

Outsourcing borders

Monitoring EU externalisation policy

Bulletin 19
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“On average, every six hours a person dies on the Central Mediterranean route while seeking safety”

SOS Humanity

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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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Deportation and readmission



Time to get more “transit-related” deportations going, says Council

A [discussion document on “readmission provisions”](#) circulated by the Irish presidency of the Council of the EU points out that most deportation agreements with non-EU countries include provisions to also deport people who transited through those countries. In practice, though, this doesn’t happen very often. Accordingly, the presidency invites delegates at the 9 June 2026 meeting of the Working Party on Integration, Migration and Expulsion (IMEX Expulsion) to brainstorm how these ‘transit-related’ deportations could be stepped up.

The document describes the use of ‘transit-related’ deportation provisions as “limited and uneven”, noting that while some member states have requested such deportations, there have been few “successful outcomes”. While it’s not entirely clear why this is, the document points to cooperation with partner countries as a main factor, as well as disputes over what counts as ‘transit’ and a misunderstanding of what the relevant clauses actually provide for.

This issue is also referenced in a [Presidency flashnote ahead of the IMEX expulsion meeting](#).

Migration partnerships



€32m for counter-migration in Mauritania, with “high” risk of human rights violations

A €32m project in Mauritania, financed by the EU via a Commission [implementing decision for the 2025 Mauritania action plan](#), shows a heavy emphasis on migration control in the southern borderlands near Senegal and Mali. The “intervention rationale” for the project, described in [the first annex to the Mauritania financing decision](#) puts it plainly: “Irregular migration flows to the EU from this area will be reduced”. €12m of the budget is intended for Mauritania’s security forces, which is a notable decision given the same document describes the risk of those security forces committing human rights violations as “high”.

€25m of the overall financing for this project comes from the EU itself, with the remaining €7m coming from the French development agency AFD.



Updated Action Files

In recent weeks Statewatch has received various country and migration route action files presented to the MOCADÉM working party and other delegations. These ‘action files’ sum up the EU’s activities and future ambitions for border externalisation and other related projects in partner countries.

(Along with the other files below, a [2023 revised draft of the Nigeria Action File](#) has been uploaded to the Statewatch site, though with little information of note).



Council opens file on Syria

The Council has opened [an action file on Syria](#), in light of “new openings” for deportations made possible by the fall of the Assad regime.

There are two versions of the action file acquired by *Statewatch*, both heavily redacted. The [first version of the Syria action file](#) is dated 22 May 2026, the second was prepared for a meeting of permanent representatives on 22 June. Aside from information on individual member state spending and some minor differences in redaction, the two documents are identical.

For now, given the recency of events in Syria, this action file mostly concentrates on deportations and “voluntary” returns. There are, however, some hints towards the EU’s externalisation ambitions in the future. A full analysis of the Syria action file is on the *Statewatch* site.

Eastern Mediterranean “route matrix”

The Council issued [an update of the “Eastern Mediterranean route matrix”](#) to the MOCADDEM meeting of 26 March 2026 (see the [previous edition of this bulletin](#) for notes from that meeting).

Notable updates from [the last published version of the Eastern Med](#) file are below, divided by country or region:

Regarding South Asian countries such as **Pakistan** and **Bangladesh**:

- Implementation of the “EASTEAMS” project is reported as continuing (see the below action file on Pakistan) with hopes to extend the project to 30 September 2026
- An unspecified “memorandum of understanding” between Pakistan and Greece is reported to be close to being signed
- A **€7m project for “sustainable reintegration” in Pakistan** was reported as having begun implementation after the contract was signed in late 2024
- A European Migration Liaison Officer (EMLO) is deployed to Pakistan as of 1 May 2025
- The document reports that [“Global Alliance Rapid Response Initiatives”](#) (GARRI) test initiatives for counter-migration “communications campaigns” were to begin in Pakistan as of March 2026, implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), with a Bangladesh trial to follow soon after. Language in the action file suggests that if the EU starts to see a sudden rise in migration from certain areas, they can “activate” further targetted GARRI campaigns. The AMIF-funded [PARIM I programme in Pakistan](#) is also mentioned

The document also list significant spending in **Turkey**, including:

