

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH BOARD MEETING OF THE EU EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA (EUTF FOR AFRICA)

Brussels, 24 April 2018

The European Commission convened the fourth meeting of the Board of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa) which was attended by European Commission services (DG DEVCO, DG NEAR, DG HOME, DG ECHO) and the European External Action Service (EEAS), donor countries including EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway, partner countries, concerned regional organizations and representatives of the European Parliament. The Director General of DG DEVCO, Mr. S. Manservigi, chaired the meeting.

Introduction session

The Chair opened the meeting by presenting the agenda, which was adopted.

In his opening remarks, the Chair briefly referred to progress made in terms of new approvals, signed contracts and disbursements, as well as to the work accomplished along the Central Mediterranean Route through the voluntary return and reintegration of migrants from Libya and other countries towards their country of origin. He also introduced the need to have a clear and open discussion on the future of the EUTF Africa based on the limited available financial resources.

The Director General of DG NEAR, Mr. C. Danielson, indicated that activities in the North of Africa region are going in the right direction with migratory flows decreasing and efforts being made to build capacities of the Libyan authorities. He recognised the usefulness of working together with Member States, other donors and partners, and stressed the need to pursue further all the efforts already undertaken in order to contribute to a safe and orderly management of the irregular flows in the region. Despite the positive progress, he called for caution to the changing nature of migratory flows in the region (i.e. Tunisia and Morocco) and stressed the importance of being prepared to address new emerging needs.

The Managing Director for Human Rights, Global and Multilateral Issues at the EEAS, Ms. L. Knudsen, highlighted that the EUTF Africa has a very good track-record in its different areas of work, has enabled the EU to tackle root causes, has worked in close cooperation with Member States and partners according to the principle of shared responsibility, and that it represents the backbone of the EU achievements in the area of migration. She also added that the Trust Fund has developed new tracks for dialogue with partner countries, embedding migration in a wider foreign policy context and has strongly contributed to saving lives at sea and in the desert by fighting against trafficking and smuggling of migrants. She re-iterated the future funding of the EUTF Africa is a key issue.

The Deputy Director General of DG HOME, Mr. S. Mordue, emphasised that the secret of success of the EUTF Africa is the mobilization of several partners around common objectives. The cooperation of the Commission with IOM, UNCHR and Italy in Libya was referred to as an example of best practice. He highlighted that the EU policy objective is not to stop migration but rather to introduce an orderly management of migration, and that the Trust Fund is succeeding in doing that. The concept was further elaborated by referring to progress on the Commission *pledging exercise* launched in 2017, for which EU Member States have responded beyond 50,000 pledges for resettlement, the announcement of pilot projects on legal migration and the need to continue making headways on return and readmission.

As to the future, he agreed on the need to further prioritize. Mr. Mordue also referred to DG HOME contribution to the EUTF for Africa of EUR 77 million, in addition to EUR 23 million planned under the 2018 Annual Working Plan of DG HOME.

The Director C of DG ECHO, Ms. A. Kaminara, recognised the good progress achieved by the EUTF Africa. She reiterated the need to keep the focus on addressing the root causes of migration and forced displacement, recalling the importance of resilience in the objective of the EUTF to achieve this. She also indicated the concrete opportunity presented under the EUTF to strengthen the link between humanitarian aid and development.

SESSION I – Stock-taking of progress achieved by the EUTF Africa

The Deputy Director General of DG DEVCO, Mr. K. Doens, made a wide presentation on the state of play of the EUTF for Africa including approved programs, contracts signed with implementers and other operational matters, the indication of preliminary results, an overview of financial contributions to the Trust Fund as well as an indication of progress achieved in terms of reporting and monitoring, as well as communication and transparency.

Comments by delegations

Virtually every delegation has expressed strong support for the work accomplished so far by the EUTF Africa, for the efforts made in terms of reporting and monitoring, and the excellent results in terms of communication, transparency and visibility, notably the launching of a dedicated website. A vast majority of delegations recognised that the Trust Fund has fully demonstrated its added-value as a flexible instrument able to address short and long-term challenges in a quite effective way and pooling together expertise and resources of the EU MS and partners at large. In the overall, delegations expressed their support to a balanced approach among the different pillars of the Valletta Action Plan (VAP), as well as to a reasonable geographic balance.

