-29 March 2022	Commissioner Várhelyi's visit to Tunisia	
11-13 April 2022	Visit of members of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee	
30 November 2022	Meeting between DG Monique Pariat and Tunisian Ambassador Nabil Ammar	General exchange on main aspects of migration and security
13 December 2022	Technical (hybrid) meeting on Talent Partnership	Launching technical discussions on the operationalization of a Talent Partnership with Tunisia
31 January 2023	Sub-committee on Migration and Social Affairs	Positive meeting discussed all areas of migration including Talent Partnerships and returns. Availability of Tunisia to discuss more, ascribing any challenges to lack of funding.
21 March 2023	Senior official mission, with participation of NEAR's DG Gert-Jan Koopman and HOME's DDG Johannes Luchner	Further exploring opportunities for cooperation on counter-smuggling, border management, returns (to Tunisia and from Tunisia to sub-Saharan Africa), legal pathways (Talent Partnership)
27 March 2023	Commissioner Gentiloni's visit to Tunisia	
27 April 2023	Commissioner Johansson's visit to Tunisia	
9-10 May 2023	Visit of Belgian and Portuguese Foreign Ministers on behalf of the HRVP	
11 June 2023	President von der Leyen's visit to Tunisia	Advancing comprehensive approach built around five pillars, including one on migration and one on people-to-people contacts; announcing extra available funding for migration management.
19 June 2023	Visit of French and German Ministers of Interior in Tunis	
22 June 2023	First Talent Partnership roundtable	

16 July 2023	Agreement on Memorandum of Understanding on a strategic and comprehensive EU-Tunisia partnership	Formalising the approach proposed by President von der Leyen during her visit.
17-18 January 2024	Technical EU mission (DG NEAR, DG HOME and EEAS) in Tunis on the implementation of the MoU	Taking stock and agreeing on the next steps and priorities in the implementation of all five pillars of the MoU, including on migration.
12-13 June 2024	EU-Tunisia business forum	
13 June 2024	Signature of EU-Tunisia MoU on energy	
21 June 2024	Second Talent Partnership roundtable	
29-30 October 2024	Second technical EU mission (DG NEAR, DG HOME and EEAS) in Tunis on the implementation of the MoU	Taking stock and agreeing on the next steps and priorities in the implementation of all five pillars of the MoU, including on migration.

ALGERIA

The EU-Algeria Association Agreement entered into force on 1 September 2005. The Commission received a mandate to negotiate a readmission agreement with Algeria in November 2002. No negotiations have so far taken place. Migration and mobility are one of the 5 Partnership priorities adopted in March 2017, currently being renewed.

*Algeria was eligible for funding under the EU Trust Fund for Africa but did not express an interest. In recent engagement, including the **seventh EU-Algeria Informal Dialogue on Migration and Mobility** (July 2023) in 2022, the Algerian authorities have shown renewed interest in cooperation on migration, and in particular triangular cooperation and voluntary returns to sub-Saharan Africa, with the objective of reaching the target of 10 000 returnees per year (up from ca. 2 000 per year currently).*

Algeria features on the list of priority partners to conclude Working Arrangements with Europol and is also covered by a Council mandate to open negotiations concerning an international agreement to exchange personal data with the Agency. However, the country has not expressed any concrete interest in either process.

Algeria is a beneficiary of both regional capacity-building projects CT INFLOW and EUROMED Police, both managed by CEPOL (EUROMED Police is also supported by Europol).

During the Dialogue, Algerian authorities also indicated interest for cooperation on counter-smuggling, although with a preference for addressing root causes rather than operational cooperation, and made requests for technical assistance, in particular in view of setting up a national authority in charge of migration management, and on management of reception facilities. Attempts at addressing these other topics and those of interest for the EU side have not yielded results so far.

Algeria did not participate in the International Conference on a Global Alliance to counter migrant smuggling organised by the European Commission on 28 November 2023 in Brussels.

Following trilateral EU-DZ-IOM meetings in 2023 and 2024, the EU is supporting the scaling-up of voluntary return operations from Algeria to countries of origin.

Key past and upcoming events

13 July 2020	Ministerial Conference of the Ministers of Interior of EU Member States and Partner Countries on countering Migrant Smuggling	Chaired by Italian Minister Luciana Lamorgese with the participation of Commissioners Johansson and Várhelyi, Algerian Minister of Interior Kamal Beldjoud
7 December 2020	EU-Algeria Association Council (VTC)	Co-chaired by High Representative/Vice President J. Borrell and the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Boukadoum. Commissioner Johansson and Minister Boukadoum discussed migration and mobility in a dedicated session.

1 July 2021	EU-Algeria informal dialogue on migration and mobility	Co-chaired by DG HOME DDG Mr Johannes LUCHNER, with participation from EUDEL, EEAS, NEAR, SG and JHA counsellors as observers and on the Algerian side - Mr Cherif OUALID (Directeur des Affaires Consulaires, Direction Générale des Affaires Consulaires et de la Communauté Nationale à l'Étranger, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères), with participation from the ministries of foreign affairs, the interior, labour and social affairs, the gendarmerie nationale.
13 September 2021	10 th Sub-committee on Justice and Home Affairs	Co-chaired by EEAS Head Division Rosamaria Gili and Director Noredine BENFREHA (MFA, Directeur de la coopération avec l'UE et des institutions européennes).
3 March 2022	Meeting between DDG Luchner and Algerian Ambassador Mohamed Hanèche	Discussion on relations with Algeria and on a way forward in cooperation on return
28 June 2022	Technical workshop on new EU-funded multi-country, migration-related programmes open to Algerian participation	
6 July 2022	Technical workshop on opportunities for 'triangular cooperation', involving EU, Algeria and sub-Saharan countries	Algeria showed particular interest in cooperation on returns to sub-Saharan countries, unaccompanied minors.
17 January 2023	Meeting between DG Monique Pariat and Algerian Ambassador Ali Mokrani	General exchange on main aspects of migration and security
12-13 March 2023	HRVP visit to Algeria	Meeting with President Tebboune and PM Benabderrahmane
20 June 2023	11 th Sub-committee on Justice and Home Affairs	Co-chaired by EEAS Head of Division Rosamaria Gili and Director Said Meziane (MFA, Directeur de la coopération avec l'UE et des institutions européennes). Home affairs discussed although it was agreed to discuss migration in upcoming informal dialogue
13 July 2023	Seventh Informal Dialogue on Migration and Mobility followed by a technical meeting on irregular migration, including readmission.	
14 December 2023	EU-IOM-DZA trilateral technical meeting	hosted by the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DG Consular affairs) with the participation of the Ministry of the Interior, DG NEAR and DG HOME (remotely), the EU Delegation, IOM (Algeria office + regional director remotely).

		Agreement to scale up AVRR from the EU's side.
30-31 January 2024	COM DG NEAR technical mission to Algeria	Follow-up on the AVRR programme with IOM.
4 June 2024	COM DG NEAR/HOME technical mission to Algeria	2 nd trilateral EU/DZ/IOM meeting to discuss increase support to AVRR
Q1 2025 tbc	8th informal dialogue on migration	

EGYPT

Relations between the EU and Egypt are governed by an Association Agreement since 2004. The latest EU- Egypt Partnership Priorities were adopted on 19 June 2022 and include a chapter on the strengthening of bilateral co-operation on migration and mobility. On 16 December 2017, Commissioner Avramopoulos and Egyptian FM Shoukry launched the EU-Egypt Migration Dialogue. The 4th Migration Dialogue took place in July 2024.

In 2024, Egypt and Europol concluded the negotiations on a Working Arrangement. After the endorsement by the Agency's Management Board in December, the signature is expected in Q1 2025, depending on final procedural steps on both sides. The country is also covered by a Council mandate to negotiate an international agreement concerning the exchange of personal data with Europol as of 2018, but no particular interest has been shown on the Egyptian side and no formal negotiation round has been held.

Egypt is a beneficiary of the regional capacity-building project CT INFLOW and EUROMED Police, both managed by CEPOL (EUROMED Police is also supported by Europol). Negotiations on a Working Arrangement between Egypt and CEPOL are ongoing and making good progress. Frontex and the EU Drugs Agency have been increasingly engaging with Egypt for the past two years. Egypt and Eurojust agreed on the final version of the working arrangement, which could be signed early 2025.

In recognition of Egypt's key role in the security and stability of the region and its important role as mediator, the Commission has launched a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership with Egypt on 17 March 2024, with the signature of the Joint Declaration. This will unleash the full potential of EU-Egypt relations alongside 6 key pillars: (1) political relations; (2) economic stability; (3) trade and investment; (4) migration and mobility; (5) security and (6) demography and human capital. This partnership is accompanied by a financial and investment support package of EUR 7,4 billion for the next four years (2024-2027) to strengthen the Egyptian economy and foster EU-Egypt cooperation across various sectors. The package includes up to EUR 5 billion in loans through two Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) operations (first 1 bn EUR budget support tranche disbursed; negotiations ongoing in EP for the 4 bn EUR remaining; adoption at the earliest in April); EUR 1.8 billion in additional investments to be mobilised in conjunction with European Financial Institutions under the Economic and Investment Plan; EUR 600 million to support specific priorities under the Partnership through projects and technical assistance, out of which up to EUR 200 million for migration.

In the area of migration, the EU has responded to the Egyptian government calls for more international support through its different funding instruments, for instance, via the EUR 60 million programme "Enhancing the Response to Migration Challenges in Egypt" under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa currently ongoing until June 2025 (total allocations for Egypt under the EUTF amount to EUR 90 million, including also regional programmes).

*Under NDICI, between 2021 and 2023 we have already **allocated EUR 164 million for bilateral migration-related programmes** to support Egypt on protection (EUR 28 million, contracted in 2023), border management (EUR 110 million, of which EUR 23 million signed in 2022 and topped-up in 2023 with EUR 5 million; and EUR 82 contracted in December 2024), anti-smuggling (EUR 20 million, contracted at the end of 2024), labour migration and mobility (EUR 2 million, already signed in 2023), and sustainable reintegration (EUR 4 million, signed in 2022). Egypt also benefits from EU-funded multi-country and regional programmes (notably in the area of voluntary returns and reintegration, and legal migration and mobility), for which it is not possible to compute specific country allocations. Therefore, the total amount of funds allocated to Egypt under both bilateral and regional programmes exceeds EUR 164 million.*

As a direct follow-up to the 4th EU-Egypt Migration Dialogue held on 16th July in Cairo, three workshops were organised on 3 and 4 December 2024: two technical workshops on returns, readmission and reintegration, and legal migration and mobility (including the Talent Partnerships), in addition to a programming workshop to operationalise the priorities discussed at the Migration Dialogue, reflect on

lessons learnt and identify priority areas of mutual interest for EU support to Egypt on migration. During the programming workshop, the EU and Egypt agreed on joint operational conclusions to guide the identification of needs and prioritisation of migration-related projects until 2027. Building on ongoing programmes, new programmes will be designed and implemented in Egypt under the EUR 200 million foreseen under the Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership. Funds will come from NDICI and will cover the period from 2024 to 2027. Support will cover all areas of migration, in line with the comprehensive approach, and Egypt's priorities.

As outlined in the Communication on Attracting Skills and Talent to the EU published on 27 April 2022, Egypt is among the priority countries to be engaged for the launching of a Talent Partnership. The first Talent Partnership Roundtable took place on 7 June 2023. A technical workshop to discuss the Talent Partnership Action Plan was called in Cairo on 4 December 2024. The second Roundtable is expected for S1 2025.

Key past and upcoming events

25 June 2019	Visit of Commissioner Avramopoulos for the second round of the Migration Dialogue	Main purpose to ensure political continuity to the Migration Dialogue and discussion on Security
10 July 2019	Senior Officials meeting on migration in Cairo	To follow up on the 2 nd round of the Migration Dialogue at the technical level
3 September 2019	EU Counterterrorism dialogue Coordinator visit to Egypt	To relaunch the dialogue on counter terrorism with Egypt.
27 November 2019	Meeting of the 7 th EU-Egypt Stability Cluster, Cairo	The meeting covered counter-terrorism, migration and asylum, as well as consular issues.
3-4 February 2020	EUAA consultation meeting with Egyptian authorities in Malta	Opportunities for future cooperation
18-19 February 2020	Seminar organised by EUAA on asylum in Alexandria	Asylum systems and procedures under the Common European Asylum System
3 September 2020	HRVP visit to Cairo	To discuss bilateral and regional relations; migration pact was briefly raised
4-9 October 2020	EUAA technical level mission to Cairo	Future cooperation
5 November 2020	President of the European Council Michel visit to Cairo	To discuss bilateral and regional relations including fight against Terrorism
12 July 2021	Meeting between Commissioner Johansson and Egyptian Foreign Minister Shoukry	Discuss migration and security cooperation, raise EU intention to hold the next Migration Dialogue meeting in autumn 2021
05 October 2021	EU-Egypt 7 th meeting of Association Committee,	To discuss various aspect of cooperation and in particular programmes for 2021, including migration
25 October 2021	Commissioner Várhelyi visit to Egypt	Meetings with President Al Sisi and Foreign Minister Shoukry (besides other Ministers as well as CSOs, HR- defendants, business). Discussions focused on all aspects of cooperation, including migration and future programmes

15 November 2021	Commissioner Johansson visit to Cairo	Discussed all aspects of cooperation on migration and mobility with relevant ministers
16 November 2021	Migration Dialogue at senior officials' level	
31 May – 1 June 2022	31 May – 1 June 2022	Meetings with President Al Sisi, Foreign Minister Shoukry, Minister of Planning and Economic Development Hala Elsaid. Discussions focused on food security, socioeconomic recovery, and migration (border assistance package).
15 June 2022	President von der Leyen's visit to Egypt	Meeting with President Al Sisi focused on food security and energy cooperation.
19 June 2022	9 th EU-Egypt Association Council	Endorsed the Partnership Priorities 2021-2027 and discussed all aspects of bilateral relations, including migration.
31 October 2022	Commissioner Várhelyi visit to Cairo	Signature of contract for new EU-funded border management programme
7 December 2022	Sub-Committee on Justice and Security Working Group on Migration, Social and Consular Affairs	
27 January 2023	Meeting between HOME DDG Luchner/EEAS MD Hallergard and the Egyptian Ambassador to Brussels	Follow up Article 25a, upcoming visit of VP Schinas, legal migration
25 – 28 February 2023	VP Schinas to Cairo	Addressed migration issues in a comprehensive manner, discussed interfaith dialogue
27-28 February 2023	CT Coordinator Salmi	
2-3 May	Coordination Committee of the GCTF	Coordination meeting in view of our Joint co-chairmanship of the GCTF
7 June 2023	Talent Partnership roundtable	
13 June 2023	Senior level meeting on law enforcement and security	Covering also migrant smuggling; First positive signals on possible cooperation in this area, including with the EU agencies; to be followed up at technical level
Fall 2023	Visits from Europol and CEPOL deputy executive directors to Cairo. Visit of a Ministry of Interior delegation to Frontex headquarters	As a follow-up to 1 st SOM Security

18 – 19 June 2023	HRVP to Cairo	Meetings with President Al Sisi, FM Shoukry and MoD Zaki: On bilateral issues, migration was a prominent theme across meetings. HRVP announced a 20 MEUR support to EGY in their response to the flux of refugees from Sudan.
19-20 June 2023	EUMC Chairman	Exchange with Ministry of Defence on CSDP missions
24-28 July 2023	FRONTEX mission	
October 2023	CT Dialogue	1 st CT Dialogue: examined regional threats
17 November 2023	President Von Der Leyen’s visit to Cairo	Presentation of a Strategic and Comprehensive partnership with Egypt
23 January 2024	10 th EU-Egypt Association Council	Both parties reaffirmed commitment to pursue an elevated partnership through the Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership.
April 2024	Visit of a Ministry of Interior delegation to Europol headquarters	
29-30 June 2024	EU-EG Investment Conference	
2-3 July 2024	Aswan Forum for sustainable peace and development	The EEAS MD Africa was represented by Nicola Bellomo (acting DMD, HoD Africa.1). DHoD Riccardo Mosca attended the panel dedicated to Peace support operations in Africa
15-16 July 2024	4 th EU-EG Migration Dialogue, back-to-back with SOM Security on 15 July	Both parties reiterated their commitment to reinforce cooperation on migration, in line with the comprehensive approach and agreed on the organisation of three workshops by end-2024 as a direct operational follow-up to the meeting.
9 September 2024	Commissioner Johansson visit to Cairo	Meetings with Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Interior with substantive outcomes to strengthen the migration and mobility and security pillars of the strategic and comprehensive partnership signed in March 2024.
3-4 December 2024	Workshops on Programming, Talent Partnership, and Return and Readmission	A direct follow-up to the 4 th Migration Dialogue
9 January 2025	EP President Roberta Metsola visited Egypt 8-9 January and met Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi in Cairo and FM Abdelatty, among others	Discussed ways to develop relations between Egypt and the EU and regional issues, including Gaza, Syria, Libya and the Horn of Africa. President Al Sisi urged support for Egyptian efforts to combat irregular migration, referring to a high number

		of migrants present in Egypt (amounting to 8.7% of the population).
S1 2025 (date tbc)	9th Meeting of the Subcommittee on Justice and Security and the Working Group on Migration, Social and Consular Affairs	

LIBYA

The overriding priority of EU action is to contribute to a stable, democratic and united Libya. To this end, the EU supports the UN-mediated Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process, ultimately aimed at holding national elections.

The EU aims to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and legitimate national institutions for a stable, resilient and prosperous Libya. While significant progress has been made in 2024 in establishing a constructive EU-Libya dialogue on migration, further stabilisation of the country remains a prerequisite for developing a rights-based migration management system in Libya.

In 2024 Libya was the primary departure point of irregular migrants along the Central Med route to Europe. 42 643 migrants arrived in Italy from Libya via the Central Mediterranean route, marking a 18% decrease compared to 2023 (52 034 arrivals).

Libya is a beneficiary of both regional capacity-building projects CT INFLOW and EUROMED Police, both managed by CEPOL (EUROMED Police is also supported by Europol).

*Promoting human rights including the human rights of migrants remains a priority. In March 2023 the **Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya** presented its final report. The Mission found reasonable grounds to believe that the exploitation of migrants entailed violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and the commission of crimes against humanity. The report also came to the conclusion that State affiliated entities in Libya “received technical, logistical, and monetary support from the EU and its MS for inter alia the interception and return of migrants to Libya.”*

*The EU Border Assistance Mission (**EUBAM Libya**) was established in July 2013 as a civilian advisory Mission. In June 2023, the Council extended EUBAM Libya’s mandate until 30 June 2025, with a refocus on support to integrated border management, fight against cross-border crime (including trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling) and counterterrorism. EUBAM Libya provides technical advice, capacity-building activities at the operational and technical levels and carries out projects, complemented as appropriate and on a case-by-case basis by specialised training. The Mission furthermore provides strategic advice where requested by the Libyan authorities. The Strategic Review of the mission has been launched in December 2024 and will inform the discussions on the extension of the mandate beyond June 2025. The presentation of the EUBAM Libya Strategic Review to the PSC is expected in April 2025 (TBC).*

***EUNAVFOR MED IRINI** was launched on 31 March 2020 with the core task to contribute to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya, through the use of aerial, satellite and maritime assets. In particular the mission is mandated to carry out inspections of vessels on the high seas off the Libyan coast suspected to be carrying arms or related material to and from Libya. The mandate also includes to contribute to the implementation of the UN measures against illicit exports of petroleum products from Libya, the training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy in law enforcement tasks at sea and the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking in human beings networks. In March 2023 the Council extended the mandate of EUNAVFOR MED IRINI until 31 March 2025. On 17 December 2024 PSC agreed to extend the mandate until March 2027 and to add a new Maritime Situational Awareness related task.*

Libya was the biggest beneficiary of the EUTF-NoA, with EUR 465 million. Over half of the funding went to the protection of migrants and refugees, their evacuation and humanitarian return; one third to community stabilisation in Libyan municipalities; the rest of the funds was allocated to programmes in the area of border management.

Under the new NDICI-Global Europe (2021-2027), Libya is profiting from bilateral and regional actions, adopted between 2021 and 2023, amounting to approximately EUR 130 million, including in the area of protection, supporting return and reintegration, as well as border management.

Further actions and related funding are being discussed for Libya under the Annual Action Plan for

Migration in the Southern Neighbourhood for 2024 (overall amount EUR 208 million).

As of 2024, a technical dialogue was launched with Libya to deepen the bilateral exchanges on key areas like migration governance, border management, search and rescue, protection and human rights and combatting human smuggling and the trafficking of human beings.

Key past and upcoming events

4 April 2021	Visit to Tripoli by European Council President Charles Michel	First EU-level meeting with new Government of National Unity (GNU)
28 May 2021	Visit to Tripoli by Commissioner Várhelyi with Italian and Maltese Foreign Ministers Di Maio and Bartolo	Meeting to discuss with GNU closer economic cooperation with the EU
7 June 2021	Visit to Tripoli by Commissioner Johansson	Meeting with GNU to discuss new areas of cooperation in migration and border security
8 September 2021	Visit to Tripoli by HRVP Borrell	Meeting with GNU on a range of issues related to stabilisation, political and economic reform
21 October 2021	Ministerial Conference on Libya's Stabilisation	Conference to prepare elections, stabilisation and cooperation with the African Union, EU and UN on stabilisation agenda
12 November 2021	International Conference on Libya	It brought together Libyan transitional authorities, the heads of State and government of the countries invited to the Berlin conferences, and the countries in Libya's neighbourhood.
22-24 November 2021	VP Koni visit to Brussels	
20 March 2023	Principals meeting of the trilateral EU-AU-UN Task Force in Brussels	Adoption of Terms of Reference and agreement of next priorities
27-28 November 2023	International Conference on a Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling on 28 November 2023, in Brussels	Participation and intervention of minister of interior Trabelsi in the conference and conveying a message of willingness to cooperate on anti-smuggling
4/5 December 2023	Musa Al-Koni, Vice-President of the Libyan Presidential Council, visit to Brussels	Bilateral meetings with Commissioner Johansson, Commissioner Várhelyi and HRVP Borrell where VP Koni passed a message of willingness for cooperation
29 January 2024	PEC Michel met with GNU PM Dbeibah in the margins of the "Italia-Africa" Conference in Rome	

5-8 February 2024	HOME, NEAR and EEAS technical mission to Libya	Meeting the relevant legal authorities to engage on migration and border management, as well as on anti-smuggling. The visit highlighted a set of concrete opportunities for enhancing the EU-Libya cooperation on migration
31 March 2024	Demarche of the EU-AU-UN Task Force to key Libyan Ministers	The demarche focused on the establishment of due process for migrants in detention, release of vulnerable migrants from detention, humanitarian access, alternatives to detention, migrant workers regularisation.
15 May 2024	PM Dbeibeh visit to Brussels	Bilateral Meeting with President Von der Leyen Bilateral meeting with President Charles Michel
16 May 2024	Libyan counterparts of the technical mission in February paid a migration-related technical return visit to Brussels	Identification of several concrete next steps to advance work: continuing work on the MRCC, recalling states' international obligations; border management, including on the southern border; improving the conditions of migrants in Libya, including the transfer of children and their caregivers from detention centres into the care of UN agencies or MoSA shelters; more meaningful access of UN agencies and implementing partners at disembarkation points and in official detention centers and abolishing the exit visa for IOM assisted voluntary returnees.
29 June – 2 July 2024	HOME, NEAR and EEAS technical mission to Libya (Tripoli and Benghazi)	Meeting the relevant legal authorities to engage on migration and border management, as well as on anti-smuggling.
17 July 2024	VP Schinas participation at the Trans-Mediterranean Migration Forum on 17 July in Tripoli	The Conference organised by the Tripoli based Government of National Unity aimed at promoting partnerships between countries of destination and transit, and crucially the EU, to support development in countries of origin, particularly in infrastructure and energy
7-10 December 2024	HOME, NEAR and EEAS technical mission to Libya (Tripoli and Benghazi)	Meetings the relevant technical authorities, recognised throughout the country, to engage on migration and border management, protection and human rights, as well as on anti-

		smuggling. The mission also aimed to discuss the implementation of current EU support, and to identify further needs and possible options to support addressing those needs.
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JORDAN

Relations between the EU and Jordan are governed by an Association Agreement which entered into force in 2002. On 12 December 2012, the EU and Jordan launched a Dialogue on Migration, Mobility and Security. On 9 October 2014, the EU and Jordan signed a Mobility Partnership. First bilateral discussions on visa facilitation and readmission took place in November 2016 but were afterwards put on hold by the Jordanian side, mainly due to concerns over third country nationals' clause in the readmission agreement. The EU—Jordan Partnership Priorities 2021-2027 text (including migration and mobility) has been adopted at the 2 June 2022 EU-Jordan Association Council.

