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## NOTE

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From:	Presidency
On:	12 June 2025
To:	Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration (EMWP)
Subject:	Making the best use of the financial framework for enhancing comprehensive cooperation on the external dimension of migration and asylum

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## Introduction

### **Building upon the February Commission Communication and the May Member States' discussion at the informal SCIFA**

With the upcoming presentation of the new post-2028 EU budget, the Polish Presidency initiated a discussion on the future of the EU migration funding during the informal SCIFA meeting in May 2025. The discussion built on the mid-term Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) outcome, while also taking into account the Commission's February Communication on "The road to the next MFF"<sup>1</sup>. The document lays out the main pillars of work in the run-up to the next MFF, namely: simplification, focus on the priority areas and increased impact of EU funding. Migration, in its internal and external dimension is mentioned among the thematic priority areas, alongside with increasing EU competitiveness and security. The Communication calls for a greater balance

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0046>

between predictability and flexibility recalling the limited in-built flexibilities of current MFF, which include the Thematic Facilities under AMIF, ISF and BMVI, and the NDICI-GE cushion.

Moreover, during the informal meeting of the Mocadem roundtable in May 2025, the Polish Presidency encouraged an informal exchange of views on enhancing donor coordination in a Team Europe spirit, when it comes to external dimension of migration. There was a general agreement among the Member States that experience sharing and mutual coordination, when it comes to funding priority actions, will be increasingly required in a global context, which is more unpredictable than in the past, and where the needs are increasing, also considering the disengagement of the US and the general reduction of ODA. The upcoming discussion at the EMWP meeting on 18 June will be therefore an opportunity to:

- a) deepen the understanding of best practices and the lessons learnt, which can be drawn from the 2024 mid-term revision of the 2021-2027 MFF in the external dimension as well as relevant European Court of Auditors (ECA) reports,
- b) further the reflection started by the informal SCIFA and complemented by the informal Mocadem meeting on key elements and priorities for the post-2028 EU budget design negotiations. Such negotiations will start during the upcoming Danish Presidency of the EU, after the expected presentation of the Commission proposal in July 2025.

The scope of this paper encompasses all major EU funding streams relevant to the external dimension of migration and asylum. This includes both geographic instruments, such as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI–Global Europe), and thematic instruments, notably the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). The analysis covers the allocation and implementation of these financial tools, with particular attention to their coherence, complementarity, and alignment with EU priorities. By adopting a comprehensive approach, the paper aims to provide a holistic overview of how EU resources are mobilised to support migration management, address root causes, and promote partnerships with third countries in line with the objectives of the EMWP.

## Current financial instruments

During the 20 May SCIFA discussion, the delegations reflected the need for new sources of funding to finance the migration pillars of the strategic partnerships, as under the current MFF the funding of the external dimension of migration has been ensured by a rather complex combination of various financial instruments. These include:

- **The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE)** assisting partner countries in the Neighbourhood (East and South), Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and the Caribbean countries in addressing the challenges and root causes related to irregular migration and forced displacement, supporting the cooperation between these countries and the EU, and promoting *Team Europe* and EU action at global level.
- **The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance** (currently in its third phase: IPA III) assisting countries with an EU membership perspective to align to EU standards.
- **The Home Affairs Funds** which offer limited targeted possibilities for the Commission and Member States to finance actions in or in relation to third countries, whereby a number of overarching requirements/safeguards must be respected.
- **The Trust Funds**, combining EU and bilateral Member States' funds, launched during the previous MFF and terminated at the end of it, notably in response to the 2015 migration crisis, including: Facility for Refugees in Türkiye <sup>2</sup>; EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis (MADAD) <sup>3</sup> and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/turkiye/eu-support-refugees-turkiye\\_en](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/turkiye/eu-support-refugees-turkiye_en)

<sup>3</sup> [https://trustfund-syria-region.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://trustfund-syria-region.ec.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>4</sup> [https://trust-fund-for-africa.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://trust-fund-for-africa.europa.eu/index_en)

## NDICI Global Europe

The NDICI Global Europe deserves particular attention in this discussion, as it is the largest financing instrument in the context of funding for the external dimension of migration. The NDICI-GE Regulation provides that indicatively 10% of the Instrument should support actions dedicated to management and governance of migration and forced displacement, including when addressing the root causes of these phenomena. The Commission is currently well on track in fulfilling this spending target, as until now on average the spending has been of around 14%. Additionally, it should be noted that the NDICI-GE Regulation allows 7% of its funding to be spent on non-ODA (Official Development Assistance) activities. Since 2021, non-ODA has represented 2% of NDICI-GE spending.

