

# MISPLACED TRUST: DIVERTING EU AID TO STOP MIGRATION

The EU  
Emergency  
Trust Fund  
for Africa



# Global Health Advocates (GHA)

is a global health advocacy organisation dedicated to fighting diseases stemming from poverty and inequality. GHA's mission is to advocate for policy change at the highest political level and to mobilise resources to tackle major health threats, build sustainable health systems and enhance health equity. GHA has offices in Paris and Brussels.

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## Acronyms

<b>ACP</b>	African, Caribbean and Pacific	<b>GNI</b>	Gross national income
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organisation	<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>DCI</b>	Development Cooperation Instrument	<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>DG ECHO</b>	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	<b>MFF</b>	Multiannual Financial Framework
<b>DG HOME</b>	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs	<b>MS</b>	Member States
<b>EC</b>	European Commission	<b>NIP</b>	National Indicative Programme
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States	<b>PCD</b>	Policy coherence for development
<b>EEAS</b>	European External Action Service	<b>ODA</b>	Official development assistance
<b>EDF</b>	European Development Fund	<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament	<b>TFEU</b>	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>EUD</b>	EU Delegation		
<b>EUTF</b>	EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa		
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product		
<b>GHA</b>	Global Health Advocates		

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2015 saw a stark rise in the number of migrants attempting to reach Europe via its southern borders, prompted by instability in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Eritrea and Afghanistan. This led to an EU-wide political crisis about migration management, linked to fast-approaching elections in key Member States and a hardening public opinion on migration.

Mostly funded through EU development aid, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) became one of the most prominent elements of the EU's response to the so-called "migration crisis". This response was shaped by the portrayal of migration as a "challenge" with domestic implications, a portrayal which in turn justifies the growing involvement of interior ministries in EU's external policy planning. This raised the question among many development actors of whether development aid was becoming tied to achieving EU's domestic political objectives.

Concerned that the EU was losing sight of aid's original purpose - addressing the structural causes of poverty in areas like health and education - Global Health Advocates visited Niger and Senegal to collect first-hand accounts of the implementation of the EUTF. **This report, based on a series of interviews conducted, sheds light on the impact of this type of instrument on development effectiveness and shows that the European Emergency Trust Fund for Africa is:**

- A **political instrument designed to respond to a political emergency in Europe** rather than development needs in partner countries. When introduced at country level, the selection of projects was made contingent on their ability to deliver results rapidly, in contradiction to the principle of sustainable development. While projects were selected swiftly, disbursements of funds took in some instances up to 1,5 year. Experts in Senegal and Niger concur: communicating about quick EU action was the priority.
- An instrument that **backtracks on all internationally-agreed aid effectiveness principles**. The EUTF does not align with national priorities and its governance structures minimise country ownership of programmes.
- An instrument that **shifts the focus of aid delivery**. Migration patterns, rather than a country's needs, determine the allocation of aid. Irregular migrants become the main focus of aid and priority is given to areas where migrants transit through or originate from. Actions which might impact migration dynamics are privileged over long-term development goals.

- An instrument that **hinders good governance, accountability and transparency principles**. Actors in Senegal and Niger reported that there were no public calls for proposals, nor publicly available eligibility criteria. The EU's communication was described as "disordered" and the process of selection of projects as "opaque". The evaluation framework that will be used to assess the overall performance of the EUTF is unclear.

- An **approach that comes with adverse effects**. Both in Niger and Senegal, altering migration dynamics can increase vulnerability, by both preventing people from migrating to neighbouring countries for seasonal work and impacting the financial transfers that many communities rely heavily on. In Niger, cutting off smuggling revenues without providing viable economic alternatives is impacting a fragile stability. These altered migration dynamics are the direct result of the prioritisation of EU domestic interests over partner countries' development needs and the lack of respect for aid effectiveness principles.

This report concludes that the approach underpinning the EUTF is inefficient both from a political and a development perspective. There is a serious risk that development ceases to be regarded primarily as a tool for poverty eradication and that EU aid will continue to be used to leverage partner countries' cooperation on migration. This may create an incentive for partner countries to cooperate, provided they receive additional funding, as is currently the case with Libya.

**This report recommends that the European Commission and European Union Member States:**

- **Do not replenish the EUTF** until it is revised to respect aid effectiveness principles, transparency and good governance standards.
- Actively **support and promote a more nuanced narrative on migration** and mobility, anchored in facts and in core EU values of tolerance, solidarity and respect for human dignity.
- **Decouple their political dialogue on migration from their development agenda**, while also acknowledging that migration is a driver for development.
- Make and maintain a **clear distinction between domestic objectives and external development goals**. From an internal perspective, the EU has much to gain from partner countries' development, but the allocation of development aid should not be subordinated to EU's domestic political agenda.

# INTRODUCTION

## How migration became a top priority for the EU

In September 2015, in his State of the Union speech, the President of the European Commission (EC), Jean-Claude Juncker, announced the creation of an EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. Presented as a development tool responding to an emergency situation, this new funding mechanism would help in pooling resources “to support the most fragile and affected African countries” in order to “address the root causes of destabilisation, displacement and irregular migration, by promoting economic and equal opportunities, security and development”. This happened in a context of “ongoing unprecedented levels of irregular migration” towards the European Union<sup>1</sup>.