Jordan features on the list of priority partners to conclude Working Arrangements with Europol; negotiations are ongoing, and it is hoped to conclude them soon. The country is also covered by a Council mandate to negotiate an international agreement concerning the exchange of personal data with Europol as of 2018, but no particular interest has been shown on the Jordanian side and no formal negotiation round has been held.

Jordan is a beneficiary of both regional capacity-building projects EUROMED Police and CT INFLOW, both managed by CEPOL (EUROMED Police is also supported by Europol).

Jordan hosts the 5th largest number of refugees per capita worldwide, including more than 600,000 Syrians. The majority of all Syrian refugees live below the poverty line. Most Syrian refugees continue to rely on humanitarian aid to get by. While the total number of Syrians crossing from Jordan to Syria is significantly higher, at least some 5,100 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned to Syria in December 2024, most of them following the fall of the Assad regime. This brings the total number of registered refugees returning from Jordan in 2024 to some 17,200, representing a significant increase compared to previous months in 2024 as well as to previous years.

On 27 May, during the eighth edition of the Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region' hosted by the European Union, the donor community pledged a total amount of €7.5 billion. This strong commitment shows once more the willingness of the EU and the international community to mitigate the impact of the Syrian crisis; and support the populations both in Syria and in neighbouring countries. The total amount of pledges includes €5 billion of grants and €2.5 billion of loans for 2024 and beyond. The overall figure includes the €2.12 billion pledged by the EU for 2024 and 2025, announced during the conference by High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell. The total amount pledged by the EU and its Member States amounted to almost €6 billion, reaffirming them as the largest donor to the Syria response.

The EU and Jordan have agreed during the Association Council of 15 July to elevate their relationship to the level of a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership (SCP), with the aim to strengthen Jordan's resilience, support the modernisation process launched by the King, and unlock the full economic potential of EU-Jordan partnership. The new partnership will revolve around five pillars:

- Political relations and regional cooperation;*
- Security and defence;*
- Economic resilience, Trade and Investments;*
- Human capital;*
- Protection and support to refugees .*

The content of the SCP is currently being agreed jointly with Jordan.

Key past and upcoming events

17 June 2019	EU raised Mobility Partnership in Association Council.	EU reiterated that it is ready to relaunch the negotiation process on visa facilitation and readmission, and encouraged Jordan to actively explore all opportunities provided by the Mobility Partnership.
26 May 2021	EU-Jordan Subcommittee on justice and security	
31 May 2021	EU – Jordan Association Committee	Discussed a range of subjects including security and Mobility Partnership
2 June 2022	EU-Jordan Association Council	The EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities 2021-2027 adopted
6-7 March 2023	13 th meeting of Sub-committee on Human Rights, Democratisation and Governance	
13 March	The EU- Jordan Subcommittee on Climate Action and Green Economic Growth	Both parties agreed on joint deliverables
27 April	EU-Jordan Research and Innovation Subcommittee	Both parties agreed on joint deliverables
2 May	EU-Jordan Trade, Agriculture and Customs Subcommittee	
6 February 2024	EU-Jordan Association Committee	Migration issues part of the agenda
11 June 2024	EU-Jordan Business Forum	
15 July 2024	EU-Jordan Association Council	

LEBANON

Relations between the EU and Lebanon are governed by an Association Agreement signed in June 2002 (entered into force in April 2006). On 10 December 2014, the EU and Lebanon launched a Dialogue on Migration, Mobility and Security. In 2016, the EU and Lebanon adopted the Partnership Priorities for the period 2016-2020 (extended until new ones are signed), migration and mobility being one of them. After more than two years of presidential vacancy and care-taker government, a President - Joseph Aoun, former Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) – was elected on 9 January 2025 and only four days later, Nawaf Salam, former President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), was named Prime Minister-designate.

Lebanon features on the list of priority partners to conclude Working Arrangements with Europol and is also covered by a Council mandate to open negotiations concerning an international agreement to exchange personal data with the Agency. However, the country has not expressed any concrete interest in either process. Lebanon is a beneficiary of both regional capacity-building projects CT INFLOW and EUROMED Police, both managed by CEPOL (EUROMED Police is also supported by Europol).

Lebanon expressed in May 2019 an interest in starting the negotiations for a Visa facilitation agreement. In the autumn 2019, there were signals that Lebanon would be willing to relaunch the negotiations on the Mobility Partnership, but no concrete follow-up steps have been taken by Lebanon so far (also due to the deteriorating political, financial, economic and social crisis, exacerbated by the 2020 explosion in the port of Beirut and the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a power vacuum in 2022 – no government formed since the 15 May parliamentary elections and president not elected since the expiration of the mandate on 31 October).

On 27 May 2024, during the eighth edition of the Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region' hosted by the European Union, the donor community pledged a total amount of €7.5 billion. This strong commitment shows once more the willingness of the EU and the international community to mitigate the impact of the Syrian crisis; and support the populations both in Syria and in neighbouring countries.

The total amount of pledges includes €5 billion of grants and €2.5 billion of loans for 2024 and beyond.

*The overall figure includes the **€2.12 billion pledged by the EU for 2024 and 2025**, announced during the conference by High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep **Borrell**. **The total amount pledged by the EU and its Member States amounted to almost €6 billion**, reaffirming them as the largest donor to the Syria response.*

Since the start of the conflict in 2011, the EU and its Member States have mobilised over EUR 30 billion to help those affected by the Syrian conflict. This makes the EU collectively the largest provider of international aid in response to the Syria crisis, delivering humanitarian, stabilisation and resilience assistance inside Syria and in neighbouring countries.

During a visit to Lebanon on 2 May 2024, President von der Leyen announced a EUR 1 billion financial support package for the country (following up to the 17-18 April Council conclusions).

The first part of this package of EUR 500 million was adopted on 1 August 2024. It has been designed to improve the overall economic situation of the country, including on basic services such as education, social protection and health, and supporting the most vulnerable people in Lebanon, including refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities; as well as to strengthen cooperation on migration-related challenges, integrated border management, including anti-smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and security. It was also designed with the necessary flexibility to adapt for the escalation of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict which took place between September and November 2024, causing the displacement of more than 500.000 people and affecting over 1.3 million people.

The second part of the package, encompassing funds for 2026-2027 will be adopted at a later stage, taking into account progress on necessary reforms and the overall situation in the country.

Key past and upcoming events

7 December 2020	FAC adopted Council Conclusions on Lebanon	
18-20 June 2021	HR/VP visit to Lebanon	
30 July 2021	The Council adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures to address the situation in Lebanon. The framework has been extended for one year on 26 July 2022.	
15 June 2023	Commissioner Várhelyi meeting with Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdallah Bou Habib	Meeting in the margins of the Brussels 7 th Conference on the Future of Syria and the region. Discussed the current situation of multiple crisis in Lebanon and refugee file.
29-30 March 2023	Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarcic	A mission to Lebanon to assess the humanitarian situation and announcement of the annual humanitarian allocation for Lebanon
5-7 January 2024	HRVP Josep Borrell mission to Lebanon	Meetings with Prime Minister Najib Mikati, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Abdallah Bou Habib, Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri, General Joseph Aoun
22 April 2024	Commissioner Várhelyi meetings with Speaker of the Parliament H.E. Mr Nabih Berri, General Joseph AOUN, Commander in Chief of the Army in Lebanon, Prime Minister Designate H.E. Mr Najib Mikati, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Designate H.E. Mr Bou Habib	Mission to Lebanon following EU Council Conclusions 17-18 April.
2 May 2024	PCOM Von der Leyen accompanied by CY President Christodoulides, meetings with Prime Minister Designate H.E. Mr Najib Mikati and Speaker of the Parliament H.E. Mr Nabih Berri,	Mission to Lebanon following EU Council Conclusions 17-18 April.
24 November 2024	HRVP Josep Borrell mission to Lebanon	Meetings including with Prime Minister Najib Mikati, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri and Lebanese Armed Force Commander Josef Aoun.

19 December 2024	European Council Conclusions	The EU stated its continued support to the Lebanese State's sovereignty, territorial integrity and State-building efforts, including by contributing to the strengthening of the Lebanese Armed Forces.
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C. WESTERN BALKANS

Cooperation with all Western Balkan partners remains a top political priority for the EU, as i.e. demonstrated by the EU-Western Balkan Summit Declaration adopted on 18 December 2024. The declaration specifically also mentions that migration management remains a joint challenge and responsibility, which the EU and Western Balkan Partners will continue to address together, in line with the EU Action Plan on Western Balkans presented by the Commission in December 2022. All citizens of the Western Balkans enjoy a visa-free regime with the EU.

The Western Balkan region mainly serves as a transit route for migrants and victims of trafficking. Partnership with the Western Balkans is a good example of the comprehensive approach to migration management as set out in the New Pact. Through the support of the JHA Agencies and with significant financial and technical assistance, the EU is working closely with partners in the region in the area of asylum and reception, visa policy alignment, border management, return and readmission, tackling migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, and sharing of information. The implementation of the EU Action Plan on Western Balkans has delivered significant results, since the number of irregular border crossings to the EU via the Western Balkan route decreased by 30% in 2023 compared to 2022. This decrease further accelerated in 2024, with -80% of irregular border crossings from this route.

There are bilateral Justice and Home Affairs subcommittee meetings and Joint Readmission Committees with Western Balkan partners. There are also yearly regional meetings on Home Affairs at Senior Officials' and Commissioner's levels. From 2007-2020, the EU has provided assistance to the Western Balkans in the area of migration for a total of EUR 492.75 million, channelled through the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (EUR 450.15 million), as well as humanitarian aid (EUR 42.6 million). Overall, total migration support to the Western Balkans adopted so far under IPA III (2021-2024) amounts to EUR 350 million.

Key past and upcoming events

17 May 2021	EU – Western Balkans JHA SOM	Asylum, migration, border management and police cooperation in the area of prevention and investigation of child sexual exploitation online and off-line were discussed.
9 - 10 June 2021	Brdo Process Ministerial conference	Main topics were the management of mixed migration and the prevention and investigation of online child sexual abuse.
24 June 2021	Salzburg Forum Ministerial	Schengen, Joint Coordination Platform

29 June 2021	Berlin Process Ministerial	Home Affairs Ministers in the framework of the Berlin Process (focus on security)
30 September 2021	President von der Leyen's mission to the Western Balkans	President von der Leyen visited Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.
6 October 2021	EU – Western Balkan Summit	
11-12 November 2021	Ministerial Conference on Child Sexual abuse	Western Balkan partners were invited to this ministerial conference organised by the Slovenian Presidency in Brdo, Slovenia
2-3 December 2021	EU – Western Balkans JHA Ministerial Meeting	Organised by the SI Presidency in Brdo, Slovenia. Western Balkans partners were invited. Topics: migration, counter terrorism, organised crime. Commissioner Johansson held bilaterals with BIH, MK, KS.
14 December 2021	Salzburg Forum Meeting	VTC conference organised by the HU Presidency of the Salzburg Forum.
21-24 February 2022	JCP Ministerial Return Conference, Vienna	Organised by the Joint Coordination Platform. Topic: set up a regional return mechanism and return partnership.
16 May 2022	EU – Western Balkans JHA SOM	Organised in Brussels. Topics: 1) Improving the exchange of operational information on border management and organised crime; 2) Improving cooperation on returns and assistance to migrants.
23 June 2022	Meeting of the members of the European Council with Western Balkans Leaders	
3-9 October 2022	VP Schinas mission to Western Balkans	VP Schinas met with North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

20 October 2022	Berlin Process Meeting	Hosted by DE Minister of the Interior. Western Balkan ministers of interior and security, MS associated to the Process and the UK discussed migration and security with Commissioner Johansson.
24-25 October 2022	Fourth Prague Process Ministerial Meeting	Hosted by CZ; Attended by several WB partners and by Commissioner Johansson; Commissioner's intervention on WB/UA under "Current migration challenges in our region and beyond".
26-29 October 2022	President Von der Leyen tour of the Western Balkans	President von der Leyen visited Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.
3 November 2022	Berlin Process Summit	Hosted by DE Chancellor. Western Balkan leaders discussed migration and security with President Von der Leyen, as part of a wider agenda
3-4 November 2022	EU – Western Balkans JHA Ministerial Meeting	Organised by the CZ Presidency in Tirana, Albania. Topics: security implications of war against Ukraine, migration, asylum and border management. Launch of Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership (ASOP).
15-16 November 2022	IOM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Migration Governance in the Western Balkans	
28-29 March 2023	Immigration Liaison Officers (ILO) Network regional meeting in Tirana, Albania.	Technical meeting organised by DG HOME for the operationalisation of the Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership with Western Balkans. Participants: Immigration Liaison Officers from EU Member States, JHA agencies, Western Balkan partners. Special Envoy on external aspects of migration.

3-4 April 2023	Ministerial Conference Brdo-Process	Two main topics were discussed at the Ministerial Conference: 1. regional cooperation in the fight against migrant smuggling 2. return management and cooperation on readmissions
15 May 2023	EU-WB JHA SOM	Preparation of the annual Western Balkans JHA Ministerial meeting which took place on 26 October 2022 in Skopje, under the Spanish Presidency.
16 May 2023	Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)- Ministerial	
8-9 June 2023	Sarajevo Migration Dialogue	The aim of this conference was to define concrete follow-up actions towards the implementation of the Skopje Declaration commitments to address smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, increase access to alternative pathways for migrants in protracted transit situation and work towards a holistic return management approach. The conference was co-hosted by the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU with facilitation by IOM.
15-16 June 2023	Prespa Dialogue Forum	This year was the 5 th anniversary since the signature of the Prespa agreement between Greece and North Macedonia. “EU-Western Balkans Migration Management: Solidarity and Shared Commitments” session was organised.

December 2022 – February 2023	Joint HOME-NEAR-MS-HOME Agencies missions to the Western Balkan partners, led by DDG HOME	Implementation of the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans (Belgrade 6/12/2022; Skopje 21/12/2022; Tirana 31/01/2023; Podgorica 2/2/2023; Sarajevo and Pristina 14-15 March 2023)
14 September 2023	Berlin Process Home Affairs ministerial, Tirana	Organised by Albania. Topics: migration management, cybersecurity and fight against organised crime
26 October 2023	EU Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Forum, Skopje	Organised by ES. Topics: strengthening migration and asylum and border management, counterterrorism, illicit drugs. Follow-up on the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Western Balkans.
First semester 2024	Joint HOME-NEAR-MS-HOME Agencies missions to the Western Balkan partners, led by DDG HOME Onidi	Implementation of the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans (Belgrade and Sarajevo in February 2024, Tirana and Podgorica in March 2024, Skopje in July 2024)
20-21 March 2024	Ministerial Conference Brdo-Process	Organised by SI. Focus on irregular migration and trafficking in human beings, together with the role of international cooperation and the increasing importance of financial investigations as well as of digital sector.

16 April 2024	EU-WB JHA SOM	Preparation for JHA Ministerial meeting to be held on 28-29 October 2024 under HU Presidency. Focus on EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans, in particular on tackling migrant smuggling and on fight against corruption.
25-26 June 2024	Salzburg Forum	Attended by DDG Onidi. Working sessions on the Security of the Danube and digitalisation and on migration and migrant smuggling.
17 September 2024	Berlin Process Ministerial, Berlin	Organised by DE. Attended by DDG Onidi. Working sessions on irregular migration and migrant smuggling and on fight against organised crime.
28-29 October 2024	EU Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs Budva	Organised by HU. Topics: strengthening migration and asylum and border management and fight against organised transnational crime and illicit trafficking.

ALBANIA

Albania formally agreed an association with the EU by signing a Stabilisation and Association Agreement in 2006 (entry into force in 2009). Albania was awarded candidate status in 2014. The accession negotiations were officially opened in 2020 and launched in on 19th July 2022 with the first Inter-governmental Conference. On 15th October 2024, a second Intergovernmental Conference was held, opening negotiations on cluster 1 – Fundamentals. The launch of negotiations on the fundamentals paved the way to open the other negotiating clusters and set out the Interim Benchmarks to be met for closing chapters. On 17th December a third Intergovernmental Conference was held, opening negotiations on cluster 6 – External Relations.

Albania has agreements or arrangements signed with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)(Status Agreement signed in 2023 (to replace previous SA from 2019)) with teams currently deployed at Greek border, along the Adriatic, and at border crossing with Montenegro; Europol (2013); CEPOL (2013); the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) (2019), and a Roadmap with the European Union Asylum Agency, and has signed the 2019 Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism for the Western Balkans, whose implementing arrangement was revised in December 2022. Albania is a beneficiary of the regional capacity building project WB PaCT, managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol.

The Seventh report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism adopted in December 2024 confirmed that Albania has taken actions identified in the Sixth Report and the visa liberalisation benchmarks continue to be fulfilled.

Key past and upcoming events

20 February 2021	Commissioner Johansson's mission to Albania	Meeting with Minister of the Interior and visiting Frontex joint teams at the border with Greece
1 March 2021	11th EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Council	
23 November 2021	Meeting on the bilateral implementing arrangement of the Counter-Terrorism Joint Action Plan for the Western Balkans	EU mission to Tirana
9-10 December 2021	13th EU-Albania Sub- Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security	
15 February 2022	EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Committee	
16 February 2022	9 th EU-Albania Joint Readmission Committee meeting (VTC)	
19 July 2022	Intergovernmental conference	
9 December 2022	Signature of the revised Arrangement for the implementation of the Joint Action Plan on Counterterrorism for the Western Balkans between the European Commission and Albania	
31 January-1 February 2023	Visit of DDG HOME to discuss the WB Action Plan	Commitments taken by the Albanian authorities to implement the Action Plan
15-16 March 2023	EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Council	

28-29 March 2023	Immigration Liaisons Officers (ILO) Network regional meeting in Tirana, Albania.	Technical meeting organised by DG HOME for the operationalisation of the Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership with Western Balkans. Participants: Immigration Liaison Officers from EU Member States, JHA agencies, Western Balkan partners.
14-15 June 2023	14 th EU-Albania Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security	
September 2023	Signature of upgraded Status Agreement for additional Deployments of EBCG Standing Corps at Albania's border with non-EU countries	Entry into force of the upgraded Status Agreement on 1 June 2024
5 October 2023	10 th EU-Albania Joint Readmission Committee meeting, Brussels	
6-7 March 2024	Visit of HOME Director, with NEAR, MS and HOME Agencies to follow-up on the implementation of the WB Action Plan	
20-21 March 2024	15 th EU-Albania Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security	
Q1 2025 (tbc)	11 th EU-Albania Joint Readmission Committee meeting	
11-12 February 2025	16 th EU-Albania Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security	

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU entered into force in June 2015 and the country applied for EU membership in February 2016. The European Council granted the status of EU candidate country to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 15 December 2022, and on 21 March 2024 decided to open EU accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The European Council invited the Commission to prepare the negotiating framework with a view to its adoption by the Council the moment all relevant steps set out in the Commission's recommendation of 12 October 2022 are taken. Among these steps, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to decisively advance work to ensure effective coordination, at all levels, of border management and migration management capacity, as well as ensuring the functioning of the asylum system. Significant financial support has been provided to the country to strengthen the response capacity to manage migration flows.

Negotiations for a Frontex Status Agreement with the EU started in May 2024, after it was authorised by the Council in 2022. The agreement text was initialled on 18 December 2024. The signing of the status agreement is tentatively scheduled to happen in February 2025. A Working Arrangement with Frontex on operational cooperation was signed in 2009. Bosnia and Herzegovina concluded an Agreement on Operational and Strategic Co-operation with Europol (2016) and a Working Arrangement with CEPOL (2014). The country is a beneficiary of the regional capacity-building project WB PaCT, managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol. In January 2021, the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) agreed on a roadmap for cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the overall objective of enhancing the protection space for asylum seekers in Bosnia, thus aligning it in with the EU Common European Asylum System. The EUAA 2nd generation Roadmap for cooperation is being finalized. Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the 2019 Joint Action Plan on Counterterrorism for the Western Balkans. A new reception and identification centre opened in Lipa on 19 November 2021.

The seventh report under the visa suspension mechanism adopted in December 2024 confirmed that Bosnia and Herzegovina's taken actions identified in the Sixth Report and the visa liberalisation benchmarks continue to be fulfilled.