Actions in the area of migration and forced displacement under the NDICI-GE and other financing instruments can be implemented in all manners foreseen by the EU contractual and financial rules, including through third-country authorities, UN agencies, EU Member States' agencies, non-governmental organisations, and others. A number of Member States, through their agencies (e.g. Civipol in FR and GiZ in DE) have gained the implementing experience managing the EU funds in the migration field. However, many stakeholders, including from smaller Member States, report that substantial administrative capacity is required in order to be able to manage the EU-funded programmes.

In line with the EU's core values and international obligations, all funding dedicated to the external dimension of migration and asylum must adhere to the "do no harm" principle. This requires that financial support is strictly conditional on full compliance with international law and human rights obligations by partner countries and implementing organisations. Accordingly, this paper emphasises that robust safeguards, regular monitoring, and transparent reporting mechanisms must be integrated into all funding arrangements to ensure that EU resources do not contribute to or enable human rights violations.

## Conclusions emerging from the 20 May informal SCIFA

The strategic discussion between the senior officials on 20 May reflected deliberations with regard to the external dimension and the need for new sources of funding to finance strategic and comprehensive partnerships (SCPs). Other calls included the need for a *Team Europe* approach, which would allow for better coordination between the EU and national funds. This Team Europe spirit could be achieved through EU financing of the deployment of European immigration liaison officers in third countries or through MS' co-financing IOM assisted voluntary returns and reintegration.

More generally, several Member States called for an increase of funds available for migration under the new MFF. Increased funding was argued for in several areas, including in relation to the external dimension, the Mediterranean, SCPs, migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, return and readmission, but also the so-called innovative solutions.

While some Member States called upon **greater flexibility** and easier transfer of funds between different priorities, there was a division with regard to the pooling of funds. Flexibility was seen as important in view of the ongoing conflicts, crisis management, and the changing dynamics of migratory flows, which often tend to move to another route in case surveillance is stepped up on different routes. On the one hand, Member States indicated that there is a need for **simplification and a possible merger of JHA funds**. However, some Member States showed a more careful approach and argued for **caution** when it comes to combining home and cohesion funds, which are based on other indicators. A better and more structured link between the external and internal dimensions of funding was called upon, while Member States also supported the reduction of the administrative burden.

When it comes to **improving coordination between the EU and MS in the external dimension**, Member States argued for synergies between different funds (rather than a single fund) and improved coordination between the Commission and the Member States. Nevertheless, the current level of coordination, *including the Migration Coordination Group*, was assessed positively by other Member States. The discussion also echoed a more strategic approach to **the funding of the agencies** and called for clearer objectives to be set for the Agencies.

## Lessons learnt from the 2024 mid-term revision of the 2021-2027 MFF

The purpose of the 2024 mid-term review of the EU 2021-2027 budget was to prepare the 2025-2027 EU programmes. The mid-term revision pointed out the mismatch between available funds and actual needs, as three years into its implementation, the NDICI-GE cushion was almost depleted. This exemplifies the need for leaving a greater flexibility and stronger alignment between the EU and EU Member States priorities when it comes to the design of the new MFF. The review also highlighted the need for better coordination and transparency in the area of forced migration and security, including with Member States and among EU funds.

Following the mid-term revision, NDICI-GE regional and country programmes have been revised with the aim to reinforce the capacity to fund actions in the area of migration and forced displacement.

Moreover, following the recommendations issued by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in its September 2024 report on the EUTF<sup>5</sup>, the Commission has already approved new internal guidance for staff on the implementation of the human rights-based approach in migration and forced displacement interventions, and it has approved an internal-procedure to be used by all staff when responding to allegations of human rights abuses in EU-funded projects. started working on further strengthening the capacity of its services to monitor the respect of human rights in the context of the design and delivery of its programmes. Moreover, the Commission aims to identify and design its actions through an evidence-based approach and with more clearly identified results indicators.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?ref=SR-2024-17>

## Discussion questions

In view of the above, and building on the SCIFA discussion, the Polish Presidency would like to ask the following questions to delegations:

1. What are the lessons learned so far from the 2021-2027 programming period to address changing migration patterns?
  2. How can EU funds (both [in]direct and shared management) dedicated to the external dimension of migration be further improved? Is there a room for further improvement in coordination on EU funding, in order to be more effective and ensure synergies? If so, how could it be achieved?
  3. How could we better coordinate between COM and MS expenditures in order to be more effective and avoid overlaps?
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