While migration had already found its way into the political priorities of the EC set by J.C. Juncker<sup>2</sup>, urgent action was now called for, considering the death toll in the Mediterranean and the difficulties Member States (MS) had in managing the increase of migration flows. This response materialised in the adoption in May 2015 of a *New Agenda on Migration*.

The EUTF was born shortly after. In Spring 2015, EU standard barometers revealed that immigration had become Europeans’ number one concern at EU level (and the second most important issue at national level) and that feelings about immigration from beyond EU borders were mostly negative<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, in the build-up to elections in key European countries, far-right populism was increasingly capitalising on anti-EU and anti-migrant rhetoric<sup>4</sup>.

Within this context, the EU’s narrative on migration changed. Whereas the EU had previously emphasised the need to maximise the development impact of migration and mobility<sup>5</sup>, that positive link had now been replaced by a discourse in which migration is portrayed as a “challenge” with domestic implications. “Addressing the root causes of migration” became the predominant narrative, leading to the enhanced involvement of the EU’s Directorate for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) and ministries of interior in the elaboration and implementation of migration policies and external action<sup>6</sup>.

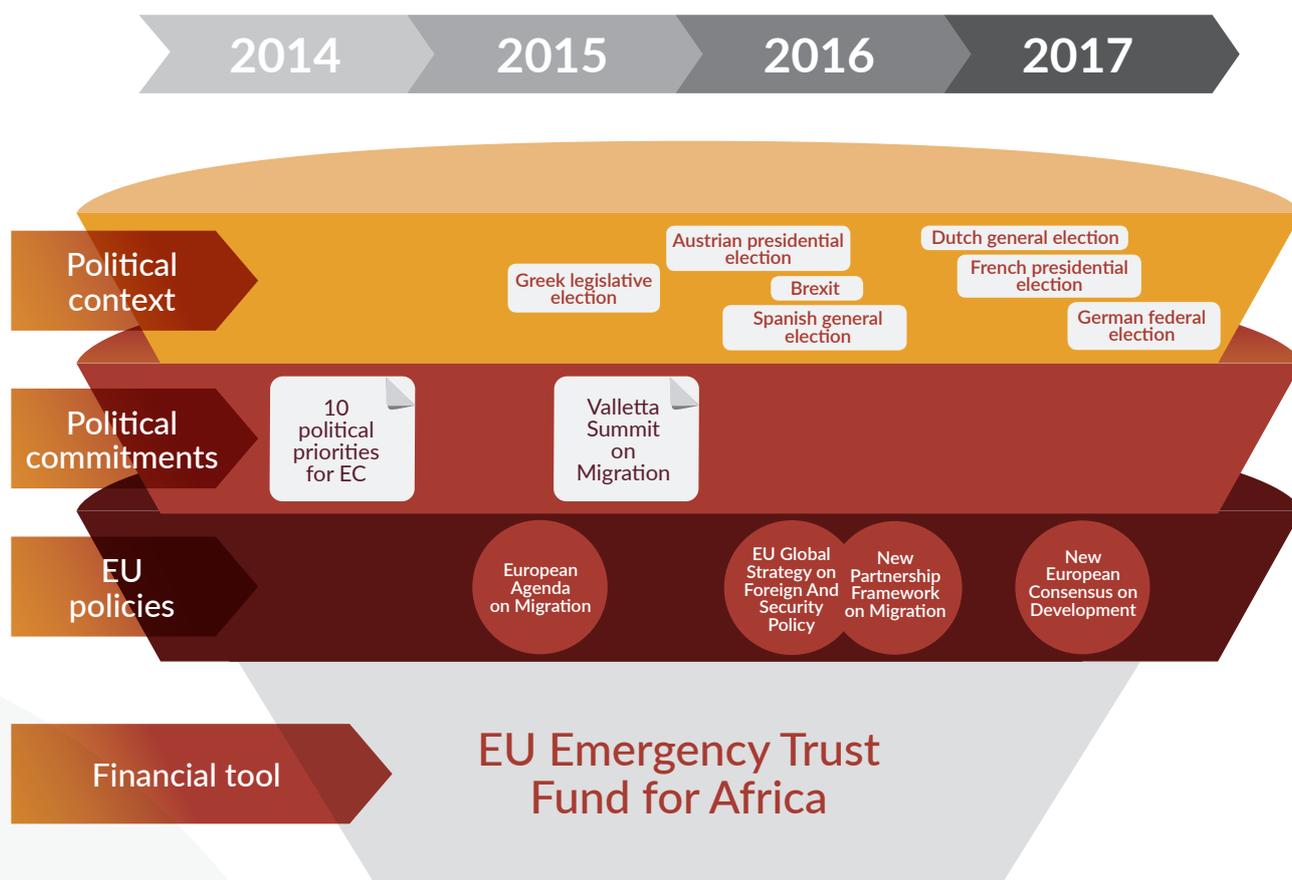
## Growing instrumentalisation of development aid

As a consequence of the reshuffling of political priorities and a changing global context, the role and nature of EU development aid - whose primary objective is to fund the reduction and long-term eradication of poverty in developing countries - was revisited in three major EU policies: (1) the 2016 *Global Strategy for the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy*, (2) the 2016 *New Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration* and (3) the 2017 *European Consensus on Development*.

