

Outsourcing borders

Monitoring EU externalisation policy

Bulletin 18
7 July 2026

“State-watching Europe is a futile business – unless you are going to do something about it”

A. Sivanandan, 1993

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Thematic and regional developments

Official EU documents summarised here, and those published with previous editions of the bulletin, are contained in our [document archive](#).

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Border management

Council adopts Article 25a visa measures against Somalia, Italy dissents

On 15 June 2026, [the Council published its adoption of a resolution](#) to suspend certain visa provisions for Somali citizens - also known as visa sanctions. This comes after a “strong call” to issue visa sanctions against Somalia was reported at the 4 June meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs council, in light of Somali’s “insufficient” cooperation on deportations.

In [an accompanying written statement](#), however, Italy expresses its dissent. While not questioning the (very questionable) effectiveness of Article 25a sanctions, Italy argues that cooperation with Somalia is improving, and sanctions could therefore be counter-productive.

EU drone/counter-drone strategy

Two compilations of member state comments on the EU’s Action Plan on Drone and Counter Drone Security, dated 7 and 18 May, are largely unrelated to externalisation policy but contain several small items of note.

In the 7 May compilation, the following comment appears from the Irish delegation:

*“Ireland is concerned that **the funding is through the Border Management and Visa Instrument BMVI, which Ireland cannot access**, as it does not participate in that element of the Schengen acquis. Any alternative funding available through ISF?”*

(The [published drone strategy](#) describes €400m via the BMVI to buy and operate “drone and counter-drone technology”)

In the [18 May compilation](#), Finland references the need to increase border surveillance and threat detection systems – which could in theory also be used to spot irregular migration. **The Finnish delegation also references an operational role for Frontex in the drone strategy, while Croatia mentions the agency’s involvement in working groups on the issue.**

France, on the other hand, is concerned that any Frontex counter-drone operations should be “conducted within the strict limits of (the agency’s) competence” and not impede on member states’ intelligence or national security operations.

Statewatch released a document in [Outsourcing Borders bulletin 16](#), indicating that Frontex is expected to have some role in the future drone/counter-drone strategy.

Budgets and funding



Updates to Libya funding list

In the annex to the updated Libya action file (see below), there are a number of member state actions related to Libya. These include:

- a €1m programme financed by the **Czech Republic** for protection and counter-trafficking, as well as €616,000 for border management support. Both programmes implemented from July 2025;
- a €3m CESVI-implemented programme financed by **Italy**, for Sudanese refugees in Libya; another €3m programme for 'vulnerable migrants' implemented by the IOM; and a similar €1,6m programme run by UNHCR. All three programmes began January 2025 and are to run into 2027.

In the German diplomatic cable described below, Italy is also reported to have contributed around **€16m, via the AMIF, for two voluntary return projects in 2025.**

Deportation and readmission

A new Libyan deportation system?

According to a person familiar with Council discussions around the Libya action file (see below), there is a lot of concern about **Libya's new "national return mechanism" being developed for deportations.**

In particular, there are worries over the human rights impacts of the system, the effective 'reintegration' of people deported and issues to do with the **Libyan government insisting deportees transit through an "Islamic Call Society" centre in Tripoli** (this is also believed to be slowing down deportations in general). The EU is described as being broadly open to supporting this new deportations system in some fashion.

According to information from the same person, **the International Organisation for Migration conducted 'voluntary' returns of 16,090 people from Libya in 2025**, almost the same amount as the year before.

Updates on deportation agreements from the Readmission expert group

The [minutes of the 22 May 2026 meeting of the Commission's Readmission Expert Group](#), obtained via Freedom of Information Request, contain a couple of items of interest:

- the Council has decided to end Article 25a visa measures against Ethiopia
- with regards to deportation agreements, **an un-named member state is reported to be "concluding a Memorandum of Understanding with Rwanda and negotiating another one with Burundi". Another MS reports negotiating an implementing protocol with Albania**

Frontex releases (virtually no) information on RECAPP and RRApp

Following two Freedom of Information requests by *Statewatch*, Frontex has provided two sets of heavily redacted documents related to the development of the 'digital tools' RECAPP and RRApp.

[As previously reported by Anas Ambri at Algorithm Watch](#), RRApp is intended to be an AI chatbot for people deported from Europe. The [documents released by Frontex on the RRApp](#) tool reveal little new, other than some hints of budgetary and procedural problems with the app's developer, Polish Fabrity.

Similarly, the [documents released by Frontex regarding the RECAPP app](#) reveal vanishingly little, though they do confirm what was broadly already known: that RECAPP is to be used for pre-deportation monitoring as an alternative to detention as well as some form of reintegration support and monitoring.