Key past and upcoming events

18 - 19 February 2021	Commissioner Johansson's mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	Meeting with state level and local authorities and visit to Lipa reception centre
13 July 2021	EU-BiH Stabilisation and Association Council	
22-23 September 2021	High Level Visit on Migration in Brussels, with the BiH Minister of Security, Selmo Cikotic	BiH delegation met with Commissioners and DGs. During the visit, DG NEAR convened a working meeting as a follow-up to the high-level EU-BiH meeting on migration (July 2019) which was attended also by Deputy Director-General Johannes Luchner (HOME) and colleagues from ECHO and EEAS.
10 November 2021	Bilateral meeting (VTC) of Commissioner Johansson with BiH Minister of Security	Migration and security cooperation and opening of Lipa were discussed.
18 November 2021	Regional conference on "Irregular Migration and the Western Balkan, Response Future Challenges and Joint Solutions"	Commissioner Johansson attended the opening session by VTC

6 December 2021	8th EU-Bosnia and Herzegovina Joint Readmission Committee meeting, Sarajevo	
13-14 December 2021	Mission of DDG Onidi to discuss state of play of cooperation on CT and P/CVE	To discuss the implementation of the Joint Action Plan on CT and more in general on security issues given the political situation in the country.
19 September 2022	2 nd Sarajevo Migration Dialogue	Organised by Selmo Cikotic, Minister of Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina, about migration and returns in the Western Balkans - with participation of Commissioner Johansson.
8-9 December 2022	Sub- Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security with BiH	
20-21 February 2023	Mission DDG HOME to discuss WB AP	To discuss the engagements of BiH authorities for the implementation of the AP
16 June 2023	EU-BiH 6th SA Committee	
23-24 March 2023	Visit Mr. Nestic to Brussels and meeting with Commissioner Johansson and DDG Onidi	
28 March 2023	9 th EU-Bosnia and Herzegovina Joint Readmission Committee meeting, Brussels	
22 June 2023	Opening Ceremony Europol National Focal Point	The creation of this National Contact Point, who coordinates the communication between relevant BiH law enforcement authorities and Europol, was followed by the deployment of a BiH Liaison Officer to the agency.
12 September 2023	Bilateral Commissioner Johansson and Minister of Foreign Affairs Konakovic	Discussions focused on visa alignment and on the appointment of the Frontex negotiation team
28 November 2023	Bilateral DDG Onidi and Min Nestic in the framework of the International Conference on a Global Alliance to counter migrant smuggling	Discussions focused on visa alignment and on the appointment of the Frontex negotiation team
29 November 2023	Phone meeting DDG Onidi and Minister of Foreign Affairs Konakovic	Discussions focused on visa alignment

6-7 December 2023	Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security with BiH	
29 January 2024	Meeting Commissioner Johansson and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Josip Brkić	Discussions focussed on visa alignment, the start of Frontex revised Status agreement negotiations, smuggling and returns
12-14 February 2024	Visit of DDG Onidi	Follow up of implementation of the Western Balkans Action Plan
25 April 2024	VTC Director Ullrich with representatives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Security and SFA	Presentation of the EU proposed operational actions to decrease irregular migration resulting from the abuse of visa free regimes with TU, CN and RU
19-20 September 2024	Sarajevo migration dialogue	Regional authorities, international organisations, and EU member states discussed operationalisation of police cooperation in the Western Balkans, the European Union's role in migration management in the region, combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and improving voluntary and involuntary return and readmission policies.
10-11 December 2024	Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security with BiH	
Q1 2025 (tbc)	10 th EU-Bosnia and Herzegovina Joint Readmission Committee meeting	
February 2025 (tbc)	Signing of Frontex status agreement	

NORTH MACEDONIA

North Macedonia formally agreed an association with the EU through the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, which entered into force in 2004. It applied for EU membership in 2004, and the Council decided in December 2005 to grant the country candidate status. In March 2020, the General Affairs Council decided to open accession negotiations under the revised methodology. In July 2020 the draft negotiating framework was presented to the Member States. In July 2022, the first political intergovernmental conference opening the accession negotiations process took place.

North Macedonia concluded agreements or arrangements with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) (2009 working arrangement and 2022 status agreement, operational since April 2023); Europol (2011); CEPOL (2017); and signed the 2019 Joint Action Plan on Counterterrorism for the Western Balkans. The country is a beneficiary of the regional capacity-building project WB PaCT, managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol. On 26 October 2022, the EU and North Macedonia signed a Frontex Status Agreement. North Macedonia has a Joint Roadmap with the EUAA, to support the further development of a national asylum and reception system in line with EU standards in place.

The Seventh report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism adopted in December 2024 confirmed that North Macedonia has taken actions identified in the Sixth Report and the visa liberalisation benchmarks continue to be fulfilled.

Key past and upcoming events

17-18 November 2021	EU-North Macedonia Sub-Committee meeting on Justice, Freedom and Security - VTC	
4 May 2022	Meeting on the implementation of the Joint action Plan on Counter Terrorism, Skopje	
30 June 2022	9 th EU-North Macedonia Joint Readmission Committee meeting, VTC	
19 July 2022	Intergovernmental conference	
26 November 2022	Signature of the Frontex Status Agreement	Commissioner Johansson signed in Skopje, witnessed by President von der Leyen
9 December 2022	Signature of Joint Action Plan on Counterterrorism for the Western Balkans between the European Commission and the authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia	Signature of the JAP
20-21 December 2022	Mission DDG Onidi for WB Plan	Commitments taken by North Macedonia for the implementation of the WB AP
15-16 March 2023	EU-North Macedonia Sub- Committee meeting on Justice, Freedom and Security	
April 2023	Launch of Frontex JO North Macedonia Land (on basis of status agreement)	
6 February 2024	EMN Fact finding mission	

10 February 2024	Meeting Dir Ullrich and Ambassador of North Macedonia mission in Brussels	Discussions focussed on North Macedonia's delay in issuing new travel documents by the deadline agreed in the Prespa Agreement and EU MS recognition of the old documents.
5-6 March 2024	EU-North Macedonia Sub- Committee meeting on Justice, Freedom and Security in Skopje	
26 June 2024	Bilateral DDG Onidi and the Minister of Interior in the margin of the Salzburg forum	Presentation of the EU proposed operational actions to decrease irregular migration resulting from the abuse of visa free regimes with TU
18-19 July 2024	Mission DDG Onidi on the EU Action Plan for the Western Balkans	Follow up of implementation of the Western Balkans Action Plan
28 October 2024	North Macedonia signed the Administrative Arrangement granting it Observer Status to the European Migration Network.	
Q1 2025 (tbc)	10 th EU-North Macedonia Joint Readmission Committee meeting	
13-14 March 2025	EU-North Macedonia Sub- Committee meeting on Justice, Freedom and Security in Skopje	

MONTENEGRO

Montenegro formally agreed an association with the EU by signing a Stabilisation and Association Agreement in 2007 and was awarded candidate status in 2010. The accession negotiations started in 2012 and to date 33 negotiating chapters have been opened (including Chapter 24 on Justice, freedom and security) of which six have been provisionally closed. Sub-Committees on Justice, Freedom and Security take place, in principle, annually. An Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) took place on 26 June 2024 June with Montenegro, on the basis of the Interim Benchmarks Assessment Reports (IBARs) prepared by the Commission relating to chapters 23 and 24 of the acquis. The latest IGC took place on 16 December 2024, leading to the provisional closure of three negotiating chapters.

The Commission IBARs concluded that Montenegro has overall met the interim benchmarks set in the European Union Common Positions (CONF-ME 13) for Chapters 23 and 24, while some have been only partially met. Based on this assessment, the Council adopted EU Common Positions for chapters 23 and 24 that set closing benchmarks and provide further guidance for the work ahead. Building on the current momentum on enlargement, Montenegro has now moved to the next phase of accession negotiations, in which further negotiating chapters are being provisionally closed.

Montenegro concluded agreements or arrangements with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) (2019 Status agreement; new agreement signed on 16 May 2023 with teams deployed at EU borders); Europol (2014); and CEPOL (2011); and signed the 2019 Joint Action Plan on Counterterrorism for the Western Balkans and a 2021 Joint Roadmap for cooperation with the EUAA. The country is a beneficiary of the regional capacity-building project WB PaCT, managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol. In 2023 Montenegro made the request to sign a Working Arrangement with the ECMDDA that was signed in October 2024.

The seventh report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism adopted in December 2024 confirmed that Montenegro has taken actions identified in the sixth Report and the visa liberalisation benchmarks continue to be fulfilled. Montenegro has observer status in the European Migration Network.

Key past and upcoming events

17 and 18 March 2021	10th EU-Montenegro Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security	
22 June 2021	Intergovernmental Conference	Montenegro accepted the revised enlargement methodology.
25-28 October 2021	Visit of Minister of Interior Sergej Sekulovic to Brussels	Meetings with Commissioners Jourova, Johansson, Dalli and senior officials from EEAS and the Commission
26 November 2021	7 th EU-Montenegro Joint Readmission Committee meeting (VTC)	
13 December 2021	Intergovernmental Conference	
26 January 2022	11th meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Committee	
15-16 February 2022	11th EU-Montenegro Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security	
4 July 2022	11th EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Council meeting	

23 September 2022	Signature of an Administrative Arrangement for Montenegro's participation in the European Migration Network	DDG Onidi and Minister of Interior Filip Adžić met in Brussels
25 January 2023	Stabilisation and association committee Montenegro	To discuss progress on chapters 23 and 24
1-2 February 2023	Mission DDG HOME to discuss the WB AP	Discussion and commitments taken by MNE authorities for the implementation of the Western Balkans Action Plan
23 March 2023	Visit to Brussels Min of Interior Adzic and meeting with Commissioner Johansson	
22-23 March 2023	EU- Montenegro Subcommittee on Justice, Freedom and Security	
16 May 2023	Signature of new Status Agreement for the deployment of EBCG Standing Corps	
28 November 2023	Signature the revised Counterterrorism (CT) Arrangement and bilateral with Commissioner Johansson	First courtesy visit by the new Minister Saranovic. Discussions focused on visa alignment and on WB Action Plan priorities.
7-8 March 2024	Visit of Director Nielsen	Follow up of implementation of the Western Balkans Action Plan
13-14 March 2024	EU- Montenegro Subcommittee on Justice, Freedom and Security in Podgorica	
19 March 2024	Meeting between Acting DG Beate Gminder and Ambassador of Montenegro	IBAR discussions on anti-corruption and organised crime
22 March 2024	Bilateral in the margin of the Brdo Process between DDG Onidi and Montenegro Minister of Interior Danilo Šaranović	Discussions focussed on anti-corruption, fight against organised crime and visa alignment
8 April 2024	Commissioner Johansson's meeting with Montenegro Deputy Prime Minister Aleksa Bečić and Minister of Interior Danilo Šaranović	Discussions focussed on anti-corruption, fight against organised crime, visa alignment and IBAR progresses
19 April 2024	8 th EU-Montenegro Joint Readmission Committee meeting	
June 2024	Meeting between Acting DG Beate Gminder and Ambassador of Montenegro	Visa alignment and Reform Agenda

18-20 June 2024	Peer Review Mission on the Joint Action Plan on Counter Terrorism	
26 June 2024	Intergovernmental Conference	Closing Benchmarks set for Chapters 23 and 24
22 October 2024	Radicalisation Awareness Network Tailor-made Support Service on the review of the strategy on preventing and countering radicalisation	
28-29 October 2024	Bilateral visit of Commissioner Johansson in the margin of the JHA Ministerial	
13 December 2024	DDG HOME meeting with Ambassador Petar Markovic	
18 February 2025	14 th Stabilisation and Association committee with Montenegro	
18-19 March 2025	EU-Montenegro Justice Freedom and Security Subcommittee in Podgorica	

SERBIA

In March 2012 Serbia was granted EU candidate status. In September 2013 a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Serbia entered into force. 18 out of 35 negotiating chapters have been opened, including, “Judiciary and fundamental rights” (so-called chapter 23) and “Justice, freedom and security” (so-called chapter 24) since the start of accession negotiations with Serbia in January 2014. The first inter-governmental conference with Serbia under this revised methodology agreed by the Council in May 2021, was held on 22 June 2021. Member States decided that no new clusters should be opened.

Serbia has Working Arrangements in place with Frontex (2009)); CEPOL (2017); and EMCDDA (2020). The country is a beneficiary of the regional capacity-building project WB PaCT, managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol. An Agreement on Operational and Strategic Cooperation with Europol was signed in 2014. A new Status Agreement with the EU, allowing the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) to deploy personnel to Serbia’s borders with its neighbouring Western Balkans partners, in addition to the country's border with the European Union, was signed on 25 June 2024. Serbia has a Joint Roadmap with EUAA in place to support the further development of a national asylum and reception system in line with EU standards.

The seventh report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism adopted in December 2024 confirmed that Serbia had taken actions identified in the sixth Report and that the visa liberalisation benchmarks continue to be fulfilled.

Serbia was granted observer status in the European Migration Network in March 2023.

Key past and upcoming events

17 – 18 June 2021	Commissioner Johansson’s mission to Serbia	Meetings with President Vucic (accompanied by Minister of European Integration Joksimović) and Minister of Interior Vulin.
14 December 2021	Intergovernmental Conference	
25 January 2022	EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Council	
9 – 10 March 2022	EU-Serbia Subcommittee for Justice, Freedom and Security	
7 April 2022	Meeting on the implementation of the Joint action Plan on Counter Terrorism, Belgrade	
22 November 2022	Commissioner Johansson’s meeting with EU Integration Minister Tanja Mišćević	Discussion about Serbia’s progress on migration management (visa alignment, border management, asylum and reception, return and readmission, the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings), and the fight against organised crime and corruption.
24 November 2022	9 th EU-Serbia Joint Readmission Committee meeting, Belgrade	
6 December 2022	Mission DDG HOME to discuss the WB AP	Discussion and commitments taken by the Serbian authorities for the implementation of the Western Balkans Action Plan, especially on visa alignment and on the new Frontex Status Agreement

24/01/2023	Commissioner Johansson's meeting with Deputy First Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Ivica Dačić	Discussion about Serbia's progress on the Western Balkans' Action Plan on Migration.
16/03/2023	Commissioner Johansson's visit to Serbia	Discussion about the EU Action Plan, visit of Frontex deployment at the HU border
29-30/03/2023	EU-Serbia Subcommittee for Justice, Freedom and Security	
4 April 2023	Meeting with Serbian authorities on the implementation of the third countries national's clause of the Readmission Agreement	
12 June 2023	Status Agreement for deployment of EBCG Standing Corps	First negotiation
30 November 2023	Technical meeting on the readmission of third country nationals under the EU-Serbia Readmission Agreement	Meeting with Serbia and Slovakia on practical solutions for the readmission of third country nationals
11 September 2023	Commissioner Johansson's meeting with EU Integration Minister Tanja Mišćević	Discussion about migration management, Frontex Status Agreement, returns, visa alignment, draft amendments to the law on citizenship
25 October 2023	Commissioner Johansson's meeting with Prime Minister Ana Brnabić	Discussion about Frontex Status Agreement, visa policy alignment and state of play on passports for Kosovo Serbs
6-7 February 2024	Mission of DDG HOME to follow-up on the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans	
15 March 2024	10 th EU-Serbia Joint Readmission Committee meeting	Discussion on the third country national's readmission provision
12-13 March 2024	EU-Serbia Justice Freedom and Security Sub Committee	
25 June 2024	Commissioner Johansson's mission to Serbia for signature of the new Frontex Status Agreement	Discussion with authorities on visa policy alignment
25 September 2024	DDG HOME meeting with EU Integration Minister Tanja Mišćević	
11-12 March 2025	EU-Serbia Justice Freedom and Security Sub Committee	

KOSOVO*

The EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association Agreement has been in force since April 2016. Kosovo is a potential candidate and submitted an application for EU membership in December 2022. In 2018, the Commission confirmed that Kosovo had fulfilled all outstanding visa liberalisation benchmarks. The visa free regime for Kosovo passport holders entered into force on 1 January 2024.

Kosovo has Working Arrangements with EBCGA (Frontex) since 2016; Europol (2020); CEPOL (2017); and EMCDDA (2020). Kosovo is a beneficiary of the regional capacity-building project WB PaCT, managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol. Kosovo has a Joint Roadmap with EUAA in place since March 2022. In line with the 3 June 2023 statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU, the EU has been implementing reversible measures vis-à-vis Kosovo. The EU will gradually lift these measures in parallel with further steps by Kosovo to de-escalate the tensions in the north. The Council will remain seized of these matters.

The seventh report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism adopted in December 2024 covered Kosovo for the first time and confirmed that Kosovo continues to fulfil its visa liberalisation requirements.

Key past and upcoming events

9 – 10 June 2021	5th EU-Kosovo Sub-Committee Meeting on Justice, Freedom and Security	
7 December 2021	5th EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association Council	
22 - 23 June 2022	6th EU-Kosovo Sub- Committee Meeting on Justice, Freedom and Security	
5 May 2022	Meeting on the implementation of the Joint Action Plan on Counter Terrorism, Pristina	
13 May 2022	Visit of Minister of Internal Affairs of Kosovo, Xhelal Sveçla to Brussels to discuss visa liberalisation	Meetings with DG NEAR and HOME; VTC with Commissioner Johansson on 23 May.
22-23 June 2022	EU-Kosovo Subcommittee on Justice, Freedom and Security	
3 November 2022	Commissioner Johansson's meeting with Minister of Internal Affairs of Kosovo, Xhelal Sveçla, in the margins of the Tirana Ministerial	Migration management, security, visa liberalisation
14-15 March 2023	Visit of DDG HOME to discuss the WB Action Plan	Commitments taken by the Kosovo authorities to implement the Action Plan
21-22/06/2023	EU-Kosovo Subcommittee on Justice, Freedom and Security	Postponed
16 November 2023	COM proposal to grant visa free travel to holders of passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate	Final adoption to take place under the new European Parliament

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

18 April 2023	Final vote in EP on COM proposal to grant visa free travel to Kosovo passport holders	
1 January 2024	Entry into force of visa free regime for Kosovo passport holders	
13 October 2024	Entry into force of visa free regime for holders of passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate	

TÜRKIYE

In 2008 the Council adopted a revised Accession Partnership with Türkiye. On 16 December 2013 the EU and Türkiye signed a readmission agreement and launched a visa liberalisation dialogue. The Commission adopted the first report on the implementation of the Visa liberalisation roadmap on 20 October 2014. Türkiye continued to develop its administrative capacity to implement the re-admission agreement, which entered into force for Turkish nationals in October 2014. Regarding the readmission of third country nationals, the relevant provisions entered into force on 1 June 2016. Nevertheless, so far, the Turkish Council of Ministers has not taken the decisions authorising the application of these provisions.

A Strategic Agreement, not enabling the exchange of personal data, is in force with Europol and so is a Cooperation Agreement with CEPOL. Additionally, the Council has authorised the opening of negotiations with Türkiye for an international agreement on the exchange of personal data with Europol as of 2018. Four negotiation rounds have been held, the latter in 2021, and a mature text has been produced with small open points, but the agreement cannot be concluded, pending the revision of Türkiye's national data protection legislation to the extent it concerns the safeguards under the Agreement.

The meeting of Heads of State or Government with Türkiye on 29 November 2015 activated the Joint Action Plan on Migration in order to step up cooperation for the support of Syrian refugees under temporary protection and their host communities in Türkiye and to strengthen cooperation to prevent irregular migration flows to the EU. A comprehensive cooperation based on shared responsibility, mutual commitments and delivery between the European Union and Türkiye was agreed within the framework of the 18 March 2016 EU- Turkey Statement.

EU budget, and additional contributions from Member States integrated into the EU budget as external assigned revenue. Contributions amount to a total of EUR 6 billion, with EUR 3 billion committed for the years 2016-2017 and a further EUR 3 billion committed for 2018-2019. Both tranches combined, all operational funds have been committed and contracted, with just over to EUR 5 billion disbursed. In 2020 an additional EUR 535 million were committed to ensure the continuation of humanitarian assistance to refugees in Türkiye and in two flagship Facility interventions (basic needs and access to education). This comes on top of the Facility's EUR 6 billion. In June 2021, the European Council allocated a further EUR 3 billion to refugee assistance in Türkiye. The EUR 3 billion which has been fully committed and contracted. Assistance focuses on continuing supporting refugees and host communities in Türkiye. The Commission is finalising the preparation of the 2021-2023 EUR 3 billion package to be financed by the EU budget. 1 billion EUR was already allocated in 2021 (of which 325 million will be provided for the continuation of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), 530 million EUR basic needs, education, health care and migration support. to education, and 30 million EUR to the improvement of migration management), and in 2022, another EUR 1 235 million were committed in the priority areas of basic needs and socio-economic support (EUR 634 million), as well as border management (EUR 220 million). The balance of this package was being programmed in 2023 (barring the adoption of a EUR 14.4 million Support Measure, to be adopted in early 2024), going towards the areas of health (EUR 210 million), as well as post-earthquake support in the areas of socio-economic support and infrastructure services (EUR 240 million), and health and education infrastructure (EUR 115.6 million). Overall, the new 2021-2023 funding package allowed the Commission is intended to gradually to move away from humanitarian assistance to long-term livelihood support and gradual disengagement, pending the final restoration of national ownership. In May 2024 the Commission pledged a further EUR 1 billion in assistance to refugees and host communities, which were programmed and committed at the end of the year. Assistance focuses on essential needs – basic needs, health care and education – infrastructure, migration and border management support, plus an allocation to allow for the potential re-engagement of the EIB in Türkiye. The total of EU refugee assistance in the country since 2011 now stands at just under EUR 11 billion. In response to the call from EU Member States for significant additional funding to support refugees in Turkey, the Commission established on 24 November 2015 the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. The Facility

coordinates the mobilisation of resources made available under both the EU budget, and additional contributions from Member States integrated into the EU budget as external assigned revenue. Contributions amounted to EUR 6 billion with EUR 3 billion committed for the years 2016-2017 and a further EUR 3 billion committed for 2018-2019. Both tranches have been fully committed and contracted, and well EUR 5 billion disbursed. In 2020 an additional EUR 535 million were committed to ensure the continuation of humanitarian assistance to refugees in Türkiye, and in June 2021 the European Council allocated a further EUR 3 billion. This EUR 3 billion also has been fully committed and contracted and focused on basic needs, health care, education and migration management, as well as post-earthquake support in the priority areas of socio-economic support and infrastructure. The 2021-2023 package allowed the Commission to gradually move away from humanitarian assistance to long-term livelihood support and gradual disengagement, pending the final restoration of national ownership. In May 2024 the Commission pledged a further EUR 1 billion in assistance to refugees and host communities, which had been programmed and committed at the end of the year. Assistance focuses on essential needs – basic needs, health care and education – infrastructure, migration and border management support, plus an allocation to allow for the potential re-engagement of the EIB in Türkiye. The total of EU refugee assistance allocated in Türkiye since 2011 now stands at just under EUR 11 billion.

Following the June 2021 European Council Conclusions, a High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Security took place on 12 October 2021 in Ankara. On 25 November 2021, a High-Level Dialogue on Counterterrorism at senior officials’ level took place in Brussels, facilitating a discussion on security threats related to irregular migration, specifically in relation to the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the enduring migratory pressures, alongside the financing of terrorist activities through human smuggling and trafficking in human beings operations.

The continued implementation of the 18 March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement, which reduces irregular and dangerous crossings and saves lives in the Aegean Sea, plays a key role in ensuring that the migration challenge is addressed effectively and jointly by the EU and Türkiye, is in the interest of both sides and remains crucial with a view to saving lives and preventing irregular migration to the EU.