A number of delegation are eager to look at the results of the performance audit of the ECA (**PT, AT, DK**)

IT highlighted that the replenishment of the EUTF Africa up to 2020 is a matter of shared responsibility in managing migration flows and that the different migration routes should be treated in a balanced manner. **IT** stressed that resources allocated to the EUTF Africa should not be set below the level of resources allocated to the Turkey Facility and asked the Commission to provide assurances that the trust Fund will be replenished to cover the current gap, together with a financing scheme until 2020.

DE indicated the need to keep an open dialogue between the Trust Fund and the implementing agencies, to safeguard quality (as opposed to speed) and to improve the Commission's procedures to speed-up implementation (**AT**). **DE** also stressed the importance of exchanging on a strategic use of funds, focussing on improving migration management, return and reintegration, and fighting trafficking.

SE highlighted the need to focus on human rights education and respect.

BE recalled the need to keep a balance between the 5 pillars of the Valletta Action Plan (VAP) and the 4 strategic objectives of the EUTF and a human-rights approach. **BE** appreciated progress in terms of monitoring and evaluation and reiterated, as Chair of the Rabat Process, the importance of data collection and the need to enter data in the VAP database.

GUI highlighted the growing cooperation with Algeria to facilitate return of migrants towards their country of origin and indicated the need to promote the role of diaspora and legal migration (ET)

LIB highlighted that some migrants who returned to their country of origin through the EUTF for Africa came back to Libya, thus the need to review the mechanism in place for return operations.

ES – supported the idea of the replenishment of the EUTF Africa and wondered whether the EDF reserve could be used to cover part of the financial gap. ES also confirmed its interest in focusing on root causes of irregular migration and resilience, and on pursuing a balanced geo-thematic approach.

CZ + PT – stressed that a greater number of donors should be involved in the implementation of the EUTF for Africa programmes through national agencies, CSOs, etc.

FI stressed the EUTF's challenge of having a dual set of objectives: long-term development goals and short-term migration related goals, and suggested that this challenge be assessed in the frame of the forthcoming evaluation of the EUTF

Other comments include:

- Research work, including the conclusions and recommendations of the research facilities, should be further used to respect the evidence-based principle of the Trust Fund (**BE, FR, SE, UK**)
- Need for thorough evaluation of the EUTF Africa including on its impact (**BE, FR, AT, DE, UK**);
- Ensure coordination with other instruments and complementarity to avoid duplication (**FR, CH, PT**)
- Need to look into the monitoring of risks across projects and to further improve monitoring and evaluation (**UK, NO**);
- In-country coordination needs to be further improved (**NL, MAL, FR, CH**)
- Need to further improve national ownership, dialogue and coordination with national and local authorities (**BE, PT, MAL, CH**)
- Increase transparency during the identification and formulation phases (**NL, DE, NO**)
- Need to work more closely with the African Union (AU) in the area of communications and visibility (**PT**)

In response to the delegations comments, the representative of DG NEAR mentioned the efforts made in the region to ensure coherence with national programs and coordination at country level (Libya, Tunisia and Morocco). He also confirmed that pipelines of projects are the result of regular work with Member States.

The Chair added that the Trust Fund needs to focus on short-term measures (such as fighting trafficking and smuggling) and longer-term actions in the area of job creation and economic development opportunities, and confirmed that the complementarity between Trust Funds' and bilateral programmes needs to be ensured. He called on Member States, which are implementing 43% of programmes through their agencies, to look into the coherence of programmes submitted for approval. On implementation issues, he confirmed that the Trust

Fund is working together with implementing agencies, including through the Practitioners' Network, to further improve the implementation pace.

On monitoring and evaluation issues, the Deputy Director General of DEVCO confirmed that the Trust Fund will measure impact at a later stage and that measuring efficiency is key. He supported the request to take into account the inputs of the research facilities, and reiterated that the implementation pace of the Trust Fund Africa is faster than the one of traditional programmes.

SESSION II – Future perspectives of the EUTF for Africa

The Chair presented the funding situation of the EUTF for Africa and the strategic priorities of the three regions, which have been shared with the Board prior to the meeting. He clearly indicated that in order to finance the current pipeline of programmes an additional amount of EUR 1.2 billion would be required. He explained in some detail the work that would be accomplished under each regional priority.