Migration partnerships



MOCADEM roundtable discusses Turkey and Egypt partnerships

A [cable sent by German diplomats in Brussels](#) summarises discussions at the 26 March 2026 meeting of the Operational Coordination Mechanism on the External Dimension of Migration (MOCADEM).

At this meeting, discussions focused on several key themes, reflected in the [official agenda of the document](#) (made public due to a *Statewatch* freedom of information request). Those themes were:

- the 'Eastern Mediterranean' migration route;
- an EU-funded jobs creation programme in Turkey managed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD);
- the EU's partnerships with Libya, Turkey and Egypt.

The discussions around Libya are particularly interesting. Member states appear to be **broadly in favour of expanding cooperation with both Libya's Western and Eastern forces**. The document also notes that while discussions with Eastern forces can be difficult, **member states have been pursuing their own "initiatives" in Eastern Libya**.

The document contains many other details about EU-Libya cooperation, including:

- a "new programme" of **€25m for developing Libya's border management system on land and sea** is mentioned. **This appears to be a programme called "SHARAKA", which *Statewatch* has learned began in January 2026 to replace the now-ended SIBMMIL programme**
- a **€5m project with Europol** is mentioned, though little detail is given other than mention of a Libyan delegation visiting Europol in April. **Another €5m project implemented by Interpol is referenced**
- references are made to "15 vessels deployed since 2023" – presumably given by the EU – for a total cost of €59m (it is unclear if this figure is a reference to the overall SIBMMIL budget)
- **some member states apparently questioned the "One Libya Policy"** wherein the EU recognises only one governing entity in the country. Presumably this strategy is made more difficult by recent enhanced engagement with eastern forces

The committee also discussed:

- Irregular migration from Iran to Turkey, amid the conflict with Israel and the US, is highlighted as a concern, though the Iran-Turkey border is described as "currently calm, with fewer crossings than usual". If larger amounts of people do attempt to

cross, Turkey is reportedly expected to “resist letting (irregular migrants from Iran) in until the very last minute”

- The issue of **Syrian** deportations is mentioned, with the Commission reported (possibly paraphrased) as saying that “**conditions are not entirely ripe**” for **deportations of Syrians from the EU**
- **A Syria action file is being prepared** (already requested by *Statewatch*)
- **Egypt** is described as a “good partner” on migration control – “**they do a good job of keeping them on their shores**”. Greece in particular appears invested in further migration cooperation with Egypt. There is, however, some hint of **tension with the Egyptian authorities over the use of a €168m funding tranche under the EU-Egypt partnership**. It is remarked in the note that Egypt needs reminding “that financial commitments must lead to measurable results”. **Egypt is also described as interested in an “exchange” with Frontex**, though it is not clear what kind
- There are numerous mentions of ongoing **anti-migration ‘information campaigns’**, paid for by the EU and implemented by the ICMPD, including PARIM in Pakistan, MIRAMI in Iraq and the larger GARRI ‘rapid response’ programme
- There is further detail on the ICMPD [jobs and skills programme ENHANCER and ENHANCER PRO in Turkey](#), which has been previously covered on the *Statewatch* site

The cable also notes dissatisfaction with the MOCADDEM meeting format, complaining about “lengthy monologues” from the European Commission.

The [full document in German](#) can be accessed on the *Statewatch* site, as well [as a machine-generated translation of the document into English](#).



Have dozens of Greek ‘agents’ been deployed alongside the Libyan Coast Guard?

Alongside the information above, the German cable mentions a mysterious intervention from the Greek delegation (on page 11 of the document): “**Reference was made to bilateral cooperation with (Libya), including the deployment of 83 agents in SAR operations**”.

The nature of this deployment is unclear. In March 2026 [Greece said it would deploy two senior coast guard officials to Libya](#) for further migration control efforts. The deployment of dozens of agents in any kind of operational capacity, however, would be a significant escalation. It would also contradict the words of Greece’s minister for maritime affairs, Vassilis Kikilias, who said in late April that Greece’s support to Libya was designed to allow the latter to address migration “using [the Libyans’] own forces, their own Coast Guard”, [as quoted in the Greek eKathimerini](#).

Statewatch has asked the Hellenic Coast Guard, Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Commission for clarity on the nature and scope of this “deployment”.

Significant updates to the Libya action file

In response to a *Statewatch* freedom of information request, the Council of the EU has released a [heavily redacted copy of the Libya action file implementation update](#) provided to the MOCADDEM committee on 26 March 2026. ***Statewatch* has also, however, learned what was redacted in this file** – that information is included in the below summary.