On 23 November 2023, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson and the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Türkiye Ali Yerlikaya met in Brussels for the second Türkiye-EU High Level Dialogue on Migration and Security. They exchanged views on their respective policies and actions related to the prevention of irregular migration and discussed common approaches on a number of issues, including border security and the fight against migrant smuggling. They also looked at how to enhance the cooperation of their respective migration and law enforcement Agencies. Parties agreed to meet at the level of technical and senior officials regularly to review the progress on cooperation on the shared interests in the fields of migration and security.

*Following the devastating earthquakes on 6 February 2023, the European Commission and the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU co-hosted an **International Donors’ Conference for the earthquake-affected populations of Türkiye and Syria, for which the EU pledged EUR 1 billion for Türkiye.** Negotiations are ongoing with the Turkish authorities to provide humanitarian and development assistance to refugees and host communities in the affected regions. As part of this pledge, the Commission mobilised **EUR 355.6 million of the refugee package** (originally planned for socio-economic support and social cohesion) to support refugees and host communities in the earthquake affected regions as well as further humanitarian assistance of over **EUR 100 million.***

Key past and upcoming events

15 March 2019	54 th Meeting of the EU-Turkey Association Council	
15 April 2019	Commission's third annual report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey	
17 May 2019	12 th FRiT Steering Committee Meeting	

3 October 2019	Joint Visit of Commissioner Avramopoulos and DE MoI to Turkey	
5 December 2019	Joint Visit of VP Schinas and Commissioner Johansson to Turkey	
9 December 2019	13 ^d FRiT Steering Committee Meeting	
9 March 2020	EU-Turkey Leaders' Meeting (Brussels)	President Von Der Leyen and President Michel met President Erdogan
30 April 2020	Commission's fourth annual report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey	
6-7 July 2020	HRVP Borrell meeting with Turkish FM Cavusoglu	
5 November 2020	14 th FRiT Steering Committee Meeting	
21 January 2021	Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu's Visit	Met with President von der Leyen, HR/VP Borrell, VP Schinas, Commissioner Johansson
6 April 2021	Joint Visit of President Von Der Leyen and President Michel to President Erdogan in Ankara	
7 May 2021	Visit of Commissioner Johansson in Ankara	Commissioner Johansson held meetings with Vice-President Fuat Oktay, Minister of Interior Suleyman Soylu, and Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu.
25 June 2021	European Council	EU leaders confirming commitment to continue supporting refugees and host communities in Turkey.
22 August 2021	PEC phone call with President Erdogan	Focused on Afghanistan
6-7 September 2021	Visit of Commissioner Várhelyi to Turkey	Meetings with FM Cavusoglu, MoI Soylu, Presid. Advisor Kalin
12 October 2021	EU-Turkey High Level Dialogue on Migration and Security	Co-chaired by Commissioner Johansson and Minister of Interior Soylu
27-29 October 2021	Visit of DFM Kaymakci to Brussels	Meetings with NEAR, HOME, EEAS
18-20 November 2021	Visit of VP Schinas to Türkiye - focus on the migration situation in Belarus	VP Schinas met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Cavusoglu and Minister of Interior Soylu
25 November 2021	EU-TK CT Dialogue at senior official level (Brussels)	Last one held in 2017
1-3 December 2021	Visit of Commissioner Lenarcic to Türkiye	
17 December 2021	16th Steering Committee Meeting on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey	
24-26 January 2022	Acting-Director General Popowski's visit to Türkiye	

1 February 2022	Follow-up meeting to EU-Turkey High Level Dialogue on Migration and Security (VC)	
17 March 2022	Meeting between Commissioner Johansson and Faruk Kaymakci, Deputy Foreign Minister of Türkiye	
7 April 2022	Mission of DG Monique Pariat to Ankara	Meetings with DFM Faruk Kaymakci and Deputy Interior Minister Muhterem Ince
25-26 April 2022	EU-Turkey subcommittee meeting on customs, taxation, drug trafficking and money laundering (VTC)	Migration issues discussed
18 May 2022	Commissioner Johansson meeting Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Meeting in the margins of the IMRF in New York
31 May 2022	DDG Popowski meeting with Deputy Minister of Interior Catakli	
23 June 2022	17th FRiT Steering Committee Meeting	A TR delegation led by Deputy Interior Minister Catakli participated in part of the meeting.
6 July 2022	Visit of Deputy Foreign Minister Kaymakci in Brussels	
13 September	DDG Popowski (online) meeting with Deputy Interior Minister Catakli	
26-28 October 2022	Commissioner Várhelyi visit to Istanbul and Van (TR-Iran border)	
8 December 2022	18th FRiT Steering Committee Meeting	
20 March 2023	Donors Conference: People in Türkiye and Syria	Support to the 2 countries (including refugees) in the aftermath of the February 2023 earthquake.
27-28 April 2023	EU-Türkiye subcommittee meeting on customs, taxation, drug trafficking and money laundering (VTC)	Migration issues discussed
5 July 2023	19 th FRiT Steering Committee Meeting	
6-7 September 2023	Commissioner Várhelyi visit to Türkiye	Meeting with Turkish authorities following the elections (including migration).
23 November 2023	EU-Türkiye High Level Dialogue on Migration and Security	Chaired by Commissioner Ylva Johansson and Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya
01 February 2024	European Council allocated EUR 2 billion for Syrian refugees in Türkiye for the period 2025-2027	

05-06 May 2024	DG Koopman to visit to Türkiye	Meeting with Turkish authorities, including migration.
22-24 May 2024	Commissioner Várhelyi visit to Türkiye	Meeting with Turkish authorities following the local elections (including migration).
3-4 December 2024	DDG HOME Johannes Luchner visit to Ankara	Meetings with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Presidency of Migration Management

D. ASIAN COUNTRIES

CHINA

The EU-China comprehensive strategic partnership came into force in 2003. China signed an Approved Destination Status Agreement in 2004, facilitating the entry of Chinese tourists into EU Member States and including provisions on readmission. Formal negotiation of an EU readmission agreement, based on 2002 negotiating directives, has not started yet. Negotiation of a PCA, including an article on readmission and visa cooperation, started in 2007.

A Strategic Agreement, not enabling the exchange of personal data, is in force with Europol.

At the 14th EU-China Summit in February 2012 both sides agreed to explore the possibilities of facilitating mobility for Chinese and EU citizens, and strengthen cooperation on illegal immigration, as well as to pay special attention to the question of mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic passports. At the 16th EU-China Summit (20-21 November 2013), shared commitments were taken to reinforce the objectives in the 2020 Agenda EU-China Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. Following that, a Roadmap, which consists of a two-stage approach, was finalised during the 2nd meeting of the EU-China Migration and Mobility Dialogue (Beijing, 9 April 2015). The first stage of the roadmap, which comprises the signature of the EU-China short stay visa waiver for holders of diplomatic passports, the permission for EU Member States to open Visa Application Centres in 15 Chinese cities and the first Expert meeting held in Beijing on 5 November 2015, is considered finalised. The implementation of the 2nd phase of the roadmap is currently on-going. It involves parallel negotiations on a visa facilitation agreement (VFA) covering holders of other types of passports (including ordinary passports). This also includes discussions on China allowing EU Member States to open further Visa Application Centres (VACs) in additional Chinese cities; and an agreement on cooperation in combating illegal migration (CIMA – including provisions on readmission in line with the EU mandate). Progress of the Migration and Mobility Dialogue (the last meeting took place in May 2017) and parallel negotiations have been stalled due to the apparent lack of interest on the side of China, their insistence on covering service passports by a visa waiver, which is not foreseen by the EU mandate or the roadmap that only cover diplomatic passports, and due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Key past and upcoming events

9 April 2019	EU-China Summit	China committed “to actively engage in the EU-China Mobility and Migration Dialogue (MDD) and to swiftly conclude the parallel negotiations on the agreements on visa facilitation and on cooperation in combating illegal migration.” The EU has invited China to indicate dates for the 5 th meeting of the MDD, but there has been no concrete reply by the CN side yet.
28 May 2019	Third round of negotiations on EU-China Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illegal Migration (CIMA) in Brussels	For the first time, China accepted to discuss concrete procedures on readmission and did not question the structure of the draft submitted in October 2018 after the second round of negotiations.
3 July 2019	Comments from China on draft Visa Facilitation Agreement	
26-27 November 2020	Technical meeting on immigration systems (webinar): policies and regulations	

10-11 December 2020	Seminar on cross-country cooperation to fight transnational organized crime: experiences of investigation, prosecution and conviction of trafficking in human beings' cases	
11 May 2021 and 2 July 2021	Trainings for EU-Embassies in China on identification of victims of trafficking	
16 December 2021	Virtual seminar on EU and Chinese return management	
1 April 2022	EU-China Summit (VTC)	
8 July 2022	2nd EU-China Dialogue on Drugs	
Fall 2022 (tbc)	Training for Chinese officials on anti-document fraud	
10 February 2023	Meeting between HOME DDG Luchner and the Chinese Ambassador in Brussels	Discuss relaunching dialogue on migration and mobility, follow-up article 25a Visa Code
23 April 2024	3rd EU-China Dialogue on Drugs	
17 October 2024	Virtual workshop on readmission management	
27 November 2024	Study visits of Chinese officials to the EU on THB and SOM, meeting with ATC	

INDIA

The EU-India Co-operation Agreement entered into force in 1994. In 2004 the EU and India established a Strategic Partnership. The EU-India Joint Action Plan was agreed in 2005 at the Summit in The Hague and revised in 2008 at the eighth EU-India Summit in Marseille. This plan aims to promote among other people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges. After the first EU-India migration dialogue meeting held in 2006, the December 2010 EU-India Summit emphasised the importance of movement of people, and agreed to deepen cooperation by establishing a regular, comprehensive and structured dialogue on migration issues.

India and Europol signed a Working Arrangement in March 2024; and they are now negotiating the implementing instruments (MoU on SIENA connection and Liaison Agreement enabling the deployment of a Liaison Officer at Europol' HQ).

The 2012 EU-India Summit discussed possible ways to facilitate mobility – a recurring Indian request in parallel with preventing and combating irregular migration. A Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) was signed and subsequently endorsed at the 2016 EU-India Summit. CAMM implementation is referred to in the EU-India Agenda for Action-2020, also endorsed at 2016 Summit as well as in the EU-India Roadmap 2025, endorsed at the 2020 EU-India Summit. The EU-India Leaders' Meeting in Porto on 8 May 2021 confirmed the commitment for close and comprehensive cooperation from both sides on all pillars of the CAMM and the continued engagement under the High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Mobility. A project implemented by ILO and ICMPD supported the CAMM/HLDMM from 2017 to 2022; a second phase was launched in October 2023. India continues to express a high level of interest in strengthening cooperation with the EU on legal migration and labour mobility, as well as visa facilitation for students and frequent travellers.

India has concluded bilateral agreements on migration and mobility with FR, PT, AT, DE, DK, FI, IT, CY; as of Dec 2024, EE, ES, EL, BG and BE-NE-LU [jointly] are also negotiating similar texts. Most EU Member States already grant visa-free access to Indian diplomats, notable exceptions being the Benelux countries.

Key past and upcoming events

15 July 2020	EU-India Summit	Adoption of Joint Statement and 2025 Roadmap
8 May 2021	EU-India Leaders Meeting	Adoption of Connectivity Partnership (including a section on people-to-people connectivity focused on students and researchers)
24 February 2022	Closing event of Phase I of the CAMM/HLDMM support project	
14 June 2022	Technical workshop on irregular migration	Facilitated by the former project implementing partners as an ad-hoc event
27 October 2022	EU-India High Level Dialogue on Migration and Mobility, Brussels	Announcement by the COM of preparations for the 2 nd phase of the migration and mobility project with India under Global Gateway.
20 October 2023	EU-India High Level Dialogue on Migration and Mobility + launch of the 2 nd phase of the CAMM/HLDMM support project, New Delhi	

21 October 2024	Hybrid workshop on digital skills and IT worker mobility	Outside of CAMM project but supported by the implementing partners in cooperation with the EU-India Digital Policy Dialogue
28 November 2024	EU-India High Level Dialogue on Migration and Mobility, Brussels	
29 November 2024	Hybrid workshop on readmission management	
Q1 2025 (tbc)	EU-India Summit	

BANGLADESH

The EU-Bangladesh Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification and Return of Persons without an Authorisation to Stay (SOPs) was signed on 20 September 2017. To support capacity to implement the SOPs, DG HOME started in July 2018 a project under the Readmission Capacity Building Facility (RCBF, EUR 4.8 million) aiming at developing a Returnee Case Management System (RCMS) in Bangladesh and deploying an AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) to enable search by fingerprints in the copy of the Machine-Readable Passport database owned by the Special Branch Police. The pilot phase was launched on 9 November 2020. Eight Joint Working Groups on the implementation of the SOPs with Bangladesh have taken place to date. In July 2021, Commission put forward a proposal for visa restrictive measures towards Bangladesh under Article 25a of the visa Code. Member States decided not to take action on the proposal at that time. The proposal remains on the table in the Council. The sustainable reintegration of returnees is supported through the PROTTASHA II project, which aims to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed policies. Since April 2022, the Frontex European Reintegration Programme is being implemented in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has been providing assistance with the support of the EU, international community and humanitarian and development organisations to the Rohingya refugees, who fled violence in Myanmar in 2017. While Bangladesh recognises in principle that the conditions in Myanmar currently do not allow for a safe and dignified return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, the Bangladeshi government increasingly asks for support for their return as soon as possible. The Bangladeshi government has tried to close the border to Myanmar for new arrivals, but there are new arrivals in the camps. Since January 2024, more 7,678 Myanmar civilians are reported to have faced refoulement-related incidents. The security situation in Myanmar is deteriorating and in January 2025 the border was controlled by an armed group.

During her visit to Dhaka in November 2022, Commissioner Johansson discussed strengthening cooperation on all aspects of migration management with the Bangladeshi authorities and both sides reaffirmed their commitment to countering irregular migration and migrant smuggling and continuing enhanced cooperation on return and reintegration of Bangladeshi nationals. During Commissioner Johansson visit to Bangladesh in November 2022, it was agreed that a comprehensive Migration and Mobility Dialogue, as well as the Talent Partnership, would be launched with Bangladesh. 8 JWG, two Migration and Mobility Dialogues and two Talent Partnership roundtables have taken place so far. In early July 2024, the EU launched the first EU-Bangladesh Talent Partnership contract (EUR 3 million, implemented by the International Labour Organisation). Next iteration of Migration and Mobility Dialogue, back-to-back with the JWG and Talent Partnership roundtable is planned for Q2 2025 in Dhaka.

In August 2024, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stepped down and fled. Parliament was dissolved and a government collapsed and was replaced with an interim government led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus. The interim government has confirmed their full commitment to continuing the established cooperation on all aspects of migration. Broad changes in the ranks of the national public administration are expected to continue in the coming months.

Key past and upcoming events

5 April 2019	3 rd EU- Bangladesh Joint Working Group on the Standard Operating Procedures for return, Brussels	
17 October 2019	EU-Bangladesh Sub-group on Human Rights and Good Governance (including a point on Rohingya), Dhaka	
20 October 2019	EU-Bangladesh Sub-group on Development (including points on migration and forced displacement)	

21 October 2019	EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission (including points on migration and Rohingya situation), Dhaka	
16 January 2020	4 th EU-Bangladesh Joint Working Group for the implementation of the SOPs, Dhaka	
21 June 2021	5 th EU-Bangladesh Joint Working Group for the implementation of the SOPs, VTC	
26 October 2021	EU-Bangladesh Diplomatic Consultations (VTC)	
10 March 2022	6 th EU-Bangladesh Joint Working Group for the Implementation of the SOPs, VTC	
19 May 2022	Bilateral meeting between Commissioner Johansson and State Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Alam	Meeting in the margins of the IMRF in New York
20 May 2022	10 th EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission (and subgroups on Trade, Development and Human Rights and Good Governance)	Foreseen discussion on return cooperation
10 – 11 November 2022	Visit of Commissioner Johansson	Foreseen discussions on enhanced cooperation on migration management, on progress in readmission, Talent Partnership and countering migrant smuggling
1 March 2023	7 th EU-Bangladesh Joint Working Group for the Implementation of the SOPs, Dhaka	
1-2 March 2023	First meeting of the Migration Dialogue back-to-back with the Joint Working Group on the implementation of the SOPs on return of irregular migrants	Discussions on readmission, operationalisation of a Talent Partnership, countering migrant smuggling, and trafficking in human beings.
2 May 2023	Visit of MD Shahriar Alam, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, to Brussels	Meeting with Commissioner Johansson with to discuss migration and broader geopolitical issues
1 December 2023	Meeting of co-chairs of the JWG + Technical meeting on the EU-Bangladesh RCMS in Brussels as a follow up to the JWG	
4 March 2024	8 th EU-Bangladesh Joint Working Group for the Implementation of the SOPs, Brussels	

5 March 2024	2 nd Talent Partnership Roundtable with Bangladesh, Brussels	
5 March 2024	2 nd Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD) with Bangladesh, Brussels	
8 July 2024	Signature of the first EU-Bangladesh Talent Partnership contract (EUR 3 million, implemented by ILO) and of the complementary Skills21 extension project of EUR 1.8 million (focused on talent partnership activities, implemented by ILO).	
4 November 2024	11 th EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission	
5-6 November 2024	Explanatory meeting on the draft Partnership and Cooperation Agreement	
January 2025	DG HOME/EEAS technical mission to Bangladesh	Preparatory mission to follow-up on the series of meetings held with Bangladesh in March 2024, ensure continuity and to prepare the next iteration of annual meetings.
Q2 2025	3rd Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD) with Bangladesh, back-to-back with the 3rd Talent Partnership Roundtable and 9th EU-Bangladesh Joint Working Group for the Implementation of the SOPs, Dhaka	

PAKISTAN

Pakistan is a major country of origin, transit and destination of refugees and migrants. Under the Strategic Engagement Plan of 2019, Pakistan and the EU have agreed to launch a comprehensive EU-Pakistan Migration and Mobility Dialogue. Following the visit of Commissioner Johansson to Pakistan in November 2022, the first meeting of the Migration and Mobility Dialogue took place on 15 March 2023 in Islamabad. The Dialogue was organised back-to-back with the 14th Joint Readmission Committee (JRC), a regular annual meeting focusing on the implementation of the EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreement (in force since 1 December 2010), as well as with the first Talent Partnership (TP) roundtable. The latest series of those meetings took place from 23-25 April 2024 in Brussels. The Talent Partnership contract (EUR 3 million, NDICI), to be implemented by the German GIZ, was signed in November 2024.

Next, third iteration of Mobility and Migration Dialogue, back-to-back with the 16th JRC and third TP roundtable are planned for Q2 2025, in Islamabad. Those annual meetings are complemented by interactions at regional level through the Budapest Process as well as bilateral meetings at technical level with Pakistani partners by representatives of EU institutions but also from EU Member States. In April 2024, Pakistan formally approved the deployment of a FRONTEX liaison officer who will be placed at the EU Delegation in Islamabad in Q2 2025.

The full and effective implementation of the Readmission Agreement remains a priority. Ensuring protection space in Pakistan and support for Afghan refugees and host communities in the country, addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, reducing further arrivals of irregular migrants, strengthening migration governance, border management, countering migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, as well as promoting opportunities for legal migration under the umbrella of the Talent Partnership (a major interest of Pakistan) are areas to continue to be addressed.

Pakistan has strongly committed to the fight against migrant smuggling, including through its Ministerial-level participation at the 2023 Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling and the organisation, under UNODC-led project (funded by the EU), of a regional conference on migrant smuggling.

At the same time, migration-related cooperation with Pakistan cannot be isolated from the regional dimension of Afghan displacement and cooperation with Afghanistan and Iran. Since October 2023, Pakistan has aggravated the situation of displaced Afghans by launching a major operation against illegal migrants targeting primarily Afghan nationals within an “Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan”. (IFRP). Even if these returns are labelled in the majority of the cases as “voluntary”, UN agencies report that most of the people interviewed testify experiencing harassment, detention or being otherwise incited to leave Pakistan. According to IOM flow data, since 15 September 2023, 805,991 individuals have returned to Afghanistan. Thirty-nine per cent (315,100 individuals) of this total have returned as of 1 January 2024. In July 2024 the Pakistani government announced that (upon request from UNHCR) it will continue with the pause in repatriation and that recently expired Proof of Registration Cards issued to Afghan nationals will be extended by another 1,5 year (until the end of 2025). In line with EU Council Conclusions on Afghanistan from September 2021 and March 2023, the EU has mobilized substantial assistance to help returnees on the Afghanistan side of the border [see the table on Afghanistan]. The EU continued to actively reach out to Pakistani authorities directly and called publicly on Pakistan to suspend the execution of the IFRP. It has made also clear in all communications that the assistance mobilized is not meant to help implement the Pakistani Plan but only to provide humanitarian assistance to the displaced returnees.

In the aftermath of Pakistan’s December airstrike in Afghanistan, the tensions between both countries have significantly heightened, resulting in recurring border confrontations. Pakistan’s Interior Ministry announced that Afghan nationals will require non-objection certificate (NOC) to reside in Islamabad. Effective from 31 December 2024, this decision aimed to enable stricter monitoring of Afghan nationals amidst concerns over their alleged involvement in political unrest and violent protests in Pakistan.

An Action Plan on Pakistan was elaborated and discussed in the respective EMWP meetings in June and July 2022. The subsequent discussions about the Action Plan on Pakistan continued in 2023 and 2024.

