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# **Funding Africa's Development: Providing Solutions to Existent Problems or Creating New Ones?**

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## **Key points**

Migratory flows from African countries are on the increase today owing to the effects of various factors such as climate change, poverty, social uprisings, terrorism, authoritarian governments etc. The lack of socioeconomic development in many African countries is considered as one of this phenomenon's primary causes. The EU regards its contribution to African countries' sustainable growth as one very important step among efforts to curb African migration. Nevertheless, many experts argue that supporting Africa's socioeconomic development through the implementation of a specific framework will prove insufficient<sup>1</sup>.

EU member States, being some of the main destination countries for African migrants, shall therefore endeavor to implement an effective common policy against illegal migration that can be beneficial for both sending and receiving sides.

The Stakeholders of this policy and its consecutive-negative or positive-outcome are of course individual African States, EU Member States and the European Union mainly involved in related projects at Union level.

A series of additional non-financial measures in order to combat the primary causes of migration from African states could entail the following:

- A closer cooperation of EU actors with local actors on miscellaneous subjects/policies
- Cooperation firstly among the Mediterranean Member States and secondly of these states with African countries that are part of the main migration Routes
- In the field of Security, targeted initiatives in the Mediterranean
- In cases of non-successful prevention of migrant flows, an appropriate integration process for lawful newcomers.

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## **Africa-Eu Relations: Legal Basis<sup>2</sup>**

The relations between Africa and the EU are based on Article 217 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (Lisbon Treaty, 2009), the Partnership Agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)<sup>3</sup> group of countries, also known as Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000 with a focus on development, political, economic and trade cooperation, as well as on individual Agreements with African countries. Additionally, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy was adopted in 2007, concentrating on establishing a new strategic level cooperation between the continents. More specifically, regarding migration, Africa and the EU cooperate<sup>4</sup> at continental, bilateral as well as at regional level through the setting of priorities and establishing partnerships on intercontinental mobility, legal migration, border management etc. Particular attention is given to the context of EU Development policy towards Africa.

## **Migratory Patterns from African Countries**

Since the 1960s, migratory flows from then newly-independent African countries to EU Member States have been relatively stable<sup>5</sup>. An increase can be seen in the percentage of African nationals migrating to EU countries, though this remains in line with the overall rise of the African population throughout the last decades.

Data suggests that most migrants from African countries today, notably from Sub-Saharan Africa remain in the African continent, habitually moving within their region, mainly to wealthier countries e.g. South Africa, since distance poses an important barrier, especially for those facing economic distress.

Due to the geographic proximity to European coasts, it is more common for populations from North African countries to migrate to European countries. At the same time, the rise in illegal immigrant and refugee trafficking in the last years has offered more opportunities to those willing to reach Europe through the Central Mediterranean route.

However, given the demographic boom and the subsequent increase in the mainly young-workforce of African countries, mobility is expected to rise in the coming decades and European countries will certainly be some of Africans' main destinations.



## **EU Addresses Irregular Migration from Africa**

Aiming to tackle the root causes of irregular migration from African countries, the European Union established an Emergency Trust Fund for Africa<sup>6</sup> at the Valetta Summit on Migration in 2015 in order to provide financial assistance to countries of three African regions and 26 countries that constitute major potential migration routes to Europe. These regions and countries are: the Sahel region and Lake Chad (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal), the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) and North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt).

The Trust Fund under which several types of projects are implemented, aims to fight causes of instability, irregular migration, human trafficking and other criminal activities, foster Economic Development and improve employability particularly for women and young citizens who face more difficulties. Moreover, many inclusive economic programs focus on encouraging vocational training and creation of small and micro businesses in these countries.

The resources<sup>7</sup> (Commission, 2018) allocated so far total up to EUR 4.2 billion among which EUR 3.7 billion funded by the European Development Fund (EDF) and other EU financial instruments namely DCI, ENI, HOME as well as ECHO. 27 Member States and two other non-member States (Norway and Switzerland) have contributed EUR 489 million of which only EUR 449 million has been paid to the present day.

In addition to the EUTF for Africa, the Pan-African Programme and the African Peace Facility<sup>8</sup> are two projects that provide financial assistance to the implementation of the partnership elements established between the two continents.

### **Will the EU's Expectations Be Met?**

Serious questions have been raised on whether the Trust Fund for Africa and the other EU development initiatives in African countries will in fact have the desired effects.

Firstly, the Union currently cooperates only with a small number of the 54 African states. The EU usually chooses to fund specific countries which it considers to be source of significant numbers of migrants while not funding others which may in fact be in greater need of aid.



Secondly, the EU is often widely criticized when collaborating or offering aid to countries with authoritarian regimes or dictatorships such as the ones in Somalia, Sudan etc., perhaps getting pressure based on its fundamental principles to end the cooperation.

In these cases, this “preferential” funding is leaving out parts of the continent that may be a source of migrants to Europe, leading to poor and not equally distributed development results in the continent.

Most importantly though, the project’s effectiveness is being called into question because, according to research<sup>9</sup>, the socioeconomic development of a region does not necessarily result in less migration. Migration is, of course, linked to economic development to a certain extent. However, the lack of development in a region is not the only driver<sup>10</sup> of migration. Many scientists suggest that providing financial aid to poor countries not only does not decrease migratory flows but in fact enhances mobility in the long term. In fact, migration can start deteriorating only when a country attains a middle-income status.

That is because low-income citizens are by any means unable to prepare their migration to a different country especially to one of a longer distance, despite their desire<sup>11</sup> to leave their country. On the other side, even a small increase in the standard of living, better opportunities in education and employment could enable them to pursue this desire.

## **Recommendations**

It appears from the foregoing that, to the dismay of the European Union, solely providing financial support to African states does not ensure reduced migratory flows. On the contrary, there is a need for certain additional measures to be taken in this direction.

In addition to financial aid, a closer cooperation with local actors at all policy making levels is crucial to the effectiveness of the selected EU programs for the region since this will provide the Union with necessary information on how social, financial and political structures of individual African states work, enabling it to focus on contemplating customized policies that apply to the specific nature of these structures and making its involvement in the region more efficient.

The EU also needs to concentrate on applying complementary security initiatives in the Mediterranean such as applying tightened controls on external borders through the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and cooperating with countries such as Chad, Niger and

Libya that play a key transit role in order to discourage migratory flows across the Central Mediterranean Route.



Furthermore, when African migrants do enter a member State, secondary movements leading to unbalances in migrant distribution between member States need to be stopped.

However, the fact that Europe's population is in decline should not be overlooked. That is why an effectively monitored legal migration of valuable young and highly qualified labor force from Africa to EU States could contribute to mutual development of the continents. That can be realized through initiatives such as granting the EU Blue Card to African nationals who are eligible to work in EU States. Introduction of such initiatives could play an important part in generating favorable conditions for the integration of migrants with future professional or other prospects in the EU.



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