

Beat: Politics

Europe reinforces cooperation with third countries to better manage migration

New Migration Partnership Framework

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USPA NEWS - The European Commission has set out plans for a new results-oriented Partnership Framework to mobilise and focus EU action and resources in their external work on managing migration. Commission considers unacceptable loss of life in the Mediterranean Sea.

The EU will seek tailor made partnerships with key third countries of origin and transit using all policies and instruments at the EU's disposal to achieve concrete results. Building on the European Agenda on Migration, the priorities are saving lives at sea, increasing returns, enabling migrants and refugees to stay closer to home and, in the long term, helping third countries' development in order to address root causes of irregular migration. Member State contributions in these partnerships "" diplomatic, technical and financial "" will be of fundamental importance in delivering results.

First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "To stop the unacceptable loss of life in the Mediterranean Sea and bring order into migratory flows, we need to rethink how the EU and its Member States join efforts to work together with third countries. The Commission proposes a new partnership framework: starting with a first group of priority third countries, compacts tailored to the circumstances of each of them will mobilise all our policies and tools to achieve these objectives, tapping into the EU's collective influence in close coordination with Member States and focusing our resources including through the swift deployment of 8 billion euros over the next five years."^[?]

"We will also work on an ambitious External Investment Plan to help create opportunities and tackle the root causes of migration. Without concrete results from our partners in managing migration better, we should collectively be ready to adapt our engagement and financial aid," Frans Timmermans added Tuesday in the presentation of the EU agreement.

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini added: "Millions of people are on the move worldwide and we can only manage this if we act globally, in full partnership. For this reason, we are proposing a new approach for strong partnerships with key countries. Our goal, while staying focused on saving lives at sea and dismantling smugglers' networks, is to support the countries that host so many people and foster growth in our partner countries."^[?]

"We are ready to increase financial and operational support and to invest in long-term economic and social development, security, rule of law and human rights, improving people's life and tackling the drivers of migration. Our duty, and also our interest, is to give people the chance and the means for a safe and decent life. It is a responsibility Europe shares with the rest of the world: we can only do it together," she said.

Migratory pressure is the 'new normal' both for the EU and for partner countries and is part of a broader global displacement crisis. Responding together in a meaningful way requires a more coordinated, systematic and structured approach, matching the EU's interests and the interests of partners, considers European Commission. The renewed partnership with third countries will take the form of tailored "compacts" that will be developed according to the situation and needs of each partner country, depending on whether they are a country of origin, country of transit or a country hosting many displaced persons.

Action in African countries

In the short term Europe will deliver compacts with Jordan and Lebanon and take steps to agree further ones with Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia. Also intend to increase their engagement with Tunisia and Libya. According the European Commission, the full range of EU policies and EU external instruments will be brought to bear focused engagement: EU assistance and policies will be tailored to produce concrete results; the short term objectives are to save lives in the Mediterranean Sea, increase rates of return to countries of origin and transit, and enable migrants and refugees to stay close to home and avoid people taking dangerous journeys.

Immediate action with partners will focus on improving the legislative and institutional framework for migration and capacity building on

border and migration management, including providing protection to refugees. A mix of positive and negative incentives will be integrated into the EU's development and trade policies to reward those countries willing to cooperate effectively with the EU on migration management and ensure there are consequences for those who refuse.

Enhanced Support: All EU policies, tools and resources will help to support the Partnership Framework in an innovative focused and coordinated way. Increased efforts to implement the Valletta Action plan, including its financial aspects will be also beneficial to this process. Financial support and development and neighbourhood policy tools will reinforce local capacity-building, including for border control, asylum procedures, counter-smuggling and reintegration efforts.

Breaking the business model of the people smugglers who look to exploit migrants for profit is central to tackling irregular migration. Effective returns will be crucial to this objective. "It is also necessary to build on the experience of cooperating with Turkey and the Western Balkan countries and the EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia to effectively deliver results," says EC. The further deployment of European Migration Liaison Officers to priority source and transit countries will help coordinate EU cooperation. EU Cooperation Platforms on migrant smuggling will be finalised in key locations.

Creating legal routes: Dissuading people from taking these dangerous journeys also requires alternative legal pathways to Europe and greater humanitarian reception capacities closer to their place of origin. The EU will support the establishment of a UN-led global resettlement scheme to contribute to fair sharing of displaced persons and further discourage irregular movements. The upcoming proposal for a structured resettlement system will be a direct demonstration of the EU's commitment.

Financial Instruments: Financial allocations devoted to tackling the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement will be increased, as will flexibility for deploying the programmes. The new Partnership approach will make use of a smart mix of short-term resources and long-term financial instruments to deliver immediate results but also address fundamental drivers of migration. In the short term, the Trust Fund for Africa will be strengthened with 1 billion euros, consisting of 500 million euros from the European Development Fund Reserve and 500 million euros requested from Member States.

In addition, traditional financial programmes should be reoriented. In the longer term, the Commission is proposing to fundamentally reconsider the scale and nature of traditional development co-operation models. In autumn 2016, the Commission will make a proposal for a new Fund as part of an ambitious External Investment Plan in order to mobilise investments in developing third countries, building on the experience of the successful Investment Plan for Europe. 3.1 billion euros will be mobilised to this end, expected to trigger total investments of up to 31 billion euros the potential to increase to 62 billion euros if Member States and other partners match the EU contribution.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is also already working on an initiative to mobilise additional financing in Africa over the next five years. The External Investment Plan will also focus on targeted assistance to improve the business environment in the countries concerned. Finally, the new partnership brings together the EU and its Member States to deliver results. "We need a coordinated engagement and a multiplication of resources to achieve shared objectives. Member States are called to do their part by making available equivalent financial resources and working in partnership with the EU in delivering the compacts," concluded Commission.

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