Key past and upcoming events

20 March 2019	EU-Pakistan Political Dialogue, Brussels	
26 March 2019	EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, Islamabad	
15 November 2019	EU-Pakistan Joint Commission	Including a point on migration and mobility
28 January 2020	11 th EU-Pakistan Joint Readmission Committee and high-level mission (DG HOME DDG meeting various migration-related counterparts)	
8 October 2020	EU-Pakistan Political Dialogue	Including point on migration (return and readmission) and implementation of Readmission Case Management System
3 November 2020	EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, Islamabad	Including point on migration (return and readmission, Pact on Migration and Asylum)
24 February 2021	12 th EU-Pakistan Joint Readmission Committee, VTC	
16 June 2021	EU-Pakistan Joint Commission	Included a point on migration and mobility.
3 December 2021	EU-Pakistan Political Dialogue	Included a point on migration and mobility.
7 December 2021	EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue	Included a point on migration and mobility.
27 June 2022	13 th EU-Pakistan Joint Readmission Committee, Brussels	
5 October 2022	EU-Pakistan Joint Commission	Included a point on migration and mobility
13-14 November 2022	Visit of Commissioner Johansson	Discussions on enhanced cooperation on migration management, including an agreement to launch the Migration Dialogue in Q1 2023, on progress in readmission, Talent Partnership and countering migrant smuggling
29 November 2022	EU-Pakistan Political Dialogue	Included a point on migration and mobility.
15 March 2023	14 th EU-Pakistan Joint Readmission Committee, Islamabad	
15-16 March 2023	First meeting of the Migration and Mobility Dialogue back-to-back with the 14 th Joint Readmission Committee and Talent Partnership roundtable, Islamabad	Discussions on readmission (within the JRC); operationalisation of a Talent Partnership; countering migrant smuggling, international protection of Afghan refugees and trafficking in human beings

31 May – 1 June 2023	Consular Workshop on cooperation with Pakistan on readmission, Berlin	
12 June 2023	Visit of Hina Rabbani Khar, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, to Brussels	Meeting with Commissioner Johansson to discuss migration and security issues
23 June 2023	EU-Pakistan Joint Commission	A point on migration and mobility on the agenda.
4 July 2023	Technical Workshop on operational cooperation on readmission with Pakistan, Warsaw	
26 July 2023	HOME/MOVE meeting with the Pakistani civil aviation authority and Federal Investigation Agency	
September 2023	Commissioner Johansson met Minister for Foreign Affairs on the margins of UNGA	
27 November 2023	Bilateral meeting between Commissioner Johansson and Mr Jalil Abbas Jilani, Caretaker Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan	Bilateral took place in the margins of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling, to discuss migration and security issues, incl. cooperation with Pakistan on tackling migrant smuggling
06 March 2024	9 th Round of the EU-Pakistan Political Dialogue	The meeting itself, together with targeted meetings with the Pakistani Special Envoy for Afghanistan and the representatives of the Pakistani military gave the opportunity to raise migration related issues, notably the implementation of the Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan
04-07 March 2024	DG HOME/EEAS mission to Pakistan (meetings at Federal Investigative Agency, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	Preparatory mission to review the state of implementation of bilateral commitments in the area of migration cooperation.
23 April 2024	2 nd Talent Partnership roundtable with Pakistan, Brussels	
24 April 2024	15 th EU-Pakistan Joint Readmission Committee, Brussels	
25 April 2024	2 nd meeting of the Migration and Mobility Dialogue	
12 November 2024	Bilateral meeting between DG HOME and Pakistan's delegation led by Minister of Interior, in the margins of the Budapest Process Ministerial meeting	Courtesy meeting to take stock of the state of play of EU-Pakistan cooperation in the area of migration management
21 November 2024	14 th EU-Pakistan Joint Commission	
Q2 2025	16 th EU-Pakistan Joint Readmission Committee, back-to-back with the 3 rd meeting of the Migration and Mobility Dialogue and the 3 rd Talent Partnership roundtable, Islamabad	

AFGHANISTAN

Since 2016, the EU has been engaged with Afghanistan in a constructive dialogue on migration and with the aim to build a long-term partnership in this area in a spirit of solidarity. This balanced and cooperation on migration was reflected in the Joint Way Forward (JWF) and its successor arrangement Declaration on Migration Cooperation (JDMC- signed on 26 April 2021) which built on the JWF and already very good EU-Afghan cooperation on migration governance by adapting it to the migratory context. These documents had been instrumental in allowing Afghans residing irregularly in the EU to return in a safe and orderly way, and in reintegrating them in Afghanistan. Since the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in August 2021, this arrangement is on hold. While any decision on returns is the competence of EU Member States within the limits imposed by EU law, carrying out returns remains extremely difficult, in the current circumstances the rights in Afghanistan are systematically abused.

The EU's policy towards Afghanistan is based on Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions adopted in September 2021 and March 2023. These are the benchmarks that determine the EU's engagement with the Taliban. The EU maintains contact with the Taliban to allow for dialogue on the political priorities of the EU and ensure the EU can provide support to the Afghan people.

From the beginning of the crisis in mid-August 2021, the Commission and the EEAS put in place a set of priority actions:

1. Safe evacuation and passage of EU nationals from Afghanistan, as well as of those Afghans and their families who have worked for the EU and for its Member States.
2. Ensure safe and legal pathways for Afghans in need of immediate protection, with a strong gender dimension. Building on the Resettlement Forum of July 2021, Commissioner Johannsson repeatedly called on EU Member States to step up their engagement on resettlement, increase their quotas and consider other complementary pathways to ensure the highest possible number of legal admissions of Afghan refugees, notably women and children.
3. On 7 October 2021, Commissioner Johannsson and High Representative Vice-President Josep Borrell convened a High-level Forum on providing protection to Afghans at risk dedicated to taking stock of the EU Member States' intentions as regards providing protection to the various categories of people at risk in Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries. In addition, a specific, multi-annual Support Scheme for Afghans was announced with the aim to combine short-term measures, notably evacuations/safe passage, and more medium- and long-term measures, including resettlement from neighbouring countries (based on referrals from UNHCR, e.g. from Iran and Pakistan), humanitarian admissions, and other complementary pathways (family reunification and pathways linked to study or work). For 2022, Member States committed 38,000 pledges for humanitarian admissions (as of November 2022, 41 000 humanitarian admission arrivals of Afghan nationals were reported) and 1,111 for resettlement. Furthermore, 13 000 places for Afghans at risk in 2023 were pledged by 16 Member States. Under the current EU resettlement and humanitarian admission scheme for 2024-2025, 8 Member States made specific pledges for Afghans. In total, MS pledged 29 310 places, of which 2 910 for resettlement (9% of total resettlement pledge) and 26 400 for humanitarian admission.
4. Continue supporting the neighbouring countries to Afghanistan and countries of transit in their efforts to provide protection, safe and dignified reception conditions for displaced Afghans and to support the host communities. Continuation of ongoing EU programmes and strengthening cooperation, including on capacity building for host communities in Pakistan, Iran and Tajikistan, as well as other countries in the region, to prevent the unsafe and irregular movements of people, to strengthen border management with the

support of Frontex and support protection systems, further reinforce existing programmes on law enforcement cooperation to counter migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings networks, with the support of Europol whenever feasible. In close cooperation with UNHCR and IOM, the new regional Team Europe Initiative has so far generated 1.1 billion euros in indicative financial allocations and aims to support Afghan IDPs and host communities through policy dialogue, protection (including social inclusion and sustainable reintegration), provision of basis services, job creation and access to the labour market.

5. *The Regional Team Europe Initiative on the Afghan displacement situation put forward by the Commission is the EU’s response to the Afghan regional displacement crisis. It links to the Support Platform for the Solution Strategy for Afghan refugees SSAR project run by UNHCR, and covers Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian countries. In full compliance with the Council Conclusions of 21 September 2021 and March 2023, EU and Member States support protection, improve livelihood conditions and provide durable solutions for displaced Afghans and their host communities. The TEI also supports better migration management and fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, thus contributing to the operationalization of the external dimension of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum in countries of primary relevance for the EU. The Regional TEI gathers humanitarian and development actors from EU Services (DG INTPA as well as ECHO and HOME) and 13 EU Member States.*

6. *Enhanced political outreach and dialogue and further strengthening the international community’s response on Afghan displacement is also carried out through the Core Group of the Support Platform for the Solution Strategy for Afghan refugees (SSAR). The EU has used its lead role as chair of this Group in this respect in 2021 and 2022, followed in 2023 by Qatar and the Netherlands as the Chair and co-Chair. To note, that - since October 2023 - the EU has been also actively engaged in providing assistance to Afghans returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan in the framework of the Pakistani “Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan” [see the table on Pakistan for more details]. DG ECHO mobilised EUR 61 million to assist the returnees (EUR 60 million directed to the Afghan side of the border and EUR 1 million to assist on the Pakistani side of the border).*

Key past and upcoming events

8 May 2019	6 th Meeting of the EU – Afghanistan Joint Working Group under the JWF on migration	
14 May 2019	2nd EU – Afghanistan Joint Committee, Kabul	
9 May 2019	2nd meeting of the Special Working Group on Human Rights, Good Governance and Migration, Kabul	
6 December 2019	7 th Meeting of the EU – Afghanistan Joint Working Group under the JWF on migration, Brussels	
17 – 18 February 2020	International Conference on 40 years of hosting Afghan refugees in Pakistan, Islamabad	
11 November 2020	8th meeting of the EU - Afghanistan Joint Working Group under the Joint Way Forward (JWF) on migration issues	
23 -24 November 2020	Ministerial Pledging Conference on Afghanistan	

24 February 2021	Special Working Group meeting on Human Rights, Good Governance and Migration	
14-18 March 2022	EU Special Envoy Niklasson mission to Islamabad and Kabul	
24 March 2022	Third Global Core Group Meeting of the SSAR Support Platform	
8-12 May 2022	EU Special Envoy Niklasson second mission to Kabul since the Taliban takeover and Islamabad	
14-15 September 2022	DMD Paola Pampaloni joined mission with INTPA in framework of EU's SSAR chairmanship to Pakistan	
02-06 October 2022	EU Special Envoy Niklasson third mission to Kabul since the Taliban takeover	
27 October 2022	The 9th Expert Platform on Afghanistan (EUAA) focusing on the involvement of selected civil society organisations in the identification of long-term solutions for Afghans	
27 October 2022	The 9th Expert Platform on Afghanistan (EUAA) focusing on the involvement of selected civil society organisations in the identification of long-term solutions for Afghans	
2 November 2023	Global Core Group meeting of the SSAR platform	Discussion about the evolving situation with regard to the Government of Pakistan's decision to deport undocumented foreigners.
13 December 2022	The 10 th Expert Platform on Afghanistan (EUAA) focusing on security screening, identity checks and travel documents	
27 October 2023	Meeting of the Regional Team Europe Initiative on the Afghan Displacement Situation	
5 December 2023	EUAA Expert Platform on Safe Pathways for Afghans focusing on integration practices & housing support for Afghan refugees Brussels	

27 February 2024	Regional Team Europe Initiative on the Afghan Displacement Situation	High level coordination meeting
20 March 2024	EUAA Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Network Expert Platform on Safe pathways for Afghans	
10-11 June 2024	Senior Official Meeting on Afghanistan	Gathering of 50plus delegations from the European Union and like-minded partners to discuss the situation in Afghanistan in a triple nexus approach. The issue of Afghan internally displaced persons as well as the Pakistani IFRP have been discussed.
26 June 2024	Global Core Group meeting of the SSAR platform	Discussion about creating an enabling environment for Afghan nationals returning to Afghanistan and host communities to successfully integrate
25 September 2024	EUAA Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Network Expert Platform on Safe pathways for Afghans	
17 October 2024	Regional Team Europe Initiative on the Afghan Displacement Situation	Coordination meeting
10 December 2024	EUAA Expert Platform on Safe Pathways for Afghans	

IRAN

In February 2019, the Council adopted the text of the Framework for a Comprehensive Dialogue Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union on Migration and Refugee Issues, i.e. the terms for reference for a migration dialogue. The document was endorsed during the EU-Iran High Level Dialogue of December 2020 (not yet signed). The EU has repeatedly approached the Iranian side, also at a high level, with the proposal of holding the first meeting of the dialogue at senior official level, however up till now, the dialogue has not been launched. Given the wider political context, it seems unlikely that the Dialogue would be launched in a foreseeable future. However, the EU will observe if the new reformist government intends to re-engage on bilateral relations and offer some concrete opportunities.

Key past and upcoming events

8 December 2020	High-Level Dialogue with Iran – endorsement of Dialogue on Migration and Refugees Issues, agreement to start discussions at technical level while awaiting political launch.	
October 2021	Visit of EEAS delegation to Tehran	Possibility of launching the first technical meeting under the Dialogue on Migration and Refugee issues brought up.
30 March 2021	EEAS/HOME discussion with Iranian Ambassador in Brussels	Formal invite of an Iranian delegation to Brussels to hold technical discussions under the Dialogue on Migration and Refugee issues.
14 October 2021	Visit of EEAS DSG Mora to Tehran	Expressed the willingness of EEAS and HOME to organise a first working meeting at senior level.
26 March 2022	Visit of EEAS DSG Mora to Tehran	Insisted on the importance of having a technical discussion on migration
25 June 2022	Visit of the HRVP to Tehran	Raised the importance of having a technical discussion on migration and related issues in Brussels, under the agreed Terms of Reference of the migration dialogue

IRAQ

Four meetings under the informal Migration Dialogue took place in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021 respectively, discussions comprised irregular migration and return, migration governance and migration and development. The 2022 meeting of the informal dialogue could not take place due to general elections and a political deadlock in the government formation process. The 19 March 2023 EU-Iraq Cooperation Council emphasized that while not losing sight of the need to (re)-commit to the general reform path in Iraq and to address the root causes of fragility in a holistic manner, concrete steps on returns were necessary ahead of the June 2023 JHA Council, including in view of the proposal for restrictive visa measures under Article 25 put forward by the Commission in July 2021.

The readmission of own nationals is included as a legally binding obligation in the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (art. 105) in force since 1 August 2018.

Iraq is one of the countries for which restrictive measures were proposed by the Commission, in July 2021, following the first report under Art. 25a of the Visa Code. The Council, however, decided not to proceed with the proposal at the time. Discussions are ongoing with Iraq on returns, including non-voluntary, through regular meetings with the Iraqi authorities at the political and technical level on concrete steps to improve readmission cooperation, as well as a coordinated joint demarche conducted in Baghdad on 6 May 2023. The proposal remains on the table in the Council.

This intense engagement culminated in a meeting called by foreign minister Hussein on 23 May 2023, during which he announced a new policy on return and readmission based on the acceptance of all types of returns, and a firm commitment to cooperate and deliver tangible results. Since April 2022, the Frontex European Reintegration Programme is being implemented in Iraq.

Regular monitoring meetings take place with the Iraqi Ambassador in Brussels to discuss readmission cooperation. Negotiations on practical arrangements for readmission at EU level (non-binding EU readmission arrangement) are ongoing.

Key past and upcoming events

27 March 2019	3 rd meeting of Informal Migration Dialogue	
8 September 2020	Sub-committee meeting on Human Rights and Democracy under the PCA.	
17 September 2020	Visit of Iraqi Foreign Minister in Brussels/meeting HRVP	Intention to hold the next iteration of the informal Migration Dialogue was confirmed
15 February 2021	4th meeting of the informal Migration Dialogue	
17 June 2021	Meeting of the EU Delegation with Iraqi Prime Minister to deliver a letter addressed to three migration-related ministers and co-signed by HRVP and the EU Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs focusing on Iraqi lack of cooperation on non-voluntary returns.	
21 June 2021	Iraqi Foreign Minister took part in FAC	
30 June 2021	Iraqi Prime Minister met PCOM in Brussels	
30 July 2021	Meeting with the newly established Iraqi National Committee on Migration, headed by DFM Khairallah.	Iraq agreed to revert in writing with an outline of their proposals on return and readmission on which basis further exchanges could take place.

6-7 September 2021	Visit to Iraq by HR/VP Borrell	On readmission and returns, Iraq verbally reconfirmed willingness to extend non-voluntary return to some other categories. Measures taken to restrict arrivals of irregular migrants into Belarus, such as flights suspension in place until mid- September.
24 September 2021	Iraqi Foreign Minister replies to a June Letter of HRVP and Commissioner Johansson	Openness to work on migration including returns, however, forced returns not approached.
27 October 2021	Iraqi Foreign Minister follow up letter to his September letter addressed to HRVP and Commissioner Johansson.	Reiterates openness to work on migration including returns, providing more details on proposed measures however, forced returns are not addressed.
15 November 2021	VP Schinas' visit to Iraq	Talks focused on the situation at the Belarus border. Non-voluntary returns brought up also in relation to the process under article 25a of the Visa Code. Reiteration of commitment to solve the BY situation.
29 November 2021	Visit of DFM Khairallah to Brussels	The DFM met with an EU delegation led by DG HOME (DDG Luchner). Discussions focused on the current situation at the EU/Belarus external border, the Visa Code article 25a process and ways to improve cooperation on voluntary and non-voluntary returns of Iraqi citizens.
20 January 2022	Visit of Foreign Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister to Brussels	To discuss cooperation on migration and esp. returns in the context of the BY situation and in general
10 March 2022	Visit of DFM and the National Committee on Migration to Brussels	Discussion on returns, including non-voluntary continued. The Iraqi caretaker government showed openness but was unable to engage in official written confirmation.
10 May 2022	Meetings of Iraqi Foreign Minister Hussein with HRVP and Commissioner Johansson	Discussion on current situation and returns. Iraq stressed the Iraqi Airways ban that they see as a major irritant.

17-19 May 2022	HOME/EEAS/INTPA mission to Baghdad and Erbil	EU delegation led by DG HOME (DDG Luchner) to continue discussions on cooperation on migration, mainly concrete steps to improve cooperation on voluntary and non-voluntary returns of Iraqi citizens.
19 March 2023	EU-Iraq Cooperation Council (Brussels)	Discussion to also include migration, including readmission cooperation.
Since Q4 2023	Regular monitoring meetings on readmission hosted at the Iraqi embassy (Brussels)	DG HOME, EEAS and Presidency attendance
06 May, 2023	EU demarche delivered on cooperation on return and readmission (Baghdad)	The demarche was delivered in the presence of Mr Mohammed Bahr al-Uloom, Deputy Foreign Minister. Attendance: AT - BG - CZ - DE - EL – ES – HU - FI - FR - IT - NL -RO - SE. Norway was invited as Schengen country.
15 June, 2023	HRVP Borrell's meeting with FM Hussein at the margins of the VII. Syria Conference	HRVP thanked the Government of Iraq for the proactive cooperation on the migration file
02 May 2024	Meeting between Commission, EU Member States and Iraq hosted by the BE Presidency	Discussion on cooperation on return and readmission
03 May 2024	Meeting for Negotiations of practical arrangements on readmission cooperation (Brussels)	
29-30 September 2024	Negotiations of practical arrangements on readmission cooperation (Baghdad)	

E. EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

ARMENIA

EU relations with Armenia are currently governed by the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which was signed in November 2017 and entered into force on 1 March 2021 (substantial parts of it had been provisionally applied already since 1 June 2018). Building on the CEPA, and defining ambitious joint policy goals, the EU and Armenia are negotiating a new Partnership Agenda which will be underpinned by a EUR 270 million Resilience and Growth Plan for Armenia for the period 2024-2027.

The EU-Armenia Mobility Partnership was signed on 27 October 2011. The first EU-Armenia Mobility Partnership High Level Meeting took place in January 2018. The Visa Facilitation Agreement was signed on 17 December 2012 and the Readmission Agreement on 19 April 2013. Both agreements entered into force on 1 January 2014. Both agreements are implemented in a satisfactory manner, the only issue being the high number of unfounded asylum applications. In September 2024, the European Commission launched the visa liberalisation dialogue with Armenia. This process aims to help Armenia obtaining a visa-free regime for short-stays with the EU, but it will also allow to leverage further reforms in the related areas like justice, security, anti-corruption. In this optic, assistance to border management will gain importance under EU's cooperation with Armenia; a working arrangement between Frontex and Armenia is in place since 2012 and in April 2024, Frontex Management Board authorised the Agency to negotiate a new one. An Administrative Arrangement establishing cooperation between the European Commission and the Migration Service of Armenia in the European Migration Network was signed in October 2022.

A Working Arrangement with Europol was signed in 2021 and with CEPOL in 2017; an international agreement between Armenia and the EU on cooperation with Eurojust was signed in September 2024. Armenia is a beneficiary of the two EU-funded regional capacity-building projects: TOPCOP, managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol and “Fighting Against Organised Crime in the Eastern Partnership Region” managed by Europol.

In the framework of the EU’s support to the rule of law and security sector governance reforms, the EU has supported the establishment of the new Ministry of Interior (MoI) as of January 2023. The ongoing bilateral support package includes two actions for a total of EUR 6.5 million aimed at building capacity of the MoI and improve police services. On migration governance, there are two ongoing projects (EUR 3 million), supporting capacity building of the MoI for effective migration management, and the reorganisation of the Migration and Citizenship Services. Another project aims at enhancing the safety and security of the Meghri Crossing Point at the border with Iran. At Armenia’s request, Russian Border Guards are gradually reducing their presences at Armenia’s borders. By 1 August 2024, the FSB Border Guards withdrew from the ‘Zvartnots’ airport and from the border with Azerbaijan. On 1 January 2025, the responsibility for controls at the Armenian border crossing point with Iran was transferred from Russian to Armenian border guards and Armenian border guards started patrolling alongside FSB border guards at the green borders with Türkiye and Iran. Armenia has yet to build the capacity to effectively control the entirety of its borders.

Key past and upcoming events

August 2020	6 th EU-Armenia Joint Readmission Committee – written exchange	
17 December 2020	EU-Armenia Partnership Council	
28 April 2021	EU-Armenia Joint Visa Facilitation Committee	

27 May 2021	EU-Armenia Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
29 June 2021	7 th EU-Armenia Joint Readmission Committee	
28 April 2022	EU-Armenia Partnership Committee	
18 May 2022	EU-Armenia Partnership Council	
14 July 2022	8 th EU-Armenia Joint Readmission Committee	
8 November 2022	12 th EU-Armenia Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	The EU and Armenia exchanged on issues related to security (Counterterrorism, Drug trafficking, Trafficking in human beings, and cybercrime, incl. the cooperation with both Europol and CEPOL) and migration (implementation of the Visa Facilitation Agreement and of the Readmission Agreement, asylum statistics).
28 June 2023	EU-Armenia Partnership Committee	
19 October 2023	7 th EU-Armenia Joint Visa Facilitation Committee	
25 October 2023	9 th EU-Armenia Joint Readmission Committee, Yerevan.	
19 January 2024	EU-Armenia Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	The EU and Armenia discussed Armenian aspirations for the launch of a visa liberalisation dialogue as well as challenges induced by the influx of the displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh.
13 February 2024	EU-Armenia Partnership Council	The EU and Armenia shared issues related to migration, mobility and the possible launch of a visa liberalisation dialogue.
3-4 June 2024	Frontex Technical Mission to Yerevan	Frontex/EUD and Government discussed next steps to update the cooperation agreement with Frontex and possibilities to extend cooperation.
11-12 June 2024	EU-Armenia Partnership Committee	Armenia inquired about the process of the Visa liberalisation dialogue as well as issues related to the EU Asylum Agency (requesting potential for support on training) and informed about their progress on the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan and their cooperation with Frontex.
9 September 2024	VP Schinas high level visit	Launch of visa liberalisation dialogue (VLD)
5-6 November 2024	HOME technical mission VLD	Objective: to explain visa liberalisation dialogue process
11 December 2024	Senior Official meeting VLD	Senior Officials overseeing the visa liberalisation dialogue met. AM side was the Minister of Interior. HOME

		side: DDG Luchner.
2025 (Q1-Q2)	8 th EU-Armenia Joint Visa Facilitation Committee meeting	
Q1-Q2 2025	10 th EU-Armenia Joint Readmission Committee, Brussels.	
10-14 February	VLD expert mission I	
18 February 2025	EU-Armenia Justice, Freedom and Security Sub-Committee	
17-21 March	VLD expert mission II	
May 2025 (tbc)	EU-Armenia Partnership Council	
September 2025 (tbc)	EU-Armenia Partnership Committee	

AZERBAIJAN

EU relations with Azerbaijan are governed by the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which entered into force in 1999. Negotiations on a framework agreement to replace the PCA started in February 2017 but are currently on hold.

