

Outcome of the Valletta Summit on Migration

More than 60 countries were represented at the EU–Africa Summit on migration, held in Valletta on 11 and 12 November, together with the EU and African Union (AU) institutions, and regional and international organisations involved in addressing the migration crisis. While the summiteers delivered a clear message on their common interests and willingness to move forward in a realistic partnership, the summit outcome fell short of the most ambitious scenario.

Background

The [summit](#) was called for by the 23 April European Council, when EU leaders held a special meeting on the migration situation in the Mediterranean, recognising the need to deepen dialogue and partnership with the African countries. The event [brought together](#) the heads of state or government of EU Member States, west, east and north African countries party to, or observers of, the Khartoum and Rabat Processes, the African Union Commission (AUC) and the ECOWAS Commission, the United Nations, and the International Organization for Migration, together with several African sub-regional organisations.

Results

The [political declaration](#) adopted underlines the determination of the participants to forge stronger partnerships on migration at country and regional level, in the spirit of partnership, ownership and shared responsibility. In parallel, the [Action Plan](#) adopted at the summit outlines means to provide assistance to partner countries to address the root causes of migration, to strengthen cooperation on fighting irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling, and to boost the development benefits of migration. The action plan includes 16 flagship initiatives in five different sections that can be implemented by 2016. The existing mechanisms of the [Rabat Process](#) and the [Khartoum Process](#) will be used to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.

Although the summit avoided several [potential pitfalls](#), the discussion highlighted participants' divergent views in some areas:

- 1) The establishment of 'processing centres' and strengthening of reception capacity in African countries, originally put forward by some EU Member States, was not supported by the [AUC](#) and [African countries](#);
- 2) African partners' request to promote legal channels for migration and mobility, to respond to demographic pressure and limited economic opportunities, was only partially met through the EU's proposal of additional opportunities for non-EU students and researchers;
- 3) Reluctance to resort to the conditionality of the 'more for more' approach – linking development aid to agreements on readmission, stronger border controls or other actions not directly associated with poverty reduction – was also expressed, as too were doubts on the [effectiveness of aid](#) to curb migration.

The [EU Emergency Trust Fund](#) for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa was constituted to fulfil the objectives and implement the Valletta Action Plan. The Fund is made up of €1.88 billion from the EU budget and the European Development Fund, combined with contributions, so far, from 25 EU Member States and other donors (i.e. Switzerland and Norway).

As expected, the Valletta Summit did not bring about an ambitious revision of EU-Africa cooperation on migration. However, it was successful in laying down concrete steps to be taken by the Commission, EU Member States and African partners in their respective fields of competence. The implementation of the 16 priorities identified in the action plan, as well as the provision of the necessary resources to the Trust Fund will have to be closely monitored to achieve tangible progress on the management of migration.