All three documents converge on one point: EU development aid needs to become more flexible and aligned with the EU’s own strategic priorities<sup>7</sup>.

Most importantly, it can now be used to “leverage” partner countries’ cooperation on migration<sup>8</sup>.

This shift is particularly noticeable in the EU’s reports on policy coherence for development (PCD). From one year to another, the EU contradicts itself. In 2013, the EC claimed that subordinating development assistance to migration policy priorities “stands in contradiction to PCD commitments”. No later than in 2015, it stated that it was “considering how to strengthen an incentive based approach in external cooperation on migration with strategic partners in the EU neighbourhood and beyond”<sup>9</sup>.



## The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: managing the EU migration crisis with development money?

The creation and nature of the EUTF reflects both the political context in the EU and changes in wider EU policies.

Formalised with the adoption of the *European Commission Decision on the establishment of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa* in October 2015, the EUTF became one of the flagship deliverables of the Valletta Summit on Migration held in November 2015. It is one of the “most prominent” financing instruments to support the implementation of the Partnership Framework on Migration<sup>10</sup>.

Presented as one of the EU’s measures to “reduce migratory pressure along the Central Mediterranean Route”<sup>11</sup>, the EUTF focuses on “migration-related goals” through two activity areas: (1) traditional development assistance which aims to create economic opportunities and increase the resilience of communities in regions where migrants depart from or transit through; and (2) security as well as migration and border management, with projects such as improving migration policies, raising awareness to prevent irregular migration, countering smuggling networks, and supporting the redeployment of internal security forces<sup>12</sup>.

The EUTF is framed as an “emergency instrument”, yet most of its resources consist of Official Development Assistance (ODA)<sup>13</sup>, which is meant to fund long-term development programmes. For instance, 80% of the total resources to date (€2.85 billion<sup>14</sup>) come from the European Development Fund (EDF), a medium- to long-term instrument that aims to address structural development challenges<sup>15</sup> in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries covered by the Cotonou Agreement. The remaining sources of funding consist of re-allocated funds, for instance from the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), DG NEAR (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) and DG HOME.

While EU Member States were expected to match those contributions, their top ups represent only 5% of the total funding.

Because of its emergency nature, the EUTF operates “under flexible procedures”. Its project cycle is much swifter than under traditional development programming. Projects are identified at country level under the leadership of the EU Delegations (EUD), discussed and selected by an Operational Committee in which African countries only have an observer status, passed through a fast-track approval process, and contracted by the EUD through simplified procedures<sup>16</sup>.

## The EUTF: objectives, geographic coverage, funding and governance

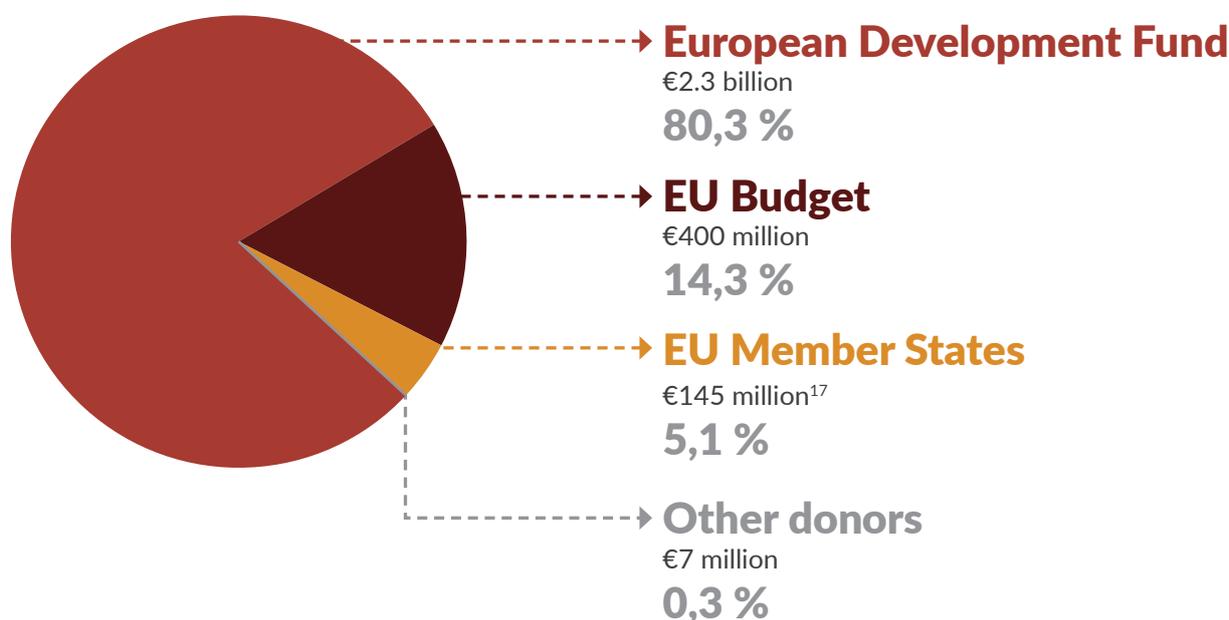
### Objectives

- Creating economic and employment opportunities
- Strengthening the resilience of communities
- Improving migration management in countries of origin, transit and destination
- Improving governance and conflict prevention and reduction of forced displacement and irregular migration