- A **€5m project to “strengthen the capacity of the Turkish gendarmerie against migrant smuggling”** was reportedly signed in December 2025
- A contract was signed in December 2025 for **€60m to “strengthen Turkey’s international and temporary protection processes”** through UNHCR
- Another project, funded via the EU’s BMVI fund, supported **management of Turkey’s western borders with €10m** between July 2024 and June 2027
- An ongoing project focussed on Turkey’s eastern and southeastern borders received an **additional €161m in early 2026, bringing the total spending on the project to €431m**. [The project appears to be at least partially implemented by the ICMPD](#) and is scheduled to run until the end of 2028

- Plans are reportedly in the works for a **€58m project to “provide additional search and rescue boats to the Turkish coastguard”**
- A pre-existing €220m project for **border surveillance on Turkey’s border with Iran is to be topped up with €50m** (see [the previous edition of this bulletin](#) for discussion of current anxieties regarding Iranians fleeing to Turkey)
- There is also reference to a “passenger screening” project run by the IOM in Turkish airports, as well as a meeting between the Turkish National Police and Frontex to acquaint the former with [the FIELDS document fraud detection system](#)

In the Middle East:

- The document lists various actions to tackle “root causes” in **Iraq**, though does not go into details other than that they are envisioned to run until at least 2027
- A meeting on migration in **Egypt** is due to take place in Cairo in the second half of 2026, with discussions reported as “ongoing” to identify other projects for the EU to fund until 2027. **An €8m project to “streamline and strengthen” the residence permit system in Egypt** was reportedly signed with the IOM in December 2025
- Two project budgets are mentioned for **Lebanon**, the first being **€7m for the fourth phase of an ongoing border management project**, and the second **€25m for “enhanced border security”**

The document also makes reference to a large-scale call for proposals for counter-migration “information campaigns” along the Eastern Med route. These are to run for 36 months from April 2026, targetting Turkey, Iraq, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Libya, Egypt and Sudan as well as diaspora communities in the EU.

The document also lists extensive individual member state actions, including:

- **A €40m Danish project for migration management targetting Turkey and the Western Balkans (2025-2029)**, a further **€40m for the same around the Mediterranean (2024-2029)**, a **€53,6m “Whole of Route Programme”** to prevent irregular migration to Europe (2024-2029) and a **€57,6m “return and readmission” programme**, as well as **€1,34 million for border management in Lebanon** and **€23,45m for a “Climate Change and Migration Data” programme**
- Two Austrian projects totalling just over €5m for deportations and “sustainable reintegration”
- Various programmes from Italy and Sweden are also listed without budgets

Senegal

Ahead of a 15 January 2025 meeting of delegations (Coreper) to the Council, the Presidency distributed what was then [the latest action file on Senegal](#). Unsurprisingly, given the significant engagement between the EU and Senegal on migration matters in recent years, the document describes Senegal as an “important origin, transit and departure country in the Atlantic Route” and urges a “comprehensive approach” to cooperation.

Most notable in this document are the various funding packages for counter-smuggling and counter-trafficking capacity building projects in Senegal. These include:

- **€1.9m delivered through the Internal Security Fund (ISF)** for the second phase (June 1 2023 – 31 May 2025) of the “[Network of Common Operational Partnership](#)” (NETCOP II) project. **There is also reference made to the next phase NETCOP III project, which was to begin early 2026 with a budget of €8m**
- **€1.75m for “support to intelligence services of Senegal”**, as well as neighbouring Mauritania and The Gambia, through the [Migration Partnership Facility](#), funded by the ISF and coordinated by Spain (1 January 2024 – 31 December 2025)
- **€1.2m for counter-smuggling under the Niamey process**, via the ISF and implemented by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (1 February 2024 – 31 January 2026)
- **€5.75m delivered through Phase II of the Common Operational Partnership** and implemented by France and Spain, begun in early 2024
- **A “new” €5.35m phase of the “[Rapid Action Groups for surveillance and intervention](#)” programme** began early 2024, focussing on Senegal’s south-eastern border
- References are made to [the €1.4m INFORMA](#) “information campaign” operating in Senegal, the Gambia and Niger, with a further **€10m budget made available 19 November 2024 for further counter-migration projects**

The document also notes “**naval assets**” for **maritime migration control to be delivered to Senegal as early as Q2 2025**. It also makes reference to a [€30m package to Senegal for migration control, which has been previously analysed by Statewatch](#).