The EU-Azerbaijan Mobility Partnership was signed on 5 December 2013 and the first High-Level Meeting was organised in February 2017. The Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements entered into force on 1 September 2014. The Visa Facilitation Agreement and the Readmission Agreement are implemented in a satisfactory manner. Strengthening border management is another strand of EU's cooperation with Azerbaijan. A working arrangement between Frontex and Azerbaijan is in place since 2013.

Azerbaijan is a beneficiary of two EU-funded regional capacity-building projects: TOPCOP and "Fighting organised crime in the Eastern partnership region., managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol.

Key past and upcoming events

6 November 2019	EU-Azerbaijan Joint Visa Facilitation Committee	
5 March 2020	EU-Azerbaijan JLS Subcommittee, Brussels	
Autumn 2020	EU-Azerbaijan Joint Readmission Committee (written exchange)	
19 November 2020	EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Committee	
18 December 2020	EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council	
27 April 2021	EU-Azerbaijan Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss, share updates and exchange views on many topics of mutual interest for the EU and Azerbaijan in the home affairs area, such as the implementation of the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements, the migration / asylum / border management situation as well as the recent counterterrorism / combating organised crime measures.
22 June 2022	EU-Azerbaijan Joint Readmission Committee	
19 July 2022	EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council	
22-23 May 2023	EU-Azerbaijan Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	

23 November 2023	EU-Azerbaijan 7th Joint Visa Facilitation Committee	
12 July 2024	8 th Joint Readmission Committee	
TBC	EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council (TBC)	
TBC	EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Committee (TBC)	

BELARUS

Belarus is the only country in the Eastern Partnership region that does not have a framework document with the EU. The EU-Belarus Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1995, but ratification was frozen in 1997. Negotiations on the EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities (a political document of non-binding nature) started in 2016, however were put on hold in 2020. Following fraudulent elections in 2020 the EU scaled down bilateral relations with Belarus, suspended cooperation with the Belarusian authorities and channelled its assistance in support to the people of Belarus, including Belarusian democratic forces and civil society (see Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and 19 February 2024). Restrictive measures and sectoral sanctions have also been adopted.

In 2021, Lithuania, Poland and Latvia experienced an unprecedented increase in irregular border crossings from Belarus, as a result of the Belarusian regime's attempts to incite or acquiesce in irregular border crossings of non-EU nationals into the EU for political purposes. The EU and its Member States strongly condemned this instrumentalisation of migrants and refugees by the Belarusian regime, including in the 2024 Council conclusions. In 2022, the situation has de-escalated at the external EU borders with Belarus with a significantly lower number of arrivals and prevented crossings. Despite a year-on-year increase recorded in 2023, the level of arrivals and prevented crossings remained well below the peak of the crisis in 2021. The situation at the EU-BY border has become more difficult in 2024, with a significant increase in the number of irregular border crossings in 2024, compared to the previous year. The dynamics however remain complex and unpredictable, and the Commission keeps monitoring the developments. On 11 January 2025 the Agreement between the Belarus and the Government and Russia on mutual recognition of visas and other issues related to the entry of foreign citizens and stateless persons into the territories of the entered into force.

On 13 October 2016, Belarus and the EU signed a Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership. The kick off meeting took place on 10 November 2017. On 1 July 2020, the EU-Belarus Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements entered into force. On 28 June 2021, Belarusian authorities announced its decision to suspend the Readmission Agreement (formally notified on 2 December 2021).

On 9 November 2021, the Council adopted the Commission proposal on the partial suspension of the EU-Belarus Visa Facilitation Agreement. The suspension concerns government officials of Belarus (members of Belarus official delegations; members of Belarus national and regional Governments and Parliaments, Belarus Constitutional Court and Belarus Supreme Court). In line with the latest guidelines, DG HOME has suspended any ongoing or planned bilateral engagement with representatives of Belarus, including at technical/expert level.

Belarus has a Working Arrangement signed with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) since 2009 but is not involved in any EBCGA operations.

Key past and upcoming events

26 March 2019	6 th and final round of negotiations on the visa facilitation and readmission agreements, Brussels	Final texts were agreed between the chief negotiators on 29 March.
24-25 April 2019	7 th meeting of the EU-Belarus Coordination Group, Minsk	

GEORGIA

The EU – Georgia Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreement, (succeeding the PCA of 1999), was signed on 26 June 2014 in Brussels and entered fully into force on 1 July 2016.

The Mobility Partnership between the European Union and Georgia was signed in November 2009. The Readmission and Visa Facilitation Agreements with Georgia entered into force on 1st March 2011. Georgian citizens were granted visa-free travel to the Schengen area on 28 March 2017. On 20 December the Commission adopted a proposal for a Council decision to suspend the visa exemption for Georgian diplomats [Art 10 of the VFA] and suspend visa facilitations for Georgian diplomats and officials [Art 4-7 of the VFA]. This proposal follows the broad agreement of the Member States at the Foreign Affairs Council of 16 December. The Council will examine this proposal and decide whether to partially suspend the Visa Facilitation Agreement, and task Member States to take the necessary internal measures.

The seventh report under the visa suspension mechanism adopted in December 2024 concluded that in order to continue fulfilling all visa liberalisation benchmarks and to avoid the possible activation of the suspension mechanism, Georgia needs to take further urgent action to address the Commission's recommendations. The report noted that in particular Georgia needs to ensure and uphold the protection of fundamental rights, avoid and repeal any legislation that may restrict fundamental rights and freedoms, align its visa policy, address unfounded asylum applications in Member States, and address legislative, policy and institutional issues.

*Georgia applied for EU membership on 3 March 2022. The European Council recognised the **European perspective** for Georgia in June 2022 and Georgia was granted **candidate status** in December 2023, on the understanding that the relevant nine steps set out in the Commission recommendation of 8 November 2023 are taken.*

Building on its conclusions in June 2024, on 17 October 2024 the European Council reiterated its serious concerns regarding the course of action taken by the Georgian government, which runs counter to the values and principles upon which the EU is founded. The European Council recalled that such a course of action jeopardises Georgia's European path, and de facto halts the accession process. Serious concerns regarding the course of action taken by the Georgian authorities were reiterated by the European Council on 19 December. The European Council also regretted the Georgian authorities' decision to suspend the country's EU accession process until 2028.

Following discussions at the Foreign Affairs Council of 24 June 2024 and the European Council of 27 June, the Commission and the EEAS have taken steps to respond to democratic backsliding in Georgia. It has been agreed to withhold all funds directly benefiting Georgian authorities (amounting to over EUR 120 million, to suspend the European Peace Facility Assistance Measure 2024 (EUR 30 million) and to suspend high-level bilateral visits, meetings and events, other than those focused on finding a way out of the crisis. The support to civil society and independent media has been stepped up.

A Working Arrangement between Georgia and CEPOL, replacing the previous Cooperation Agreement, was signed on 22 June 2022. Georgia is a beneficiary of the two regional capacity-building projects: TOPCOP and "Fighting against organised crime in the Eastern partnership region", managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol. Since 2024, Georgia has been participating in an international operation on cultural heritage crime alongside five EU Member States, Switzerland and Europol. An operational Agreement enabling the exchange of personal data with Europol has been in force since 2017.

In September 2022 a new Working Arrangement between Georgia and the EUD (European Union Drugs Agency), replacing the former Memorandum of Understanding (2015), and the 2022-2024 work programme entered into force.

A revised working arrangement between Frontex and Georgia was signed on 11 February 2021. Frontex operated the first joint EU-Member States repatriation flight to Georgia in September 2023. Since 2021 Georgia is an observer in the European Migration Network.

Key past and upcoming events		
5 March 2019	EU-Georgia Association Council, Brussels	Bilateral meeting between Commissioner Avramopoulos and Prime Minister of Georgia in the margins of the Association Council to discuss stepping up cooperation, followed by a visit of DG to Georgia (23-24 April 2019).
22 May 2019	JLS Subcommittee with Georgia, Tbilisi	Discussion to identify concrete operational measures to decrease irregular migration and crime-related challenges linked to the travel of Georgian citizens to the EU.
18 June 2019	EU-Georgia Association Committee, Tbilisi	
17 September 2019	9 th EU-Georgia Joint Readmission Committee, Tbilisi	
1 July 2020	EU-Georgia Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
11 November 2020	10 th EU-Georgia Joint Readmission Committee (VTC)	
15 December 2020	EU-Georgia Association Committee	
16 March 2021	EU-Georgia Association Council	
15 October 2021	EU-Georgia Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
22 October 2021	11 th EU-Georgia Joint Readmission Committee (VTC)	
24-25 March 2022	EU-Georgia Association Committee	
22-23 June 2022	EU-Georgia Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
6 September 2022	EU-Georgia Association Council	
30 November 2022	12 th EU-Georgia Joint Readmission Committee, Brussels	
1 December 2022	EU-Georgia Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
18-19 July 2023	EU-Georgia Association Committee	
26 October 2023	13 th EU-Georgia Joint Readmission Committee, Tbilisi	
20 February 2024	EU-Georgia Association Council	
28 November 2024	14 th EU-Georgia Joint Readmission Committee, Brussels	
2025 (tbc)	17 th EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue	
2025 (tbc)	EU-Georgia Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
Q3-Q4 2025 (tbc)	15 th EU-Georgia Joint Readmission Committee, Tbilisi	

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The EU-Republic of Moldova Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, (succeeding the PCA of 1994), was signed on 27 June 2014 and fully entered into force on 1 July 2016.

The EU-Moldova Visa Facilitation Agreement and Readmission Agreement entered into force in January 2008. An amended Visa Facilitation Agreement entered into force in July 2013. A Mobility Partnership was signed in June 2008. Moldovan citizens were granted visa-free travel to the Schengen area on 28 April 2014. Moldovan citizens continued to benefit from visa-free travel to the EU and the Schengen Associated Countries. From 28 April 2014 until 31 December 2020, some 2 366 647 Moldovan citizens made almost 9 million trips to the Schengen area under the visa-free regime. The seventh report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism adopted in December 2024 confirmed that Moldova continues to fulfil the visa liberalisation benchmarks. At the same time, it also identified that further efforts were needed to align Moldova's visa policy with the EU list of visa-free required countries, in particular those presenting irregular migration or security risks to the EU, as well as continue combatting organised crime.

Moldova concluded agreements or arrangements with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) since 2005. A Status agreement was signed on 17 March 2022. An operational and strategic cooperation agreement is in force with Europol (2015), and so is a working arrangement with CEPOL (2012). Moldova is a beneficiary of the two regional capacity-building projects: TOPCOP managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol, "Fighting against organised crime in the Eastern Partnership Region", as well as of the bilateral project EU4Security, also managed by CEPOL and funded by the EU Delegation. The European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) redirected and scaled up its activities to assist in managing the influx of refugees (with additional EUR 15 million) and support on Solidarity Lanes. Amendment of EUBAM's mandate was signed on 6 June 2022, allowing executive powers for border checks and customs controls, if requested.

In 2021, Moldova became an observer in the European Migration Network.

Moldova was awarded EU candidate status on 23 June 2022. On 14 December 2023, the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with the country. The first intergovernmental conference marking the formal launch of the accession negotiations was held on 25 June 2024.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is having severe spill-over effects on Moldova. Since 24 February 2022, over 1,039,749 Ukrainian nationals have entered Moldova (via the MD-UA border sector), of which roughly 127,000 have remained. Since March 2023, 81,988 displaced persons from Ukraine have registered for Temporary Protection in the Republic of Moldova, 64,466 Temporary Protection documents have been issued. The EU has been mobilising several strands of assistance since the outbreak of the war (humanitarian, border and migration management, security, energy, trade). In parallel, the programmed assistance is being re-purposed to strengthen Moldova's resilience. Transfers of vulnerable people are also taking place from Moldova to the EU, under the Solidarity Platform, coordinated by the Commission. Since March 2022 Member States, Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and Iceland (EU+) made pledges to welcome 15 870 people transiting Moldova. Out of the pledges made so far, a total of 2,708 persons have been transferred to the EU+ from Moldova, mostly via air (charters and commercial flights), within the agreed workflow in cooperation with UNHCR, IOM and the support of EUAA. In order to support transfers, DG NEAR is running a programme implemented by IOM Moldova entitled "Supporting Protection, Transit, Voluntary and Informed Return and Reintegration of Eastern Partnership Citizens and Third Country Nationals affected by the conflict in Ukraine" with a budget of €15 million for a duration of 36 months (having started retroactively on 24 February 2022).

Moldova is currently affected by an energy crisis following Russia's Gazprom unilateral decision to halt gas deliveries to Moldova's Transnistrian region as of 1 January 2025, causing rolling blackouts and halting all economic activity in the region, with the potential to turn into a humanitarian crisis.

Key past and upcoming events		
30 September 2019	Association Council	
15 October 2019	10 th EU-Moldova Joint Readmission Committee, Brussels	
14 November 2019	JLS Subcommittee	
24 September 2020	JLS Subcommittee	
19 February 2020	EU-Moldova Association Committee	
18 November 2020	11 th EU-Moldova Joint Readmission Committee	
12 October 2021 (VTC)	Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
28 October 2021	EU-Moldova Association Council	
2 – 3 March 2022	Visit of HRVP Borrell and Commissioner Várhelyi to Moldova	
3 March 2022	Visit of Commissioner Lenarcic to Moldova	
4 May 2022	PEC Charles Michel visit to Moldova	
12 May 2022	Visit of Commissioner Johansson to Moldova	
17 June 2022	EU-Moldova Association Committee	
11 July 2022	First meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Thematic Focus: Firearms
7 September 2022	Second meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Stocktaking
19 October 2022	Human Rights Dialogue	
20 October 2022	Third meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Thematic Focus: Trafficking in Human Beings
20 October 2022	JLS Subcommittee	
10-11 November 2022	PEP Roberta Metsola visit to Moldova	
6 December 2022	Fourth meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Thematic focus: Financial dimension of organised crime
7 February 2023	EU-Republic of Moldova Association Council	Discuss EU-Moldova relations against the background of Moldova's EU candidate country status, exchange views on global and regional challenges, including the negative impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine.
10 May 2023		

	Sixth meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Thematic focus: counterterrorism
21 September 2023	Seventh meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Thematic focus: hybrid threats (with UPM)
9 November 2023	Eight meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Thematic focus: drugs
21 March 2024	European Council	The European Council welcomed the progress of the Republic of Moldova (and Ukraine) in advancing on the necessary reforms on the EU path. Further to the submission of the draft negotiating frameworks for the Republic of Moldova (and Ukraine), the European Council invited the Council to swiftly adopt them and to take work forward without delay.
15-16 February 2024	9 th meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Thematic focus: border management
21 May 2024	8th EU-Republic of Moldova Association Council	
28 May 2024	10 th meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Thematic focus: large IT security systems
23-25 September	Bilateral screening meeting on Chapter 24 acquis (Justice, Freedom and Security)	
24 September 2024	11 th meeting of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova	Thematic focus: FIMI

UKRAINE

The Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) entered into force in 1998. Negotiations on an EU-Ukraine Association Agreement started in September 2008 and initialled in 2012. Ukraine and the EU parliament simultaneously ratified the economic and political parts of the Association Agreement on 16 September 2014.

The Readmission and Visa Facilitation agreements were concluded in 2008. An amended version of the Visa Facilitation agreement with Ukraine entered into force in July 2013. As of the 11 June 2017, Ukrainian citizens, can travel visa-free to the Schengen area. The fourth report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism adopted in August 2021 confirmed that Ukraine has taken actions identified in the Third Report and the visa liberalisation benchmarks continue to be fulfilled.

An operational Agreement enabling the exchange of personal data is in force with Europol and a Working Arrangement was concluded with CEPOL. Ukraine is a beneficiary of the regional capacity-building project TOPCOP, managed by CEPOL and supported by Europol.

The fifth visa suspension mechanism report covered the period up until the end of 2021, and mainly reflected the situation before the start of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Under the exceptional circumstances, the visa-free regime between the EU and Ukraine has allowed to facilitate travel to and from Ukraine, in particular for those Ukrainian nationals who decided not to take up residence in the EU or do not fall under the scope of the temporary protection directive. The sixth (October 2023) and seventh (December 2024) reports, concluded that Ukraine continues to meet the visa liberalisation benchmarks.

The Administrative Arrangement establishing co-operation between the European Commission and the State Migration Service of Ukraine in the European Migration Network was signed on 2 August 2022.

The Russian unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has quickly led to the fastest-growing movement of people in Europe since World War II. The EU remains committed to supporting people fleeing Ukraine, as well as EU Member States and Eastern Partner countries directly affected.

On 4 March 2022, the EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive to offer immediate support and protection to the people fleeing the war in Ukraine. On 2 March, the Commission adopted operational guidelines for external border management to facilitate border crossings at the EU-Ukraine borders. Temporary protection has been extended until March 2026. A Solidarity Platform has also been set up and a 10-point Action Plan presented by Commissioner Johansson in order to support various strands of action.

'The mandate of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) has been expanded to provide executive powers to the mission to support the Moldovan border police with border control and strengthen its capacity and human resources, and a new regional action of EUR 15 million, implemented in partnership with IOM, has been adopted to ensure the protection and facilitate the transit, voluntary return and relocation of Ukrainians and third country nationals from Moldova to the EU and to countries of origin.

The temporary protection is extended until March 2026.

Ukraine was granted candidate status on 23 June 2023.

Accession negotiations formally started on 25 June 2024. First bilateral screening meeting held on 8-9 July on "acquis" chapter 5 (Public Procurement). Chapter 23 (Judiciary & Fundamental Rights) scheduled for September 2024, chapter 24 (Justice, Freedom & Security) in October, with full screening of all 6 clusters and 35 chapters expected by Autumn 2025.

Key past and upcoming events		
22 March 2019	JHA Subcommittee, Kyiv	
8 July 2019	EU-Ukraine Summit, Kyiv	
6 September 2019	12 th EU-Ukraine Joint Readmission Committee Meeting, Kyiv	
5 November 2019	EU-Ukraine Association Committee	
December 2019 (tbc)	EU-Ukraine Association Council	
1 July 2020	Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
6 October 2020	EU-Ukraine Summit, Brussels	
10 November 2020	EU-Ukraine Association Committee	
8 December 2020	EU-Ukraine Association Council-	This was replaced by a call on 8 December and the EU-Ukraine Association Council took place on 11 February 2021
11 February 2021	EU- Ukraine Association Council	
19 May 2021	EU-Ukraine Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
12 October 2021	EU-Ukraine Summit	
18 November 2021	14 th Joint Readmission Committee	
29-30 November 2021	EU-Ukraine Association Committee	
4 May 2022	Meeting between Commissioner Johansson and Ms Olga Stefanishyna, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine (UA DPM)	Discuss the protection of Ukrainians arriving in the EU
5 September 2022	EU-Ukraine Association Council	It reconfirmed the unwavering broad support to Ukraine
3 February 2023	EU-UA Summit	It reconfirmed the unwavering broad support to UA, acknowledged UA's reform progress and strengthened the bilateral relation with a number of initiatives bringing Ukraine closer to the UE
27 April 2023	Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
11 May 2023	Visit of Commissioner Ylva Johansson to Kyiv	Focused on fight against serious crime, involvement of Europol, police cooperation, de-mining, border management, fight against corruption and UA's path to the EU.
3 February 2023	EU-UA Summit	
9-10 March 2023	Justice, Home Affairs Council	
29 March 2023	1 st EU-UA Internal Security Dialogue	
26 April 2023	Human Rights Dialogue	
27 April 2023	Justice, Freedom and Security Subcommittee	
6 September 2023	EU-UA Health Ministerial	

2 October 2023	Informal EU-UA Foreign Ministers' meeting in Kyiv	
16 November 2023	2 nd EU-UA Internal Security Dialogue	Political part of the Security Dialogue. The meeting (by VTC) was devoted to border management and border security. It also included a short discussion on the diversion of small arms and light weapons.
30 November 2023	Association Committee (Trade formation)	
14-15 December 2023	European Council	
1 February 2024	EU leaders agree to provide Ukraine with regular and predictable support via a new dedicated financial instrument. The 'Ukraine Facility' will make available up to €50 billion in grants and loans until 2027.	
6-7 February 2024	Visit of HRVP to Kyiv	
20 February 2024	Technical part of the 2 nd EU-UA Internal Security Dialogue	Technical part of the 2 nd EU-UA Internal Security Dialogue focused on firearms trafficking and Integrated Border Management. On border management, UA agreed to adapt their reviewed strategy on the basis of the new EIBM. UA committed to establish its own roadmap on firearms trafficking.
20 March 2024	9 th 'EU-Ukraine Association Council' (Brussels)	
21 March 2024	European Council	The European Council welcomed the progress of Ukraine (and the Republic of Moldova) in advancing on the necessary reforms on the EU path. Further to the submission of the draft negotiating frameworks for Ukraine (and the Republic of Moldova), the European Council invited the Council to swiftly adopt them and to take work forward without delay.
25 June 2024	1 st 'Ministerial meeting opening the Intergovernmental Conference on the Accession of Ukraine to the European Union (Luxembourg)	
27 June 2024	European Council + signature Joint security commitments between the European Union and Ukraine	
8-9 July 2024	First bilateral screening meeting held on 8-9 July on "acquis" chapter 5 (Public Procurement).	
September 2024	Justice, Freedom and Security Sub-committee	
23-25 October 2024	Bilateral screening meeting on Chapter 24 acquis (Justice, Freedom and Security)	
26 November 2024	Justice, Freedom and Security Sub-committee	

F. RUSSIA

The EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) came into force in 1997. Ministerial meetings for Freedom, Security and Justice area were organised regularly until the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula / Ukraine (2014) by Russia. The Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements entered into force on 1 June 2007. On 11 April 2011, the Council adopted a mandate for the renegotiation of the Visa Facilitation Agreement. However, further cooperation with Russia in the Home Affairs area was affected by the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and Russian military destabilisation of eastern Ukraine (2014), which led to the introduction of sanctions against Russia. Meetings at ministerial and senior officials' level and all negotiations on new home affairs agreements, namely on visa liberalisation, upgraded Visa Facilitation Agreement (VFA), and Eurojust (agreement on operational cooperation), have been suspended. The Strategic Agreement signed with Europol in 2003 has also been suspended. A Working Arrangement with CEPOL (2013) is not being implemented either. Following the Russian full-scale military invasion of Ukraine (24 February 2022), any ongoing or planned bilateral engagement with representatives of Russia has been suspended, including at technical/expert level.