The Chair explained that due to the scarcity of resources it is necessary to further prioritize in order to provide guidance to the next OPCOM meetings planned at the end of May. To this effect, the Chair suggested focusing on the following criteria, which had not been previously circulated to delegations:

- Return and reintegration (IOM / UNHCR)
- Refugees management (Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework)
- Completing progress on the securitization of documents and civil registry
- Anti-trafficking
- Essential stabilization efforts in Somalia, Sudan and South-Sudan and in the Sahel if resources are available.
- Migration dialogues (Gambia, Ethiopia, etc.)

The Deputy-Director General of DG NEAR, Mr M. Popowski, recalled that, concerning the North of Africa window, prioritization has already been made and presented to the Member States during COREPER II discussions in November 2017 and March 2018. He highlighted that the priorities for 2018 and 2019 aim at contributing to an effective migration management in the region. In this respect, he detailed the future pipeline which will notably focus on the protection of vulnerable migrants; on voluntary return and sustainable reintegration; on community stabilization (including through support to municipalities along migration routes); on integrated border management; and on support to labor migration. He emphasized that updates on the existing pipeline will continue to be discussed regularly with donors.

The Chair also presented two options for the future:

- (i) Commit the remaining resources and come gradually to a close of the EUTF Africa on the basis of the selected priorities;
- (ii) Recognise the added-value of the Trust Fund based on the Valletta objectives, restructure the priorities and project pipelines, and agree on a replenishment of the EUTF in the order of EUR 1 billion.

He stressed that it will be possible to work only with the existing instruments (at least for the next two years) and that it will be possible to look into the EDF reserve considering, however, other compelling priorities such as the support to the G5/Sahel, the African Peace Facility and the External Investments Fund.

Comments by delegations:

In the overall, most delegations agreed on the strong need to prioritize the current pipeline of projects, and requested the Commission to submit a list of proposed projects for future funding. They also indicated that, at this stage, they are unable to commit additional financial resources

Some delegations highlighted the need to look into the Report of the Audit of the ECA, or the upcoming mid-term evaluation of the Trust Fund, before making a decision on future contributions to the EUTF Africa.

There is a wide agreement on the need to work around option 2 as starting point, although a number of delegations (**UK, CZ, PT**) stressed that it will be necessary to work around a level of additional resources lower than the envisaged EUR 1 billion.

Some delegations suggested looking into the possibility to transfer resources from other instruments (**FR, DE, FI, ES**); others mentioned the possibility to use the EDF uncommitted resources.

BE indicated that the EDF reserve is decreasing and should also be used for other initiatives such as the African Peace Facility or for unforeseen crises that may occur.

DE stressed that limited resources should be spent in a targeted manner on migration management projects including the fight against illegal migration, the improvement of border management and return, readmission and reintegration while ensuring consistency with human rights standards and transparency concerning ODA-eligibility. **DE** added that in the future, EUTF funding should have a stronger leverage on African partners and ensure that countries of origin and transit cooperate more readily with the EU and its Member States in areas of interest for the EU. **DE** stressed also that on top of their direct contribution to the EUTF Africa, they provide co-financing to Trust Fund programs

IT underlined the urgency of a full replenishment of the current funding gap (EUR 1.2 billion) to consolidate results achieved so far on the Central Mediterranean route.

Comments and conclusions by the Chair:

- The Board should not expect that the Report of the ECA performance Audit of the Trust Fund will provide the answers required to make decisions on the future of the EUTF Africa;
- The next MFF will not be implemented until the beginning of 2021;
- There are no possibilities to tap resources from other financial instruments as the Mid-Term Review (MTR) mobilized resources for other initiatives. The EDF reserve represents the only option, although it will not be able to cover a financial gap in the order of EUR 1 billion, considering competing priorities such as the African Peace Facility (APF), the EIP/Guarantee Fund and priority countries;
- The Commission will prioritize existing proposals in view of the upcoming meetings of the Operational Committee (end of May), based on the six priorities presented;

- A great number of delegations supported option 2 “minus” and indicated the need to aim at a reduced financial target. Consequently, it is necessary to keep working on filling the gap with a level of additional resources which could be lower than the envisaged EUR 1 billion;
- As the EUTF Africa has been a powerful tool for donor coordination, we could consider to jointly identifying projects, to be eventually financed also with bilateral funding.