Beyond spending at the EU-level, the document also lists various projects from individual member states. These include:

- **€1m from the Czech Republic** for reintegration support and preventing irregular migration (1 November 2023 – 30 April 2025)
- €400,000 from Spain (along with further unspecified “private sector” financing) to “address the root causes of irregular migration (through 2025)”
- €200,000 from Poland for a 2025 pilot project related to document security

Pakistan

Prepared for a meeting of the MOCADDEM committee 23 July 2025, [the Pakistan action file](#) describes its leading aim as preventing irregular migration through support to border management, counter-migration and trafficking operations and “awareness raising” campaigns, as well as addressing root causes and increasing deportations.

In its introductory material, the document notes that under the EU’s external funding mechanism, **since 2021 Pakistan has received €50m for actions “linked to migration”** as well as benefitting to some extent from €121m from other projects in the region.

There are other specific budget items, such as:

- A Common Operation Partnership project under EASTEAMS (European Actions Strengthening Teams Establishment Against Migrant Smuggling) funded by €1.7m via the ISF
- **A €7m project for “sustainable reintegration” of deportees**, implemented by the ICMPD and “kicked off” February 2025

Aside from distinct budget items, there is a lot of reference made to “awareness raising and information” campaigns in Pakistan, such as the PARIM II and SAFER (“*Safe and legal alternatives for Pakistanis and potential migrations and migrants on the Route*”) programmes, both apparently finalised in April 2025. PARIM II was financed through the EU’s AMIF fund for just under €1m and implemented by the ICMPD.

Pakistan is described as a “priority country” for future anti-migration campaigns. Such projects “could be foreseen” as taking place under the Global Alliance’s Communication Response Facility. This project, which was to run as part of the Migration Partnership Facility until 2029, is described in a [Commission AMIF implementing decision](#) as implementing “information and awareness-raising campaigns on the risks of irregular migration, allowing for a rapid response to emerging migration trends”. It appears to be linked to the ICMPD-implemented €5m [Global Alliance Rapid Response Initiatives \(GARRI\)](#) programme.

Niger

A 2022 “[Finalisation of the Implementation report](#)” as part of the Action File on Niger is largely outdated, given that [since Niger’s coup in 2023 there has been little cooperation with the EU on migration matters](#).

There are, however, some older items of note, including references to a **€50m “Nexus 3 frontières” programme for refugee “management”** funded by the EU’s external funding instrument and signed in May 2022, and another **€50m for the 2022-2029 “Education, Formation, Emploi” educational programme** which focussed on “regions affected by migration and displacement”.

Updates to the document archive

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



[Working Party on Integration, Migration and Expulsion \(IMEX Expulsion\)](#)

[Presidency flash note](#) to meeting 9 June 2026 (8092/2026, LIMITE, 8 June 2026, pdf)

Implementation of Readmission Provisions for Third-Country Nationals in Transit, including persons holding a visa or residence permit of the partner country at the time of entry:

[Presidency discussion paper](#) (2790/2026, LIMITE, 8 June 2026, pdf)

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

Action file Senegal: [version sent to Coreper meeting 15 January 2025](#) (297/2025, LIMITE, 10 January 2025, pdf)

Action file Syria: [first version produced for roundtable 29 May 2026](#) (6902/2026, LIMITE, 22 May 2026, pdf)

Action file Syria: [second version produced for Coreper meeting 26 June 2026](#) (8384/2026, LIMITE, 22 June 2026, pdf)

Action file Pakistan: [version produced for roundtable 23 July 2025](#) (9389/2026, LIMITE, 15 July 2026, pdf)

Action file Niger: [finalisation of the implementation report](#) (11207/2026, LIMITE, 30 August 2022, pdf)

Draft revised Nigeria Action File: [version produced for roundtable 29 September 2023](#) (11281/2026, LIMITE, 25 September 2023, pdf)

Action file to follow up on the EU Action Plan for the Eastern Mediterranean route: [update produced for roundtable 26 March 2026](#) (4020/2026, LIMITE, 17 March 2026, pdf)

Other documents

Décision d'exécution de la Commission du 16.12.2025 relative au financement du plan d'action annuel en faveur de la République Islamique de Mauritanie pour 2025: [European Commission implementing decision](#) (C 2025 8951, 16 December 2025) plus [Annex 1](#) and [Annex 2](#) (all in original french, [an english translation of all three documents is also online](#))

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.