### Governance

- A Strategic Board, which sets the global strategy. An Operational Committee for each geographic window which approves programmes
- All bodies are chaired by the EC. The European External Action Service (EEAS), EU MS and other donors which have contributed more than €3 million are members and are granted voting rights. Partner countries, regional organizations and donors contributing less than €3 million are only granted an observer status

### Funding (€2.85 billion)



## Geographic coverage

### SAHEL AND LAKE CHAD

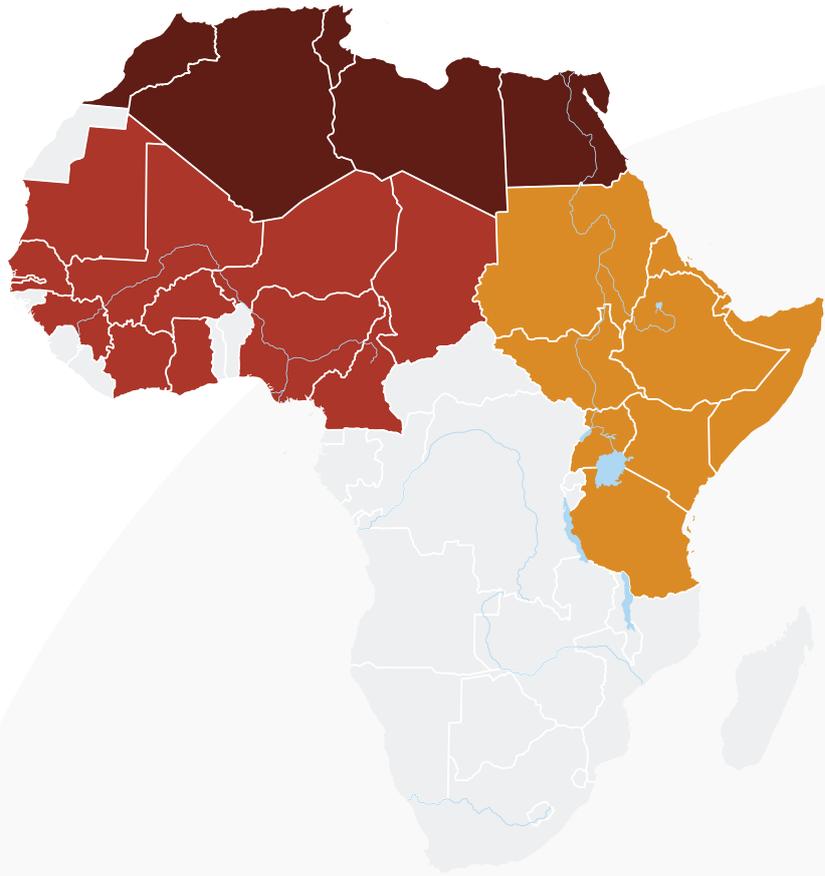
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Chad
- The Gambia
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Cote d'Ivoire

### HORN OF AFRICA

- Djibouti
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Tanzania
- Uganda

### NORTH OF AFRICA

- Algeria
- Egypt
- Libya
- Morocco
- Tunisia



## EU Trust Fund implementation in Niger & Senegal

### Senegal

- 2/3 of EUTF funding focuses on improving resilience and creating economic opportunities
- 13.6% of the GDP comes from diaspora remittances<sup>18</sup> (approximately twice as much as ODA)
- EUTF budget (€161m) represents a 46% top-up compared to the total EU bilateral funding for the years 2014-2020 (€347m)
- Country-of-origin of migrants

### Niger

- 3/4 of EUTF funding relates to migration management and governance
- 45 % of Niger's budget is financed by external support (with the EU and EU countries accounting for 25% of the total external support)<sup>19</sup>
- EUTF budget (€190 m<sup>20</sup>) represents a 32% top-up compared to the total EU bilateral funding for the years 2014-2020 (€596 m)
- Country of transit for migrants

In May and June 2017, Global Health Advocates visited Senegal and Niger - both considered as priority countries under the New Partnership Framework on Migration - to look into the implementation of the EUTF and the potential implications of this instrument for development effectiveness. The following chapter presents our findings, based on 45 interviews with stakeholders in Brussels, Dakar and Niamey. The names of organisations and institutions interviewed are listed in the Annex.

# THE EU TRUST FUND: CAN A POLITICAL TOOL BE EFFECTIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT?

The EU Trust Fund is presented by the European Commission both as a development and an emergency instrument. It aims to deliver results in the short-term, mostly drawing on development funds, which are legally bound to support long-term poverty eradication programmes (art. 21 TFEU).

This is inherently contradictory.

## High political expectations in an “emergency” context



**“The portfolio of projects was initially decided in a context of political emergency, with little analysis or strategy”**

Development cooperation agency representative, Niger

Upon the introduction of the instrument at country level, the EU was reportedly keen on the rapid showcasing of results, hoping that this would appease European public opinion on the “migration crisis”. A determining factor in the selection of projects was their ability to deliver results quickly: for instance a development agency in Senegal reported that parts of its project proposal were rejected on the grounds that results would be yielded only four years later.

