



## **EUTF for Africa and IOM initiative for Protection and Reintegration of returnees along the Central Mediterranean migration routes**

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The European Union, through the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), and with contributions from Germany (EUR 48 million) and Italy (EUR 22 million), has developed a joint initiative with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support the efforts of partner countries in Africa to strengthen migration management and to respond to the urgent protection needs and unacceptable loss of life of migrants. The joint initiative will cover 14 countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Libya.

Migration dynamics in the region are complex with mixed groups of people on the move for diverse reasons. Migration flows often encompass migrant workers (regular and irregular), unaccompanied and separated children, as well as refugees or asylum-seekers. Regardless of their legal status, migrants may face significant protection issues as well as frequent abuse and exploitation by migrant smugglers and human traffickers. Migrants in a situation of vulnerability are typically at greater risk and require special attention.

To respond to these challenges and with the overall aim of promoting safe, orderly and regular migration, the initiative will address the below priorities over the next three years.

#### **Activities**

**Increase protection and assistance for vulnerable and stranded migrants:** Life-saving assistance and migrant support services will be strengthened along migration routes to address immediate needs for food and water, medical and psycho-social care, as well as temporary shelter for an estimated 60,000 migrants.

The initiative foresees the establishment of migration centres along migration routes with the aim of informing, assisting and supporting migrants in need. They will provide support to vulnerable and stranded migrants by covering basic needs and services such as food and accommodation, health and psychosocial assistance, access to information, counselling and family tracing. Specific tailor-made assistance will be provided to the most vulnerable such as victims of trafficking, unaccompanied migrant children, or migrants with medical and psychosocial related needs. Information on migrant profiles, vulnerabilities, intentions and needs will be collected in order to feed into the data collection components of the actions and inform policy and programming.

**Voluntary return:** Many stranded and vulnerable migrants express the wish to return home rather than continue their dangerous journeys. The initiative foresees assisted voluntary return for up to 24,000 migrants from countries of transit or destination in Africa (notably Libya, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso).

**Sustainable reintegration:** up to 24,000 migrants returning from Africa and to a lesser extend from Europe will benefit from counselling and reintegration support in their countries of origin. The support whether individual or community based will ensure a sustainable reintegration. A special attention will be provided to vulnerable migrants and their needs during the return and reintegration process.

The initiative will support the voluntary return and the reintegration of migrants from transit countries in Africa as well as the reintegration of returnees from Europe to their home communities. The reintegration support will enable returnees to undertake vocational training, start a micro-business or participate in cooperatives and collective income generating activities or similar initiatives. Assistance provided through referral, or directly by the actions, will address the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions of returnees' reintegration at individual and community level. Vulnerable migrants will benefit from tailor-made individual reintegration support based on their specific needs. Individual and community-based assistance will be combined with more structural reforms addressing the underlying drivers of migration. This will be aligned with policy priorities of partner countries and include a focus on capacity building for concerned institutions and actors, to enable as much as possible their

involvement and lead in the return/reintegration efforts.

**Enhance government and stakeholder policies and responses:** The actions will contribute to the consolidation of legislation, policy or procedures and reinforce the response of local stakeholders to enhance the appropriation, sustainability and coordination of the actions. Capacity building of governments, authorities, and local stakeholders will focus on migrant protection, return and reintegration, information and awareness raising campaigns, data collection and analysis.

To enhance the sustainability and coordination of the actions, this will include specific activities focusing on transfer of knowledge and technical capacities as well as support to the operational capacities of the relevant government actors, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

**Safe and informed migration:** An estimated 200,000 migrants and some 2,000 communities will have access to accurate information on migration that can support informed choices, mitigate the risks associated with irregular migration, raise awareness of migrants' rights and responsibilities within host communities and counter negative narratives of migration representing a "burden" or a "danger" to hosting countries.

Through the actions, potential migrants, migrants stranded on the routes or returnees will be sensitized and provided with reliable information on the costs and risks related to irregular migration, European asylum law and the factual realities awaiting migrants in Europe, alternatives such as legal and safe migration, rights and obligations and opportunities for voluntary return and reintegration. The involvement of community and peer leaders, outreach in schools and universities, places where migrants gather (eg bus stations), radio spots or theatre production will be assessed and implemented to ensure a maximal coverage and impact. The assistance to migrants will neither aim at deterring migrants from setting out for Europe nor create pull factors for them to do so. It will rather aim at providing them with a realistic picture on which to base their future decisions regarding migration and return. A cross-country facility will assist all IOM Information Centers with communications content, products and best-practices. It will also ensure impactful and aligned communication by IOM on social media channels and forums most frequented by (potential) migrants from and in the partner countries.

**Improve data on migration flows, routes and trends as well as migrants needs and vulnerabilities.** Data collection tools and migration flow monitoring, will support governments to develop informed and responsive policy and programmatic responses to migration challenges and opportunities.

In order to contribute to a complete understanding of current migration flows at a regional level, systematic data collection in strategic locations along the migration routes is foreseen. The data collected from Flow Monitoring Points will focus on migrant demographics, migration flows, and routes, and be complemented with flow monitoring surveys to gather more detailed information on the drivers of migration. The data collection, where applicable, will include questions on trafficking prevalence indicators to gain a better understanding of persistence of this crime, as well as other relevant topics such as labour migration and migrant health (while respecting national and Data Protection Principles).

## Principles

- Actions will focus on the well-being and personal development of migrants with respect for their rights
- Actions will guarantee the dignity and safety of the assisted people
- Protection mechanisms will take into account the needs of the most vulnerable
- Actions will be based on the principles of non-discrimination and self-determination, participation of migrants
- Actions will respect confidentiality and the right to privacy
- Actions will involve local actors to foster sustainability

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Press contacts:

[Carlos MARTIN RUIZ DE GORDEJUELA](#) (+32 2 296 53 22)

[Christina WUNDER](#) (+32 2 299 22 56)

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