Following the Russian full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, the Commission immediately proposed a partial suspension of the Visa Facilitation Agreement. On 25 February 2022, the Council adopted the Commission proposal, targeting Russian government officials, Russian diplomats and businesspersons. On 4 April 2022, Russia also partially suspended the EU-Russia Visa Facilitation Agreement, targeting EU diplomats, MS or EU officials, and journalists. On 9 September 2022, the Council adopted a decision to suspend the Visa Facilitation with Russia in full. In addition, on 9 September 2022, the Commission presented the guidelines to support Member States' consulates in handling short-stay visa applications lodged by Russian citizens. The guidelines follow the political agreement reached by Foreign Affairs Ministers at their informal meeting of 31 August on a common and coordinated way forward when it comes to visa issuance for Russian citizens and ensure a consistent approach across consulates. On 30 September 2022, following the announcement of a partial mobilisation in Russia and sham referenda in the occupied regions of Ukraine, the Commission adopted the updated guidelines to Member States on visa procedures as well as on border controls for Russian citizens at the EU's external borders. The guidelines call for reinforced security scrutiny when issuing visas to Russians and heightened border controls, while fully respecting EU asylum law. In December 2022, the EP and Council adopted the Decision on the non-acceptance of Russian travel documents issued in the occupied regions of Ukraine and in the breakaway territories of Georgia. The Decision brings legal certainty and ensures a coordinated and uniform approach across the Schengen area when it comes to these passports and the crossing of borders. Starting from November 2023, there was a significant increase in third country citizens without Schengen visa or residence permit who were allowed by the RU Border Guard Service to cross the Finnish-Russian border. Following a decision by the Finnish government, the border crossing points with Russia remain closed for an indefinite period. In the course of 2023, in particular in the summer, there was an increase of illegal migrants arriving from Russia at the Belarusian-Polish border with Russian tourist and work visas, implying an active involvement of Russia in steering migration crisis. On 11 January 2025 the Agreement between the Belarus and the Government and Russia on mutual recognition of visas and other issues related to the entry of foreign citizens and stateless persons into the territories of the entered into force.

Key past and upcoming events

21 October 2019	EU-Russia Counter-Terrorism Talks (high-level), Moscow	
22 November 2019	EU-Russia Joint Readmission Committee, Brussels	
4 December 2019	EU-Russia expert dialogue on Drugs, Brussels	
24 November 2020	EU-Russia Drugs Dialogue, Brussels	
24 November 2021	EU-Russia Expert Meeting on Drugs, VTC	

G. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Relations between the EU and the US were formalised in 1990 in the Transatlantic Declaration, and further developed in the New Transatlantic Agenda which outlined a new framework for cooperation including a number of areas for joint action. An EU-US Joint Statement endorsed by the EU-US JHA Ministerial Troika in October 2009 (the so-called "Washington Statement") sets out common values and foundations of EU-US cooperation in the JHA area until 2014 and includes a commitment to enhance both political and operational cooperation in various JHA issues. In 2015, the framework of the EU–US cooperation for 2014-2020 was further developed in the "**Renewed EU-U.S. Statement on Enhancing transatlantic cooperation in the area of Justice, Freedom and Security**".*

Europol cooperates very closely with the US and an operational Agreement enabling the exchange of personal data is in force with the Agency.

Further to this commitment cooperation has been developed on migration and asylum issues in the context of the EU-US Cooperation Platform on Migration and Refugee issues, launched in 2010. Activities included areas such as unaccompanied minors, biometrics, refugee resettlement, trafficking in human beings and development of capacity building for migration management in third countries and contribution of the Diaspora to the development of countries of origin of migration. The dialogue was not continued under the Trump administration and restarted again in November 2021 with a meeting dedicated to Afghanistan. Issues related to border management and visas are also discussed in the regular EU-US Justice and Home Affairs Senior Officials and Ministerial meetings.

Key past and upcoming events

27-28 February 2019	EU - US JHA Senior Officials Meeting, Bucharest, Romania	Topics covered counterterrorism, cybersecurity, border management (including visa reciprocity) and migration (combatting migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings).
19 June 2019	EU-US JHA Ministerial, Bucharest, Romania	Topics covered: counterterrorism, information exchange, cybersecurity, borders, visas and migration (including updates by the EU on EBCGA and ETIAS)).
26 September 2019	EU - US JHA Senior Officials Meeting SOM, Brussels, Belgium	Topics discussed included visa reciprocity (US are in the process of assessing Member States' replies to their questionnaire, progress expected to be achieved quickly), counterterrorism, cybersecurity, aviation security, resilience of electoral systems, hybrid threats, cross-border access to evidence
10-11 December 2019	EU-US JHA Ministerial, Washington D.C, USA	The agenda included mostly security related issues and visa reciprocity. It was decided to launch a transatlantic exchange of experiences on violent extremism

28 May 2020	VTC - EU-US JHA	A VTC focused on Covid-19 related developments in the EU and US (including travel restrictions). EU and US informed about each other's measures and confirmed the willingness to continue the information exchange.
15 September 2020	VTC - EU - US JHA Senior Officials Meeting	While the most salient points of the discussion covered PNR and data protection, US informed that Croatia was close to meet the US Visa Waiver Requirements. Both sides explained their different travel restrictions related to COVID-19.
14-15 April 2021	VTC - EU - US JHA Senior Officials Meeting	The agenda included mostly security related issues, but also covered migration. EU and US expressed interest to reengage on migration and in this context to explore possible issues of mutual interest.
22 June 2021	EU-US JHA Ministerial, Lisbon	Agenda included EU and US migratory situation, and the principals confirmed their agreement to pursue a transatlantic migration dialogue. Possible issues to discuss could include protection of those in need, community sponsorships, integration, legal pathways, partnerships with countries of transit and origin, readmission, and tackling smuggling of migrants.
9 July 2021	High Level Resettlement Forum	Event organised by Commissioner Johansson. The US and Canada were invited at ministerial level.
27 August – 2 September 2021	Visit of Commissioner Johansson to the United States	
20 September 2021, Slovenia	EU-US Justice and Home Affairs' Senior Officials' meeting	The US announced publicly its decision to move away from the current travel ban and to open the air borders to all vaccinated passengers from the EU+ as of "early November".

29 November 2021	EU-US Platform on Migration and Asylum	The discussion focused on Afghanistan, resettlement and possible coordinated approach, as well as explore other avenues for future cooperation, one of the examples being smuggling of migrants.
16 December 2021, Washington D.C	EU – US JHA Ministerial meeting	Discussions centred on cyber-crime, child sexual abuse, ransomware, Artificial Intelligence, environmental crime, Afghanistan, violent extremism and PNR. The next SOM is scheduled for 5 April 2022 and JHA Ministerial Meeting for 24 June 2022.
5 April 2022	EU - US JHA Senior Officials Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine.
7 June 2022	EU-US Platform on Migration	Focus on Ukraine and support to persons fleeing the war, forward looking discussion
23 June 2022	EU – US JHA Ministerial Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine.
6-7 October 2022	EU - US JHA Senior Officials Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine.
15 December 2022	EU – US JHA Ministerial Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine.
5-6 16-17 March 2023 (Stockholm)	EU - US JHA Senior Officials Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine.
20-21 June 2023 (Stockholm)	EU – US JHA Ministerial Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine.
5-6 October 2023 (Madrid)	EU - US JHA Senior Officials Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine. May also cover other migration issues

13-14 November 2023 (DC)	EU – US JHA Ministerial Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine. May also cover other migration issues
22 January 2024. (Washington DC)	Annual Strategic Dialogue on Humanitarian issues	Exchanges centred on top line humanitarian emergencies and policy priorities, e.g. humanitarian funding gap, collaboration with the private sector, humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus).
5-10 February (Washington DC)	EEAS SG Sannino working visit	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine.
11-12 March 2024 (Brussels)	EU-U.S. JHA Senior Official’s Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine and irregular migration issues
20-21 June 2024 (Brussels)	EU-U.S. JHA Ministerial meeting o	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, including support to those fleeing Ukraine and irregular migration issues
16-17 October 2024 (Budapest)	EU-U.S. JHA Senior Official’s Meeting	Discussions included respective responses to the war in Ukraine, instrumentalization and visa reciprocity.
21 November 2024 (Geneva)	Informal working breakfast between US and EU humanitarian and migration teams	Updates were shared on refugees, IDPs, migration, climate, and protection and gender issues. Respective Budgets and Policy Framework were also discussed.
13 January 2025 (online)	Call on irregular migration cooperation	Issues discussed included: policy updates and statistics, cooperation with new US administration, migrant smuggling, Latin America and Syria.

Part 2- The regional processes

A. THE PRAGUE PROCESS

The Prague Process is a framework for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and its Member States, the non-EU Schengen States and 19 partner countries to the East (Russia, Eastern Partnership countries, Central Asian countries, Western Balkan countries, Turkey).

The work is based on the Joint Ministerial Declaration (Prague 2009) and the Action Plan 2012-2016, adopted at the second Ministerial Conference of the Prague Process (Poznan, 2011) and the subsequent Ministerial Declaration of 2016 (covering the period 2017-2021).

Key past and upcoming events

5-7 March 2019	Study visit to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees of Germany, Nuremberg	
10-11 June 2019	Senior Officials Meeting, Bucharest	
15 May 2020	Webinar “The impact of the Corona-crisis on migration”	
2 July 2020	Webinar “Maximizing labour migration outcomes in the Prague Process corridors: Practices on how to benchmark countries of destination in June 2020”	
24 September 2020	Webinar “EU Framework for Legal Migration: Lessons learned and main challenges”	
16 November 2020	Senior Officials Meeting, VTC	Pass on Presidency from Lithuania to Czech Republic and Work Plan for 2021 were discussed
28 January 2021	Webinar: “Migration Outlook for 2021: From COVID-19 to the EU’s Pact on Migration and Asylum”	
04 March 2021	Webinar: Frontex Role and Capacity on Return	
15 April 2021	Webinar: ‘Which Perspectives for Labour Migration Partnerships in the Prague Process region? Lessons from EU funded Pilot Projects on Legal Migration’	
6 May 2021	Webinar "Social Capital and Transnational Human Smuggling: What is the impact of Counter-Smuggling Policies? “	

11 May 2021	Webinar/thematic consultations: Preventing and fighting illegal migration + Promoting readmission, voluntary return and sustainable reintegration	The first (out of 3 planned) of thematic consultations on the roadmap towards 4th Prague Process Ministerial Conference planned for the second half of 2022
25 May 2021	Webinar/thematic consultations: Legal migration with a special emphasis on labour migration + Making migration and mobility positive forces for development	The 2 nd (out of 3 planned) of thematic consultations on the roadmap towards 4th Prague Process Ministerial Conference planned for the second half of 2022
10 June 2021	Webinar/thematic consultations: Asylum/international protection + Integration of legally residing migrants in host societies	The 3 rd (out of 3 planned) of thematic consultations on the roadmap towards 4th Prague Process Ministerial Conference planned for the second half of 2022
24 June 2021	Webinar: 'Reporting Migration: the role of media in shaping public opinion and policies on migration'	
22 November 2021	Annual Prague Process SOM	
12-13 May 2022, Vienna	Senior Officials Meeting, Vienna	Draft Ministerial Declaration and an Action Plan for 2023-2027 to be presented
24-25 October 2022	Ministerial Conference	Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan for 2023-2027 were endorsed.
26 January 2023	Policy Talk 'Looking into 2023: What migration dynamics and policy developments to expect'	
27-28 April 2023	Senior Officials' Meeting, Lisbon	The SOM endorsed the proposed way forward for the partial implementation of the Prague Process Action Plan 2023-2027, which shall be operationalised via the ' <i>Comprehensive Action Plan Support</i> ' initiative (CAPS).
25 May 2023	Panel Discussion 'Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its implications for migration in the Prague Process region'	
22 June 2023	Webinar 'Capacity Development in the Prague Process region: The important work of the Migration EU Expertise (MIEUX+) Initiative'	
7-8 November 2023	Kick-off Workshop 'Thematic Component 2: Promoting readmission, voluntary return and sustainable reintegration', Tirana.	

13-14 February 2024	Kick-off Workshop of Thematic Component 1: Preventing and fighting irregular migration and migrant smuggling, Budapest	
23-24 April, 2024	Kick-off Workshop under the Thematic Component 3: Legal and Labour Migration, Vilnius	On 24 April 2024, the EMN Lithuania Conference ‘Navigating a Changing Labour Migration Landscape’ took place, also featuring PP representatives. The first event held together with the countries of the PP was attended by more than 100 participants from 30 different countries.
4-5 June 2024	Kick-off Workshop of Thematic Component 4: Strengthening Capacities on Asylum and International Protection, Malta	
18-19 June 2024	EMN Cyprus and Prague Process Workshop on Reintegration, hosted and co-organised by the European Migration Network Cyprus (EMN) in Larnaca	
24-25 September 2024	Senior Official Meeting, Chisinau	This SOM marked the 15 th anniversary of Prague Process.
30 January 2025	Policy Talk “Looking into 2025: What migration-related developments to expect?” (with Ralph Genetzke and Jean-Louis de Brouwer)	
Feb/March 2025 (TBC)	Advanced Training on Trafficking in Human Beings, Vienna	

B. THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP PLATFORMS AND PANEL ON MIGRATION, MOBILITY AND INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT (IBM)

The Eastern Partnership is the framework for cooperation between the EU and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The latest Joint Declaration was adopted at the Eastern Partnership Brussels Summit of December 2021. The leaders committed to enhancing their cooperation on the basis of the EaP policy beyond 2020. The five long-term objectives of the EaP policy beyond 2020 emphasise recovery, resilience and reform as key building blocks of the future agenda. The long-term objectives are: (i) developing resilient, sustainable and integrated economies, (ii) ensuring accountable institutions, the rule of law and security, (iii) developing environmental and climate resilience, (iv) delivering a resilient digital transformation, (v) creating resilient, gender-equal, fair and inclusive societies.

Key past and upcoming events

13-14 June 2019	Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration, Mobility and Integrated Border Management (IBM), Minsk	Theme: Information exchange on IBM, different modalities of continued EU support, including border control, integrated system of green border surveillance
12 November 2019	Eastern Partnership Platform 4 „Mobility and People-to-people contacts”	State of play of current cooperation, and jointly brainstorm on the future agenda beyond 2020
17 December 2019	Eastern Partnership Platform 1 „Strengthening institutions and good governance	The future of the Eastern Partnership
March 2020-cancelled, new date tbc	Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration, Mobility and Integrated Border Management (IBM)	Labour Migration
20 October 2020	Eastern Partnership Panel on Rule of Law	Post 2020 Deliverables
24 November 2020	Eastern Partnership Platform 1 Strengthening institutions and Good Governance	Priorities beyond 2020
27 November 2020	Eastern Partnership Platform 4 Mobility and people-to-people contacts	Priorities beyond 2020
15 December 2021	Eastern Partnership Summit	

C. THE BUDAPEST PROCESS

The Budapest Process is an interregional dialogue on migration stretching from Europe to the Silk Routes region. It provides a platform for dialogue and operational cooperation for over 50 governments and 17 international organisations. During its 30 years of operation, the Budapest Process has built up a network among participating states and across a wide thematic coverage. The dialogue is non-binding and intergovernmental in nature. It also offers a platform for facilitating concrete project development. The Budapest Process is permanently chaired by Türkiye with Hungary as a co-chair. In November 2024, the Budapest Process members agreed to a joint vision of migration governance, endorsing a new Ministerial Declaration and Call for Action (2025-2030).

Key past and upcoming events

19-20 February 2019	SOM and Budapest Process Ministerial Conference, Istanbul Turkey	Adoption of the Ministerial Declaration "the Istanbul commitments and Action plan its Call to Action. 6 EUMS did not take part in the Declaration but expressed ongoing support to the process
9-10 October 2019	Joint Working Group Meeting with all three regional working groups (Silk Routes, Black Sea and Southeast Europe), North Macedonia	Working Group Meeting to discuss regional and thematic priorities to be included in the implementation plan of the „Call for Action”
4-5 December 2019	Annual Senior Officials Meeting, Turkey	Approval of the implementation plan of the „Call for Action”
3-4 March 2020	Expert meeting on return and reintegration	
14 May 2020	Virtual group discussion on labour migration in the Covid19 Pandemic	
30 June 2020	Virtual group discussion on irregular migration in the COVID-19 pandemic	
30 September 2020	Virtual group discussion on migration narratives	
3-4 November 2020	Virtual thematic Meeting on Labour Migration	
12 November 2020	Virtual Group Discussion with the South East European Region Working Group	
2-3 December 2020	Senior Officials Meeting	
24 March 2021	Webinar on Understanding and Explaining Attitudes to Migration in the Silk Routes	
5 May 2021	Webinar on Migration as a Response to Environmental Change	
1 – 2 June 2021	Thematic Meeting on dismantling of smuggling networks: international cooperation and investigations.	
13 June 2021	First meeting of the Reference Group	
13 July 2021	Second meeting of the Reference Group	
28 September 2021	Third meeting of the Reference Group	

13 October 2021	Webinar on “the Situation in Afghanistan - Implications for the Silk Routes region and what comes next?”	
14 October 2021	Joint meeting of the South East Europe and the Silk Routes Region Working Groups	
8 November 2021	Thematic Meeting on Promoting a Rights-Based Approach for Vulnerable Groups on the Move	
25-26 April 2022	Closing Conference for the ‘Improving Migration Management in the Silk Routes’ project & Fourth Reference Group Meeting, Istanbul	
19-20 May 2022	Joint meeting of the South-East Europe and Silk Route Region Working Groups	To explore possibilities for expanding cooperation between the two regions on asylum, returns & reintegration, fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings.
26 – 27 June 2022	Budapest Process Thematic Meeting on Return & Reintegration	
20 October 2022	Budapest Process Conference on Trafficking in Persons	
1 December 2022	Senior Officials Meeting	A broad agreement reached on so called Chairmanship’s proposals for the future of the Budapest Process Dialogue and on organizing the next Ministerial Meeting end 2024/early 2025
4 May 2023	3rd Meeting of Community of Law Enforcement Practitioners (COLEP)	
31 May 2023	Thematic Working Group meeting on Return and Reintegration	
31 May 2023	Sixth meeting of the Reference Group	
21 November 2023	Seventh meeting of the Reference Group	
4 December 2023	Eight meeting of the Reference Group	

5 December 2023	Senior Officials Meeting	The SOM initiated a discussion on the new Ministerial Declaration and its Action Plan, which is to be endorsed at the next Ministerial Conference of the BP in late 2024. This year's SOM marked 30 years since the start of the BP and 10 years since the start of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration.
7-8 May 2024	Reference Group meeting. Thematic Working Group meeting on legal pathways for migration.	
26-27 June 2024	Reference Group and Senior Officials meeting	Aligning of views on the new Ministerial Documents
14 October 2024	Senior Officials meeting	Final revision of the latest versions of the Ministerial Documents which were later adopted in the November Ministerial Conference
11-12 November 2024	36 th Senior Officials meeting followed by the 7 th Ministerial Conference	Adoption of the new Ministerial Declaration and Call for Action, strengthening regional cooperation in migration with emphasis on the Silk Routes Region

D. THE AFRICA-EU MIGRATION AND MOBILITY DIALOGUE

The Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue is the framework for dialogue and cooperation on migration issues between the EU and all African States. It was launched at the second EU-Africa Summit in December 2007 in Lisbon.

Key past and upcoming events

21/22 January 2019	1 st EU-AU Ministerial Meeting, Brussels	While not a specific agenda point, migration was part of the Joint Communiqué adopted and the discussions.
3 May 2019	Continental Dialogue, Technical meeting between DEVCO and AIR to prepare the AU EU event on Remittances in Nairobi in December 2019	Follow-up meeting to the meeting in November 2018
9-10 December 2019	Technical meeting on Reduction remittances costs in Nairobi hosted by AIR	Bringing together experts on remittances reduction costs.
11 December 2019	High Level Dialogue Meeting, Nairobi	Stocktaking and charting way forward
27 February 2020	College-to-College (C2C) meeting, Addis Ababa	Migration was an agenda point discussed during both the plenary session and a cluster session.

26 October 2021	2 nd AU-EU Foreign Affairs Minister meeting (Ministerial), Kigali/Rwanda	Migration was part of the Joint Communique adopted and the joint press release.
28 November 2022	EU-AU Commission-to-Commission (C2C) meeting, Brussels	
17-18 February 2022	6th EU-AU Summit, Brussels	“An enhanced and reciprocal partnership for migration and mobility” was agreed as one of the priorities in the Summit declaration “A Joint Vision for 2023”.
28 November 2022	11th EU-AU Commission to Commission meeting, Brussels.	Migration and mobility were discussed as part of the working session at Commissioner level.
27 June 2024	AU-EU Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD) - Strategic Coordination Meeting of the C2CMMD Co-Chairs	
(tbc)	3rd EU-AU Ministerial Meeting, Brussels	Migration as part of the draft joint communique’
18 October 2024	AU-EU Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD) Senior Officials Meeting	
(tbc)	3rd EU-AU Ministerial Meeting, Brussels	Migration as part of the follow-up on the 2022 Summit commitments.
(tbc)	7th EU-AU Summit, Africa	

E. THE RABAT PROCESS

The Rabat process was launched at the first Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development that took place in July 2006 in Rabat. The process aims to enhance dialogue and cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination along the West African migration route. The fourth ministerial conference was held in Rome in November 2014 where Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan for 2015-17 were adopted. The fifth ministerial conference held in Marrakesh, May 2018, adopted the Marrakesh Programme of Action which aligned the work of the Rabat process with the five themes of the Joint Valletta Action Plan. This dialogue contributes to the implementation of the Valetta Action Plan, adopted at the EU-Africa Summit on Migration on 11-12 November 2015.