Additionally, there was concern expressed that the focus of the EUTF was on the opportunity to communicate about actions taken, rather than implementation. For example, development agencies

reported that while projects were selected and communicated rapidly, the disbursement of funding in fact took at least one year.

The speed at which projects had to be contracted and implemented left the EU with no time to develop strategies based on analysis of the situation. In Niger, the EUD reported working on a “retroactive” strategy to direct future EUTF spending, at a time when 80%<sup>21</sup> of the available money had already been allocated. In Senegal, the first wave of projects was merely the continuation or expansion of existing ones, albeit with some tweaks: geographical zones where migrants depart from or transit through<sup>22</sup> were prioritised over regions most in-need.

## Flawed theory of change

“

**“The political narrative that underlies the EUTF is not adapted to reality. We know that there is a desire to show results swiftly, which - given that we have been funding programmes in the country for decades - we can do. We also know migration flows have and will continue to exist. Such challenges require long-term solutions”**

Development cooperation agency representative, Senegal

Both in Niger and Senegal, development experts questioned the ability of the EUTF to rapidly stem flows of irregular migrants to Europe, well aware that factors which can influence the decision to migrate - within the region and towards Europe - are multiple and interlinked. These can range from climate change and the lack of access to natural resources to political instability, from high levels of inequality to economic insecurity, or

from the lack of access to basic social services to social unrest<sup>23</sup>.

Having an impact on the deep-seated drivers of migration would require an in-depth but most importantly contextual analysis of the factors shaping migration flows, a comprehensive set of instruments, and better policy coherence for development.

“

**“We need to study the drivers of migration: even in the sub-region, there are very few studies on its root causes. We need to be able to bring the right answers and take time to think”**

Development cooperation agency representative, Senegal

Additionally, development experts and academics concur: the political expectation that development will halt irregular migration is not evidence-based. Indeed, in low-income and lower middle-income countries, economic development increases migration

as it provides more people with the financial capacity to migrate<sup>24</sup>. In other words, the poorest people - those who should be the primary targets of development assistance - are not the ones who migrate.

“

**“You need a minimum of 1 million francs CFA - about 1500€ - to take the dangerous trip to Europe. We have never heard anyone in the villages where we help diagnose malnutrition talk about migrating to Europe”**

INGO representative, Senegal

# Backtracking on development effectiveness

Development effectiveness is about delivering aid in a way that maximises its impact on development and achieves value for money<sup>25</sup>.

In the past decade, four high level fora on aid effectiveness brought together the whole spectrum of development stakeholders with the aim of improving the quality of aid. Discussions resulted in an unprecedented consensus formalised in the recognition that five partnership commitments should underpin all forms of development co-operation: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability<sup>26</sup>.

Given that the EUTF is predominantly funded through development aid, we looked at how effectively it has been programmed, in order to assess its performance.

## ALIGNED TO THE EU, OWNED BY THE EU?

While the EU predominantly sees migration as a challenge that should be “tackled” through addressing its “root causes”, from the perspective of African countries, migration has historically been a source of increased integration and economic opportunities<sup>27</sup>. The emphasis lies on intra-African mobility, the protection of migrants as well as the promotion of legal channels for migration and mobility<sup>28</sup>.

Migration is therefore not perceived as a problem, nor a priority and does not represent an emergency: it is for instance absent from both Senegal<sup>29</sup> and Niger’s<sup>30</sup> national development policies and NIPs (National Indicative Programmes which guide the programming of EU development aid).

Moreover, neither country had a national strategy on migration in place at the time of the establishment of the EUTF<sup>31</sup>. In their political dialogue with the EU, Senegalese officials complained that the EU essentially focuses on limiting migration flows, treating the issue of legal migration as a secondary priority.

Given the important contribution of remittances to the Senegalese economy, it seems unlikely that curbing emigration would be a priority for Senegal. As for Niger, it is unrealistic that stemming migration flows to Europe would be high on the political agenda

of a country listed second-to-last on the human development index. Given these considerations, there is strong reason to conclude that the instrument falls short on the principles of alignment.

The governance setup of the EUTF results in a lack of ownership by partner countries. Partner countries were not involved in negotiating the definition of the overall priorities of the Trust Fund, or the specific sectors benefitting from the EUTF additional resources. Although the EUTF primarily draws its funds from the EDF, it does not reflect the EDF’s co-management principles. By operating outside the usual EU-partner country cooperation process, it weakens the level of ownership and partnership. While representatives of African countries do sit in the Operational Committee of the Trust Fund, they have only been granted observer status. They only see and comment on projects once they are presented to them at the approval stage.

Both the experts who evaluated the EDF<sup>32</sup> and development agencies operating in-country acknowledge that ownership is an issue. Member States development agencies stressed that they make up for this weakness by applying their own operating procedures to ensure that, at least at the implementation and sub-contracting stages, aid effectiveness principles are upheld.