This ‘implementation update’ file summarises what has been done on each ‘action’ item that the EU has prioritised for Libya when it comes to migration control. There are nine actions in total, covering diplomatic and technical engagement, counter-migration and other cooperation, capacity building, labour migration, etc.

East vs West

Action 1 reflects the big issue of the day: which actors in Libya the EU wants to partner with on migration control. Various council meetings and exchanges with other institutions are reported on this question, based on ‘actor mapping’ with input from the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM), the EU Delegation in Libya (EUDEL) and the EU’s naval mission Operation IRINI.

Throughout the rest of the file, there are various oblique references to working with both eastern and western forces, for example:

“Since the beginning of 2024, a technical dialogue has been launched with the Libyan authorities (recognised as such throughout the country) with competencies on migration.”

As a general rule, however, direct references to cooperation with eastern forces have been studiously redacted.

Training and capacity-building

In **action 2**, considerable efforts are reported to train and familiarise Libyan actors with EU-approved standards for border and migration management, law enforcement and governance, etc. It is also reported the EU has pushed for the “adoption of the 13 SOPs (standard operating procedures) and annexes on Search and Rescue”. These have been developed with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as well as various Libyan actors such as the ‘Libyan Coast Guard’ and the less well-known General Administration for Coastal Security. **Overall, this action reflects the EU’s desire for Libyan coastal actors to become more professional, autonomous and scandal-free.**

Redacted from this section is a **joint Commission-EEAS technical mission provisionally scheduled for Summer 2026**

Counter-migration operations

Action 3, which focuses on border management and anti-migration efforts, makes mention of the **€25m border management and anti-smuggling programme begun in January 2026** – presumably the “SHARAKA” programme.

Alongside this, a new multi-annual and regional action on migration in the Southern Neighbourhood is reported to have been adopted in December 2025, which includes Libya, as well as a **€5m counter-smuggling/trafficking police action implemented by INTERPOL**.

This particular action item was heavily redacted in the file released by the Council. Some of those redactions include:

- A possible **working arrangement between Frontex and EUBAM Libya** and the political sensitivities involved in such a deal. In particular, Libyan authorities are described as wary of a Frontex operational presence on the ground. While there is reference to the divergent priorities of Frontex and EUBAM Libya, there is also mention of **existing operational cooperation and information exchange between EUBAM Libya and Frontex on an “ad hoc” basis**
- The possibility of **supporting Libyan border guards at Benina airport (which is next to Benghazi)** is discussed, as well as a specific action for the airport
- **EUBAM Libya plans to expand its activities outside of Tripoli**

Libyan operations and coordination

In the redacted version of this file, **action 4** addresses search and rescue capacity-building and training, among other things. The unredacted version also includes **addressing “deficiencies” identified with the Western LCG’s maritime coordination centre and operations**.

The action item notes **two capacity building programmes, worth €5m each**, under the NDICI-Global Europe fund – one run by the ICMPD and the other by UNODC.

Conditions

Action 5 focuses on improving conditions in detention centres for people pulled back by the ‘Libyan Coast Guard’. **It reports €35m worth of top-ups for various protection programmes** implemented with UNHCR, CESVI, WHO, IOM, UNICEF, a French NGO called Supernovae, the Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils and INTERSOS. **Contracts with UN institutions worth another €35m are expected to be signed by the end of 2026**.

What is described as a **UNHCR regional programme for North Africa is expected to be set up in 2026 - with the majority of the programme’s funding intended for Libya**.

Phase 7 of the **RDPP protection programme for North Africa** is reported as having a **budget of €50m**, €37.5m from the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, €7m from Italy, €5m from the Netherlands and the rest from UNHCR.

The public version of this action item describes various efforts to improve detention conditions and address arbitrary detention, as well as increasing UN oversight. **The unredacted version more explicitly acknowledges the abuses suffered by migrants in Libya; the “severe conditions” in detention centres; a growing general hostility against migrants in the country; and a government crackdown against migration NGOs operating there.**

This item also mentions the presence of third-party human rights monitoring in Libya by an unnamed group.

This action item also reports that **the EU is exploring further funding opportunities through individual EU Member States, “outside” the formal structure of the Libya Team Europe Initiative.**

Partner countries

Action 6 is all about working with ‘key’ origin and transit countries, notably those around the region, but also **South Asian countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh as many people travel from that region to eastern Libya.**

Work with Egyptian border forces – worth nearly €200m – is mentioned, with reference to surveillance of the Egypt-Libya border.

The EU Delegation in Libya is reported to regularly convene “Migration Advocacy Talks” with relevant embassies, whatever that means.