Key past and upcoming events

23 January 2019	Steering Committee, Brussels	Prepare the SOM of 12-13 February
11 February 2019	Steering Committee, Ouagadougou	Prepare the SOM of 12-13 February
12-13 February 2019	Senior Officials Meeting, Ouagadougou	Define a work programme for the implementation of the Marrakech Action Plan
3 June 2019	Steering Committee, Brussels	Handover of presidency from Burkina Faso to France
1-2 July 2019	Thematic Meeting on Border Management, Madrid	Exchange of information and good practice among the Rabat Process partners
24 October 2019	Thematic meeting on fight against trafficking of human beings and smuggling of migrants with emphasis on dismantling of criminal networks (event led and chaired by France and Côte d'Ivoire). A side event is also organised: 'Scenario building exercise on future mixed migration in 2030 in West and North Africa'	This meeting is organised back-to-back with the Niamey Declaration High-Level Conference of 22-23 October 2019 (Organised by France/ Secretariat UNODC). This workshop aims to create synergies between the Rabat Process and the Niamey Declaration signed on 16 March 2018.
5-6 November 2019	Technical Workshop on Diaspora Remittances and Sustainable Development, Abuja	Bring together technical experts, practitioners from the public and private sectors, civil society organisations, as well as policy- and decision makers (Rabat Process partners) to improve Rabat Process partners' technical understanding; promote mutual learning and the ex- change of good practices on remittances.
13 November 2019	Steering Committee, Brussels	

18 February 2020	Steering Committee, Brussels	Discussed and finalised Rabat process input to the updating of the Joint Valetta Action Plan
16 September 2020	Webinar - Assessment of anti-trafficking efforts, ECOWAS & Mauritania	Presentation of the findings of the “Assessment of Anti- Trafficking Gaps, Needs and Transferrable Practices in the Member States of ECOWAS and Mauritania”.
15 October 2020	Virtual Steering Committee Meeting	
28 October 2020	Virtual meeting with Steering Committee members and reference countries Meeting	
21 January 2021	Webinar on return and reintegration	Updates on main developments and exchange of best practices
19 April 2021	Webinar on International Migration and Development,	Identify practices from European and African countries in terms of elaboration, implementation, monitoring and multi-level governance of migration-development policies and strategies at the local, national or regional level.
20 April 2021	Steering Committee and meeting with reference countries (virtual)	
16 June 2021	<u>Virtual</u> migration scenario-building workshop in collaboration with Mixed Migration Centre	Understanding the Rate of Change in Mixed Migration: The role of technology within migration dynamics
1 July 2021	Rabat Process Steering Committee (virtual)	
7 July and 13-14 October 2021	Virtual roundtable (7 July 2021) and a roundtable/study visit (in Geneva, on 13-14 October) on protection and asylum	Exchange of best practices on protection and asylum
14-15 September 2021	Thematic Meeting on Local Authorities, National Authorities and Migration, Paris.	
29 September 2021	Rabat Process Steering Committee meeting, Brussels	
29 September 2021	<u>Virtual</u> migration scenario-building workshop in collaboration with Mixed Migration Centre	Identification of the future mixed migration certainties and uncertainties in North Africa and West Africa: The drivers of mixed migration
13-14 October 2021	Roundtable and study visit on protection and asylum: risks, assistance and durable solutions, Geneva	Exchange of best practices

27 October 2021	Virtual migration scenario-building workshop in collaboration with Mixed Migration Centre	Identification of blind spots and weak signals and examining their implications for policy responses: Environmental change
17-18 November 2021	Senior Officials' Meeting, Malabo	Handover of the Chairmanship from Equatorial Guinea to Spain
1 December 2021	Scenario-building workshop in collaboration with Mixed Migration Centre: "Mixed Migration Futures: How might the future of work drive migration in 2035? Focus on West and North Africa"	Developing future mixed migration scenarios in North Africa and West Africa.
16-17 December 2021	Thematic meeting on legal migration, online	Exchange of best practices on legal migration.
22 February 2022	Steering Committee meeting, Brussels	
12-13 May 2022	High level thematic event on migration & development, Madrid.	The meeting is hosted by Spain, current chair of the Rabat Process, and co-chaired by Senegal. Partners will explore how development cooperation can better address the root causes of involuntary migration, while capitalising on the positive impact of migration.
5-6 July 2022	High-level thematic meeting on border management	
29-30 September 2022	High-level thematic meeting on legal migration	
19-20 October	Meetings of the CoPil and the SOM in Madrid	Preparation for the Ministerial meeting
3-4 November	High-Level Meeting on remittances, Brussels.	
13-14 December 2022	Senior Officials Meeting and Ministerial Meeting, Cádiz	A political declaration and an action plan will be adopted.
21 February 2023	Steering Committee, Brussels	
25-26 April 2023	Thematic meeting on voluntary return and reintegration, Yaoundé, Cameroon	
22-23 June 2023	Thematic Meeting on Humanised Border Management, Marrakesh, Morocco	
20-21 September 2023	Thematic Meeting 'Separation of families and missing persons in the context of migration: prevention, tracing and reunification'	

19-20 October 2023	Thematic Meeting ‘Migration, Youth and Development’	
31 January – 1 February 2024	Rabat Process Comité de Pilotage, SOM and Special Event on circular migration ‘Circular Migration: a cycle of opportunities and skills development’	
15 March 2024	Steering Committee (CoPil)	
15th & 16th May 2024 – Lisbon, Portugal	Thematic meeting: “Promoting the positive effects of regular migration for sustainable development: the role of entrepreneurship and diaspora engagement”	
20 th & 21 st June 2024 – Praia, Cabo Verde	Thematic meeting: “Mobility schemes as drivers of change: how to unpack their full potential?”	
16th & 17th October 2024, Lisbon	High-Level Thematic Meeting: “Labour Migration, Skills Development and Legal Pathways”	Joint Rabat Process & Khartoum Process event.
19-21 November, Rome	Fourth Conference of Directors General and Senior Commanders of Internal Security Forces and Senior Justice Officials on the fight against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.	
29-30 January 2025, Porto	Senior Official’s Meeting (SOM) and Steering Committee (CoPiL).	

F. THE KHARTOUM PROCESS

The Khartoum Process (the EU Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative) is a framework for dialogue and cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination along the migratory route from the Horn of Africa to Europe. It primarily focuses on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings but includes also other areas of migration management including the root causes of irregular migration, legal migration and mobility, asylum and international protection, fight against irregular migration and smuggling of people, and return and readmission. The Khartoum Process contributes to the implementation of the Joint Valletta Action Plan adopted at the EU-Africa Summit on Migration on 11-12 November 2015.

Key past and upcoming events

6-7 March, 2019	Steering Committee and Senior Officials Meeting, (Asmara)	Eritrea takes over the chairmanship of the Khartoum Process
17 July 2019	Drafting Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards the update of the Joint Valletta Action Plan and • Preparation of the Khartoum Process Multiannual Work Plan 	
24- 25 September 2019	Thematic Meeting on “Legal Frameworks and Policy Development: Optimising the Benefits of Organised Labour Migration”, Cairo	
23-24 October, 2019	Thematic Meeting on Migration for Development: Harnessing the Potential of Diaspora, Asmara	
March 2020	Steering Committee and Senior Officials’ Meeting, The Hague	The Netherlands takes over the chairmanship the Khartoum Process; update of JVAP discussed
5 March 2020	SOM Meeting, The Hague	
2 July 2020	Khartoum Process Virtual Meeting The impact of COVID-19 on Human Mobility in the Khartoum Process Region and Partners' Responses, VTC	
8 October 2020	Mixed Migration Centre Webinar for Khartoum Process Members on Mixed Migration and the COVID-19 crisis: What’s next for people on the move in the “New Normal”? VTC	
2 December 2020	Steering Committee Meeting, VTC	
31 March 2021	Trafficking in Human Beings: The 4Ps Revisited. Module 1: Prevention of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation (virtual).	
28 April 2021	Trafficking in Human Beings: The 4Ps Revisited. Module 2: Protection of Victims of Trafficking (virtual)	
26 May 2021	Trafficking in Human Beings: The 4Ps Revisited. Module 3: Prosecution (International cooperation) (virtual)	

30 June 2021	Trafficking in Human Beings: Module 4: Partnership (Public-private partnerships) (virtual)	
21 September 2021	Virtual Roundtable: Return, Reintegration and Integration: Finding Durable Solutions	
29 September 2021	Khartoum Process Steering Committee Meeting, Brussels	
5-7 October 2022	Khartoum Process Thematic Meeting on Climate Change and Migration, Addis Ababa	
24-25 November 2021	Thematic Meeting on Return, Reintegration and Integration: Finding Durable Solutions	
22-23 March 2022	Steering Committee and SOM Meeting, Kampala	Change of the Chairmanship (NL to South Sudan)
5-7 October 2022, Addis Ababa	Thematic Meeting on Climate Change and Migration: Addressing Impacts & Adaptation Strategies for human mobility in the context of climate change	
10 October 2022	Khartoum Process Steering Committee Meeting	Discussion on the possible enlargement of the Steering Committee
22-24 November, Cairo	Thematic Workshop on Innovative Law Enforcement Tools to Tackle Irregular Migration	
15 - 16 March 2023, Berlin.	Khartoum Process Senior Officials' Meeting.	Handover of chairmanship from South Sudan to Germany, governance issues.
4-5 July 2023, Nairobi	Thematic Meeting on Building Resilience and Ensuring the Protection of and Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	
7 September 2023, Vienna	Khartoum Process Steering Committee Meeting	Governance of the Khartoum Process
4-5 October 2023, Berlin	Thematic meeting 'Exploring the Potential of mobility in the Context of Climate Change'	
7-8 February 2024, Nairobi	Thematic Workshop on enhancing regional multi-stakeholder partnerships on combatting trafficking in persons	

7-8 February 2024, Nairobi	Thematic Meeting on Building Resilience and Ensuring the Protection of and Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	
16-18 April 2024, Cairo	Steering Committee and SOM Khartoum Process	Handing over the Chairmanship to Egypt (until April 2025)
11 th & 12 th September 2024, Helsinki	Thematic Meeting Whole-of-Government Approach in the Context of Migration and Development	Co-hosted by Finland and Somalia.
15 October 2024, Lisbon	Steering Committee	
16 th & 17 th October 2024, Lisbon	High-Level Thematic Meeting: “Labour Migration, Skills Development and Legal Pathways”	Joint Khartoum Process & Rabat Process event.
5-6 November 2024, Luxor	Thematic Workshop - Navigating the Nexus: Climate Change and Displacement in conflict-affected Settings	
19-21 November	Fourth Conference of Directors General and Senior Commanders of Internal Security Forces and Senior Justice Officials on the fight against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.	
10-11 December 2024, Mombasa	Thematic Meeting - Innovative Strategies for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Migrant Smuggling	
14 & 15 January 2025, Cairo	Steering Committee and SOM	
19-20 February 2025 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Thematic Workshop Return, Readmission and Reintegration Ethiopia Co-hosted by Switzerland	
8 & 9 April 2025, Egypt.	Ministerial Conference + Senior Officials ‘Meeting + Steering Committee	Signing of Ministerial Declaration & Action Plan

G. THE ACP-EU MIGRATION DIALOGUE

The ACP-EU Migration Dialogue was launched in June 2010 through a Joint Declaration of the ACP-EU Joint Council. The dialogue is based on Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement. In May 2011, it was decided to further deepen the dialogue, focusing in particular on 4 thematic areas (Visa, remittances, returns and readmission, THB and smuggling of migrants), with the specific aim to strengthen the operational aspects of ACP-EU cooperation on these topics. In 2020, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States became the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACP).

A series of expert meetings took place on a yearly basis. A joint report including recommendations on remittances, visas and readmission was adopted in June 2012 at the ACP-EU Joint Council of Vanuatu. A Joint Visa subgroup meeting, technical workshop on return and readmission and experts' seminar on trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants took place in 2014. The last technical dialogue took place in June 2018.

The Dialogue (and in particular the organisation of the thematic meetings) was supported by the EU- ACP Migration Action, a EUR 10M programme which implemented some of the recommendations. The programme finished in August 2019. A final evaluation was carried out and its outcome was presented to EUMS at the OACP WP of 3 June 2020. The Programme covered three components: 1) Demand- driven provision of technical assistance (requested by OACP countries or by regional institutions); 2) Direct support to NSAs projects improving the conditions of migrants and their families; 3) Collection of good practices and dissemination of results.

Both the EU and the OACP sides expressed concerns about the effectiveness of this Dialogue, particularly on the interaction between the political and the technical level and saw the negotiations of the Post Cotonou Agreement as an opportunity to revisit the EU-OACP migration dialogue and its implementation. The new Agreement reaffirms the enhanced cooperation on migration and mobility, paying particular attention to circular migration, recognising the positive impacts of migration and mobility on sustainable development and addressing the negative effects of irregular migration on countries of origin, transit and destination. It also contains the legally binding annex on return and readmission process.

As the new Partnership Agreement, signed by the EU and its Member States with 77 (out of 79) the Members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) in Samoa on 15 November 2023 is provisionally applied since 1 January 2024 enters into force, the OACPS-EU Development-Migration Dialogue will be replaced by the Partnership Dialogue, encompassing all policy areas covered by the agreement.

Samoa Agreement

The Samoa Agreement was signed on 15 November 2023 and is being provisionally applied since 1 January 2024. Besides the EU-OACPS foundation, it now includes three regional protocols, with dedicated institutions, and ambitious provisions in different areas including Migration and Mobility.

Title VI of the Foundation contains comprehensive provisions on Migration and Mobility, which are set out under different chapters on:

- *Legal Migration and Mobility (Chapter 1).*
- *Migration and development (Chapter 2).*
- *Root causes of irregular migration (Chapter 3) including provisions on Smuggling of migrants (Art. 71) human trafficking (Art. 72).*
- *Return, readmission and integration (Chapter 4), referring to the return and readmission process set out in Annex I of the Agreement; and*
- *Protection and asylum for refugees and other displaced persons (Chapter 5).*

These provisions are complemented by comprehensive migration and mobility chapters under the three regional protocols (Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific)

The agreement sets that joint commitments on return, readmission and reintegration shall be monitored under the regular partnership dialogues foreseen in article 3, which shall cover all areas of the Samoa Agreement. Guidelines for these dialogues are being discussed with EU MS and OACPS.

Key past and upcoming events

19-21 February 2019	Regional Thematic Meeting on Remittances, Accra, Ghana	
12-14 March 2019	Regional Thematic Meeting on Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants, Georgetown, Guyana	
18-20 March 2019	ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Romania	
3-5 April 2019	Regional Thematic Meeting on Visas and Cooperation on Mobility, Port Vila, Vanuatu	
12 April 2019	ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors	Migration was on the agenda
23-24 May 2019	Joint ACP-EU Council of Ministers, Brussels	Exchange on Migration in a comprehensive discussion on the basis of the implementation of the JVAP and the EUTF
11 July 2019	ACP-EU Migration Action – Final Event, Brussels	The ACP-EU Migration Action presented good practices and lessons learned based on the analysis of five years of the Action’s implementation
17-21 November 2019	ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Kigali, Rwanda	Migration features in questions from MEPs and COM provided written replies. Migration and Mobility may be addressed during the Plenary, if additional questions arise.
3 and 10 December 2020	ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Brussels, remotely	Migration features in the resolution on reducing the number of unemployed youth in ACP and EU countries.
15 April 2021	Initialling ceremony of the new OACPS-EU Partnership Agreement.	European Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen, together with Robert Dussey, Togolese Minister for Foreign Affairs, Chief Negotiator of the OACPS, initialled the negotiated text for a post-Cotonou agreement.

15 November 2023	46th session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, Samoa.	Signature of the new EU-OACPS Partnership Agreement.
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H. THE VALLETTA SUMMIT FOLLOW-UP

The Valletta Summit of November 2015 enabled African and EU leaders to establish a frank dialogue and the framework for cooperation on migration including the principles, the language and a comprehensive action plan.

At the Summit it was decided that the existing mechanisms of the Rabat Process, the Khartoum Process and of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy would be used to monitor implementation of the Action plan.

Key past and upcoming events

15 December 2020	Joint Steering Committee of Khartoum and Rabat Process approved update of Joint Valetta Action Plan (JVAP)	
2022 – TBC	Valletta Partners SOM (including approval of update of JVAP)	
16 October 2024, Lisbon	JVAP Follow-up Stock-Taking Event	

I. THE EU-CELAC MIGRATION DIALOGUE

<p><i>The EU and Latin America and the Caribbean countries (CELAC) Structured and Comprehensive Dialogue on Migration was launched in June 2009 following the mandate of the EU- LAC Lima Summit. The EU-CELAC Action Plan, adopted at the 2010 Madrid Summit, called for further developing this Dialogue. This commitment was renewed during the EU-CELAC Summit held in Brussels in June 2015 but not at the last EU-CELAC Summit held in Brussels in July 2023.</i></p>		
<p>Key past and upcoming events</p>		
23-24 January 2019	3 rd EU-CELAC citizen security workshop, Belize	
12-14 June 2019	Regional Workshop on the outflow of migrants and refugees from Venezuela, in Brussels (TAIEX, FPI)	With the participation of 9 LAC countries: COL, ECU, PER, CHI, ARG, BRA, GUY, PAN, Dom. REP.
28-29 October 2019	International Solidarity Conference on the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant crisis, Brussels	With participation of European Commission, EEAS, UNHCR, IOM, NGOs
5-6 December 2019	Regional Workshop on the outflow of migrants and refugees from Venezuela, in Bogota (Colombia)	With the participation of 9-10 LAC countries.
25 May 2020	Virtual Donors Conference in solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and migrants in countries in the region, amid the COVID-19 pandemic	Co-hosted by Spain and the EU, supported by UNHCR and IOM. Over 40 countries along with UN Agencies, international financial institutions and representatives of national and international civil society.
14 December 2020	EU – LAC Informal Ministerial Meeting - Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)	Joint Communiqué: mentions that migration and population mobility in LAC are increasingly important health determinants and require greater cooperation
10 June 2021	Solidarity Event for forcibly displaced persons and host communities in Central America and Mexico (MIRPS countries), San José (Costa Rica).	Organized by Spain as the Presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform. A total of \$ 110 million were announced in the event by the different participants.
17 June 2021	International Donors' Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants	The European Commission pledged €147 million, in addition to pledges by EU Member States.
2 December 2021	EU-Latin America & Caribbean Leaders' Meeting	EU leaders agreed to step up cooperation to address the Covid-19 pandemic and ensure a long-term recovery. They referred to the regional Team Europe Initiative on Security and Justice to support bi-regional cooperation on citizen security, organised crime and the rule of law.

2-3 March 2022	Launch of CLASI in Brussels	CLASI (Comité Latino americano de Seguridad Interior following the model of the European COSI) with Latin American Interior Ministers (from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay).
30-31 May 2022	High level meeting between Latin America and the European Union EL PAcCTO, Paris	Exchange between Latin America and EU on security, justice and penitentiary, COSI/CLASI.
27-28 September 2023	EU-CLASI Ministerial Meeting, Brussels	Exchange between CLASI and EU on common efforts to tackle transnational organised crime, including trafficking and financing of drugs, trafficking in human beings, migrants smuggling, and design, manufacture and illicit trafficking of firearms. Adoption of a joint ministerial declaration to build on a comprehensive dialogue on security between the two regions.
30 May 2024	COSI-CLASI joint meeting	High-level exchange to operationalize the September 2023 EU-CLASI ministerial declaration, including through EMPACT and AMERIPOL.
6 March 2025	EU-CLASI Ministerial Meeting, Brussels	

Part 3 - The global processes

A. GLOBAL FORUM FOR MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The GFMD is an initiative of the UN Member States to address the migration and development nexus in practical and action-oriented ways. It is an informal, non-binding, voluntary and government-led process.

The process emerged after the UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development on 14-15 September 2006. The second High-level Dialogue on 3-4 October 2013 confirmed the GFMD as a valuable forum for holding frank and open discussions, which has helped to build trust among participating stakeholders.

The 8th GFMD Summit came immediately after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes migration as a recognised development enabler. During Turkey's Chairmanship, an important feature was the insertion of forced displacement and refugees on the agenda, not the least due to the Syrian refugee crisis.

In order to position the Forum's discussions at the heart of the 21st century priorities, the GFMD 2022-2023 Chairmanship Senegal-France has chosen "the impact of climate change on human mobility" as the main topic.

Key past and upcoming events

23-25 January 2024, Geneva	14th GFMD Summit	End of French Presidency, handed over to Colombia for 2024-2025.
3 September 2024, Geneva	Official launch of the GFMD 2024-2025 Programme	
19 February 2025 19-20 February 2025, Geneva	2nd Preparatory Meeting 2nd Roundtable Consultations	Geneva Hybrid Geneva in person
4 June 2025, Geneva 4-5 June 2025, Geneva	3 rd Preparatory Meeting 3rd Roundtable Consultations – Geneva, 4-5 June 2025	3rd Preparatory Meetings
Second semester 2025, Colombia (tbc)	15 th GFMD Summit	Pioneering Solutions and Partnerships - A strong focus on exchange of perspectives, solutions and partnerships

B. UNITED NATIONS

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015 recognizes that migration contributes to circular growth and development. It calls on UN Member States to increase international cooperation by facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people. In this respect, the EU counts on a long-standing strategic partnership with the UN. In December 2018, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) were adopted by the UN General Assembly. This concluded the intense two-year process launched with the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in September 2016. Follow-up and review under the Global Compact on Refugees will be conducted through the Global Refugee Forum (held every four years unless otherwise decided); high-level officials' meetings (held every two years between Forums); as well as annual reporting to the United Nations General Assembly by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The first Global Refugee Forum took place on 16-18 December 2019. The first High-level Officials Meeting took place on 14-15 December 2021 to take stock of progress and look ahead to the next Global Refugee Forum. UN Member States will review implementation of the GCM through the International Migration Review Forum, to take place every four years beginning in May 2022.

Key past and upcoming events		
July 2019	UN General Assembly adopted the modalities for the International Migration Review Forum (Global Compact on Migration)	
17-18 December 2019	First Global Refugee Forum (Global Compact on Refugees)	
12-13 November 2020	First Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the UNECE Region	
1 December 2020	High-level launch of first biennial UN Secretary-General Report "From Promise to Action" on the GCM	UNSG Report on GCM implementation, focusing on key achievements and advancements in GCM implementation mainly among its champion countries. It could not escape the shadow that the COVID-19 pandemic put on its progress. The report presents a good snapshot of the achievements of the past two years.
14-15 December 2021	High-level Officials Meeting under the Global Compact on Refugees	Stocktaking on the progress and looking ahead to the next Global Refugee Forum.
17-20 May 2022	1 st International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) New York	Adoption of a Progress Declaration Commissioner Johansson I participated in the Plenary and Roundtable 2.
13-15 December 2023	Second Global Refugee Forum under the Global Compact on Refugees	Take stock of the implementation of the Global Compact for Refugees, exchange lessons learnt and best practices and formulate pledges for the future.
2 February 2024	Tenth EU-IOM Senior Official Meeting	
11 March 2024	Second Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the UNECE Region	Intergovernmental meeting to review the implementation of the international cooperative framework on safe, orderly and regular migration in the UNECE region, while respecting the voluntary nature of participation, the sovereignty and the different positions of the UNECE Member States.
Spring 2025 (tbc) Brussels	Eleventh EU-IOM Senior Officials Meeting,	Initially planned in October 2024, postponed until the new Commission is in place; date to be confirmed.

Q2 2025 Brussels	EU-UNHCR Strategic Dialogue,	Annual meeting postponed from 2024 because of the institutional transition, date to be confirmed.
16-17 December 2025 Geneva (Preparatory meetings in March, June, September in Geneva)	Second High-Level Officials Meeting under the Global Compact for Refugees	Assess progress against the implementation of the pledges made at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) and outline next steps in the lead up to the GRF in 2027
Q2 tbc 2026 New York	Second International Migration Review Forum under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration	To take stock of GCM implementation since the first IMRF in 2022 and outline recommendations for future actions