## MORE MONEY, MORE COORDINATION?

As of June 2017, not a single coordination meeting had been organised - either in Niger or Senegal - between all the different organizations and agencies implementing EUTF projects. The EUTF lacks formal coordination mechanisms (such as regular meetings or common log frames) to avoid duplication and ensure convergence towards the instrument's strategic objectives.

Additionally, beyond ad hoc sectoral coordination, there is no comprehensive coordination framework to discuss the possible synergies and complementarity between regular projects funded under the EDF, Member States' own bilateral cooperation and the EUTF projects, let alone with programmes implemented by other big donors like USAID, Canada or the World Bank.



**“While an online database gathering EUTF projects is now being finalised, you can only learn about other projects and look for synergies if you are proactive. The EU Delegation should play a bigger role in coordinating projects funded by EU ODA”**

Development cooperation agency representative, Senegal

## SPEED AND FLEXIBILITY OVER TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY?

The breadth of EUTF objectives contrast with the hastiness with which the instrument was set up and projects selected. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) based in Niger and Senegal reported that there were no public calls for proposals, nor publicly available eligibility criteria.

The EUD communication was described as “disordered”, the selection of projects as “opaque”, the starting assumption of the EUTF - that development will rapidly curb migration - as “unfounded”. Local authorities said that they had to “chase” the EUD to obtain information.

None of the development cooperation agencies could say which monitoring and evaluation framework would be used to assess the EUTF or justify its extension.

Given that the EUTF operates outside the EU budget, the European Parliament (EP) is left with little margin of manoeuvre to exercise scrutiny.

This results in little if any EU accountability for development outcomes. The same - albeit for different reasons - applies to partner countries. Given the lack of country ownership, they could hardly be held accountable for development results.

Democratic ownership would have required the involvement of local parliaments and civil society, both of which were excluded from the process.

## How the EUTF stacks up against development effectiveness principles

### AID EFFECTIVENESS PRINCIPLES

### EUTF PERFORMANCE

#### Alignment

Donors base their support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures

- Donor countries have set up their own objectives for the EUTF, answering to EU short-term domestic priorities rather than partner countries' development needs
- Migration does not feature as a priority in national development policies nor in the countries' respective NIPs
- National strategies on migration were not in place when the EUTF was launched
- Curbing migration is unlikely to be a priority in either country
- The majority of aid channelled through the EUTF does not rely on countries' own planning and budgeting mechanisms

#### Ownership

Developing countries set their own strategies for development, improve their institutions and tackle corruption

- Partner countries' governments, parliaments and civil society organisations (CSOs) were not engaged in the definition of EUTF country-specific priorities
- Weaker ownership provisions than in the EDF
- Partner countries have only an observer status in the EUTF decision bodies

#### Harmonisation

Donor countries coordinate their action, simplify procedures and share information

- There is no formal framework of coordination among donors on the implementation of EUTF projects at the national or regional levels

#### Managing for results

Developing countries and donors focus on producing and measuring results

- EU action is not driven by an evidence-based strategy on the migration-development nexus
- No calls for proposals were issued
- No eligibility guidelines were published
- EUTF objectives are broadly defined
- No clear evaluation framework

#### Mutual accountability

Donor and developing country partners are accountable for development results

- EUTF set up with little democratic debate in the EP
- Breadth of EUTF objectives and lack of EP involvement in the EUTF results in lack of EU accountability for development results
- The EUTF is donor-driven, which impedes partner countries' accountability

# DOING MORE HARM THAN GOOD?

A direct consequence of the fact that aid effectiveness principles are not built in the EUTF is that its implementation can have adverse impacts on local communities.

For many families, migration is a coping strategy<sup>33</sup> as well as a livelihood diversification strategy. This is pertinent in the case of both Senegal and Niger. In Senegal, remittances are a source of income for a sizeable portion of the population and are predomi-

nantly used for consumption expenditure, education and health<sup>34</sup>. In Niger, cyclical droughts force people to migrate to neighbouring countries and regions with a view to diversifying their income and to seek work opportunities. Migrants can therefore be agents of development and contribute to the resilience of their communities. Impeding their mobility may in turn increase vulnerability.

## The case of Niger: increasing insecurity and fuelling instability?

The adverse impact of the EU's self-serving approach to migration can for instance be seen in Niger. Niger is a transit country where the vast majority of local people have neither the intention nor the financial means to migrate to Europe. The government of Niger - with the support of the EU - now applies stricter measures to control migrants going to Libya or Algeria without valid documentation<sup>35</sup>, intercepts migrants along the migration route<sup>36</sup> and has strengthened border management<sup>37</sup>.

These measures, however, draw no distinction between intra and extra-regional migrations, which, according to local CSOs, affects seasonal workers willing to travel to Libya or Algeria for economic purposes.

The way the crackdown on migrant smuggling has been carried out is also problematic. On the one hand, as traditional migration routes were coming under increased surveillance, smugglers started to rely on alternative ways to bypass restrictions, which made migrants' journeys riskier, and transportation fares more expensive. On the other hand, the crackdown affected the local economy. The EU did not take into account the fact that "the economics of migrant smuggling is one of the few things holding northern Niger together, that migration and the free movement

of people is intrinsic to the region, and that haphazard efforts to cut off the migrant smuggling industry may actually work against the long-term goal of stability and development in northern Niger"<sup>38</sup>.