In the unredacted version of the file, there is reference to **a proposal by Home Affairs Commissioner Brunner to the United Arab Emirates for a jointly-launched “route-based initiative” in Libya**, also involving regional and institutional partners as well as individual member states. According to the German cable above, the UAE had yet to respond at the end of March.

Evacuations

In **action 7**, which deals with ‘voluntary’ evacuation of people from Libya, 2501 people are reported to have been resettled via the Rwanda Emergency Transit Mechanism between 2019 and end November 2025. **Only 137 of those are reported to have taken place in 2025, on just one flight – and there are concerns the ETM scheme is not financially sustainable amid low pledges.** Resettlement numbers overall are low for 2025, numbering in the hundreds to third countries and EU member states.

It is reported that over a dozen unaccompanied minors are “stranded” in Rwanda because no country is willing to resettle them. Some of these children may have been there up to two years.

Deportations

Amid the information on deportations in **action 8**, there is reference to a reintegration project in Bangladesh run by the BRAC development organisation entitled PROTASSHA II.

Overall, IOM deportations from Libya are reported to have slowed down.

Labour migration and regularisation

Finally, **action 9** addresses labour migration agreements, **but is also focused on encouraging Libyan authorities to regularise the status of irregular labour migrants in the country, improve integration and increase access to public services.**

The French NGO Supernovae is reported to be running a project to encourage regularisation, and it appears the EU is also pressing Libyan authorities on the (very politically sensitive) issue.



UK gives Pakistan £8m for ‘migration management’

On a [visit to Pakistan in mid-June](#), the UK’s Middle East Minister announced £8m (around €9.3m) funding to help, among other things, “strengthen border and visa systems and bring in expertise to help Pakistani law enforcement disrupt people-smuggling and trafficking networks”. The press release also said **the funding would “support” the deportation of Pakistani citizens from the UK**, as well as “identity and information-sharing processes”.



€15m to Senegal for maritime security

On 28 April 2026, the Council released a decision to provide €15m to Senegal, under the European Peace Facility, in order to assist the Armed Forces of Senegal within the framework of “Yaoundé Architecture” maritime security conventions.

While not referencing border control directly, [the Council decision approving the funds to Senegal](#) does reference human trafficking and the need to support “maritime security efforts in Senegal and within the Atlantic and Gulf of Guinea regions.”

The funds appear to be mainly intended for “operational equipment including intervention assets, surveillance systems, communication and protective individual equipment for the National Navy of Senegal”.

Updates to the document archive

The [Outsourcing Borders document archive](#) hosts key documents from the Council of the EU, the European Commission and elsewhere.



[Operational Coordination Mechanism on the External Dimension of Migration](#)

[Libya: Update on the implementation of the action file](#): prepared for the 26 March 2026 meeting (4019/26, LIMITE, 17 March 2026, pdf)

[Summary of MOCADDEM meeting on 26/03/2026](#): sent by the Permanent Representation of Germany to the EU in Brussels to the German government, 31 March 2026

Other documents

[Compilation of written replies to the Presidency guiding questions on the Action Plan on Drone and Counter Drone Security](#): presented to the Working Party On Civil Protection - Critical Entities Resilience (PROCIV CER) (6054/26, LIMITE, 7 May 2026, pdf)

[Revised compilation of Member States' written replies to the Presidency guiding questions on the Action Plan on Drone and Counter Drone Security](#): presented to the Ad hoc Working Party on preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises (6526/26, LIMITE, 18 May 2026, pdf)

[Readmission Expert Group meeting 22 May 2026](#): minutes obtained via Freedom of Information request

[Compilation of documents regarding the Frontex RECAPP digital tool](#): obtained via Freedom of Information request, 15 June 2026

[Compilation of documents regarding the Frontex RRApp digital tool](#): obtained via Freedom of Information request, 3 July 2026

[Council Implementing Decision on the suspension of certain provisions of regulation \(EC\) 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council with respect to Somalia – Adoption and Italian dissent](#) (10270/26, 15 June 2026 and ADD 1, 24 June 2026, pdfs)

About this bulletin

This project, carried out by *Statewatch* and *migration-control.info* and funded by *Brot für die Welt*, *Misereor*, *medico international* and *Pro Asyl*, aims to make the EU's externalisation policies, plans and practices public. In doing so it seeks to highlight their impact on the rights of people on the move, as well as democratic standards, transparency and accountability. It addresses a lack of public information by publishing relevant EU documents, in this phase primarily those produced or discussed by the Council of the EU. It also tackles the overflow of information that results from a variety of EU institutions, working groups and national governments involved in the externalisation agenda by summarising thematic and regional developments, and by analysing key issues in depth.