A study from 2015 already pointed out that trying to dismantle the system of informal economy through repressive measures would create unrest and unmanageable problems for the local authorities<sup>39</sup>. This unrest - confirmed throughout interviews with local actors - is mainly due to the absence of alternative income-generating opportunities. While an EUTF project specifically addresses this issue, its implementation is lagging behind. Failure to do so swiftly could throw disillusioned young people right into the arms of criminal groups<sup>40</sup> and lead to an escalation of violence in smuggling rings, thus generating further instability<sup>41</sup>.

This situation prompted the 15 mayors of Agadez to issue a joint statement in which they express their dissatisfaction with the way the fight against migration is being managed<sup>42</sup>. This suggests that the EU's desire to rapidly stem migration flows has taken precedence over the provision of sustainable solutions for the local population, and the safety of migrants.



**“EU development agencies manage their projects as they see fit, without involving us. They act as if we didn’t exist. Countries partnering with our authorities on migration management must understand that no one can prevent this traffic without involving the youth, without involving us. There is no point in lying to ourselves in that regard. The way these development agencies operate is going to undermine all efforts from local authorities and the state of Niger. These young people, who relied on transporting migrants for work, left their occupation for a while because they trusted us. They were expecting an alternative, as promised by the [EUTF] projects that were announced. But nothing is coming! We cannot continue holding them back with empty words”**

Declaration of 15 mayors of the Agadez region<sup>43</sup>

The EUTF - and the associated political dialogue on migration - could also lead to a further diversion of domestic resources from social to security sectors. Security expenditures increases in Niger have happened at the expense of domestic budgets for

health and education and broader development objectives<sup>44</sup>. This is particularly worrying considering Niger’s poverty and demographic growth challenge (its population being set to triple by 2050<sup>45</sup>).



**“The dialogue on development is held hostage by the political dialogue on migration”**

Development cooperation agency representative, Niger

Last, but certainly not least, there is concern that the way the EU deals with the “migration crisis” turns its partnership<sup>46</sup> with Africa into an empty shell. While Europeans insist that the dialogue and cooperation with African partners on migration and mobility is carried out in a spirit of equal partnership, there is evidence that they impose their own interests and narrative on migration<sup>47</sup>.

Instead of deepening its cooperation with African partners on the basis of negotiated compromises, the type of relation the EU appears to pursue is of a “transactional” nature.

The EU indeed considers that ODA can be used to trigger partner countries’ cooperation on migration

management. Conceivably, this means that partner countries’ political compliance could become a criterion for aid allocation. In other words, turning development aid into a bargaining chip. The flip side of the coin is that this opens the way for partner countries to cooperate, provided they receive additional funding.

Regardless, the instrumentalisation of aid for political objectives goes against EU treaty obligations on poverty eradication, undermines aid effectiveness, and puts people’s needs and rights as a secondary priority.

# CONCLUSION

The implementation of the EU Emergency Trust Fund provides a first-hand experience of the instrumentalisation of development aid to the benefit of the EU's domestic agenda in the field of migration. This report suggests that this approach is inefficient both from a political and a development standpoint.

**From a political perspective**, academic research shows that the EUTF's underlying expectation that development will halt migration cannot be met. Development experts know this, which suggests that they were not sufficiently involved in the setting up of the EUTF.

Beyond the dubious use of development funds to address a political emergency in Europe, this raises concern about the EU outsourcing the control of migration to partner countries to ensure that migrants are no longer able to leave the northern shores of the African continent, at the expense of their rights.

More broadly, it shows that the EU adopted a short-term political strategy, privileging quick-fixes over and above sustainable development programmes. In the long run, coherent and sustainable development policies could have better addressed the drivers of migration, all the while preserving ODA's core mission and a more balanced partnership with African countries.

**From a development perspective**, the EUTF's ability to have a meaningful impact on poverty reduction is seriously called into question. The creation of the instrument was politically-driven: it did not respond to a development emergency in partner countries, but rather to what the EU experienced as an emergency domestically.

Also, while it is mostly funded by development aid, the instrument does not embed aid effectiveness principles in its strategy. In other words, the starting point of what is presented as a development tool was not partner countries' development needs or policies.

The instrument's programming was driven by the prospects of migration towards Europe and not poverty eradication. This means that regions where migrants depart from - or transit through - are prioritised over regions most in need, and that the poorest are no longer the fo-

cus of EU aid. The use of ODA in the field of security and migration management diverts funding from core ODA purposes.

Finally, given the EUTF's overly political agenda, communication and visibility were considered key principles. When the instrument was launched, the quest for visible results in the short term superseded long-term and coherent programming. This has led to concrete setbacks, as exemplified in Northern Niger where the crackdown on smuggling preceded the provision of economic alternatives aimed at offsetting decreased income from smuggling activities.

Ultimately, this does not mean that specific projects will have no development impact, especially as development agencies operating on the ground try to ensure that aid effectiveness principles are upheld throughout the parts of the process they oversee.

It does however mean that the EU's approach to development - as reflected in recent policy documents and operationalised through the EUTF - distances itself from what has proven to make development assistance effective and sustainable.

It runs the risk of marginalising aid by turning it into a political bargaining chip. By doing so, the EU jeopardises its reputation as a lead development actor and sends the wrong message to the development community.

The EU also erodes the quality of its partnership with African countries by implying that cooperation can be enforced if the right incentives are in place, turning it de facto into a transaction.

The EU needs to radically change course and put human rights, genuine partnership, international commitments and evidence-based policy making at the forefront.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## No trust in the Trust : back to effective development mechanisms

- The EU should **not replenish the EUTF** until it is revised to respect aid effectiveness principles.
- With regard to ongoing projects and remaining funding, the EU should:
  - Rethink the EUTF with aid effectiveness principles in mind, by putting country ownership and alignment at the forefront of the programming of the instrument.
  - Ensure sustainability of development outcomes of all development projects funded through the EUTF by building sustainability as a core indicator for project approval and monitoring of results.
- Publish calls for proposals and selection criteria to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Ensure the EUD leads on regular and effective coordination of EUTF projects with existing initiatives at country level.
- Direct funding to bottom-up regional initiatives that focus on the rights of migrants.
- The EU should set up an **effective monitoring system** that will assess the development outcomes of the EUTF as well as identify and address potential adverse impacts at local and regional levels.

## Towards a migration-development nexus that works

- **Laying the ground:** the EU should actively support and promote a more nuanced narrative on migration and mobility, anchored in facts, reality and core EU values of tolerance, solidarity and respect for human dignity.
- **Genuine and effective aid:** the EU needs to decouple its political dialogue on migration from its development agenda all the while acknowledging that migration is a driver for development. This requires:
  - **Putting an end to the instrumentalisation of aid:** the starting point - and end goal - of any project funded through ODA should be to respond to partner countries' development needs, not donors' political objectives.
  - **Mainstreaming intra and extra-regional migration dynamics** into key development priorities - and not as a siloed stand-alone priority- to maximise their positive development impact.
- **Upholding aid effectiveness principles:** any approach to migration in the framework of development assistance should be country-driven, informed by evidence, rooted in a deep understanding of local dynamics and country context, properly planned, coordinated with existing initiatives and consistently funded.
- **Implementing policy coherence for development:** the EU should aim to ensure that the whole spectrum of its actions, be it on migration trade, agriculture, climate change, fiscal justice or good governance, do not adversely impact development.
- **A partnership of equals:** migration is an interest that both the EU and Africa share. The EU needs to listen to and incorporate African countries' aspirations in relation to migration into its policies. In that way, the EU can foster much needed cooperation on the basis of equality and partnership.

## Towards the right budgetary framework

While the EU has repeatedly failed to meet its commitment to spend 0.7% of its Gross National Income (GNI) to ODA, its development funding increasingly funds activities that are diverse in nature, draining funds from core ODA objectives. In its future multiannual financial framework, the EU should:

- Meet its commitment to **allocate 0.7% of its GNI to ODA**, in the limits set by the Lisbon Treaty.
- Acknowledge that **security and stability programmes**, while they may in some cases have positive impacts on development, **are not appropriate uses of ODA**. ODA should strictly be used for long-term development projects with clear poverty eradication objectives.
- Make and maintain a **clear distinction between domestic objectives and external development goals**. From an internal perspective, the EU has much to gain from partner countries' development but the allocation of ODA should by no means be subordinated to EU's domestic political agenda. Mixing or merging the two would further allow for the politicisation of aid.
- Strike the right balance between flexibility and responsiveness on the one hand, and transparency, accountability and long-term predictability on the other hand.

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# ANNEX: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS INTERVIEWED

## African countries' authorities

- Ministry of Finance, Senegal and Niger
- Cellule de Lutte contre la Malnutrition, Senegal
- Cellule de Coordination du Programme d'Appui aux Initiatives de Solidarité pour le Développement, Senegal
- Embassy of Benin to the EU, Brussels
- Embassy of Liberia to the EU, Brussels
- Embassy of Niger to the EU, Brussels
- Embassy of Senegal to the EU, Brussels
- ECOWAS, Brussels

## EU institutions

- European Commission – Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
- Delegation of the European Union, Senegal and Niger
- Members of the European Parliament's Committee on Development

## Development Cooperation Agencies of EU Member States

- Agence Française de Développement, Niger
- Belgian Development Agency, Senegal and Niger
- Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation, Senegal
- Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency, Senegal and Niger
- Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, Senegal

## United Nations Agencies

- International Organization for Migration, Niger
- World Food Programme, Niger

## Civil society organisations

- ACTED, Senegal and Niger
- Action Against Hunger, Senegal and Niger
- Alternative Espaces Citoyens, Niger
- Care International, Niger
- CICODEV, Senegal
- CISV, Niger
- Concern Worldwide, Niger
- COOPI, Niger
- Forum social sénégalais, Senegal
- Mercy Corps, Niger
- Nutrition Alliance, Niger
- Oxfam, Senegal
- REPAOC, Senegal
- ROTAB, Niger
- Save the Children, Senegal and Niger
- Speak Up Africa, Senegal
- World Vision, Niger

# Misplaced trust: diverting EU aid to stop migration

The EU Emergency  
Trust Fund for Africa

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