

WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO COMMISSIONER

HAHN

Hearing on 18 October 2018

DG NEAR's Annual Activity Report for 2017

1. DG NEAR's annual activity report contains reservations concerning the difficulties in monitoring adequately all projects in Libya and Syria and concerning the expenditure in Direct Management Grants.
 - Could you give us an overview regarding the latest state of play regarding the implementation of the corrective actions?

1. Reservation concerning the difficulties in monitoring of projects in Libya and Syria

Currently (October 2018), the EU Delegation to Libya manages the implementation of about 50 cooperation programmes funded by different instruments (ENI, EUTF NoA, DCI, IcSP, ECHO). Most programmes have built-in control measures.

Although several visits to Tripoli could be organised in the past months, most work continues to be done from Tunis, where the EUDEL to Libya is temporarily relocated. For obvious reasons, a lot of the activities such as trainings of trainers and workshops are organised outside the country, mainly in Tunis, or, sometimes, in other countries in the region.

Programme managers in charge of the monitoring/evaluation of the activities carried out in Libya continue to encounter difficulties in appreciating the effectiveness of the actions in the field and this is at the origin of the reservation.

To mitigate this situation, the EUDEL is actively using the full range of existing control measures, such as namely: Result Oriented Monitoring missions, expenditure verification missions and financial audits. On the basis of such controls, the EUDEL has decided to interrupt several underperforming contracts. In addition, taking into account the specific situation and in order to increase transparency in the implementation of programmes, a contract "Mutual Accountability Project (MAP)" has been set up in 2018. This programme will improve the accountability for results through third party verification and monitoring in the field and will develop a national framework for Monitoring and Evaluation in the Libyan institutions. Initially, these additional control measures will be implemented specifically for Libya and in the Health sector through specifically trained impartial and neutral local inspectors (not related to the programme to be controlled). If successful, the measures will be expanded to other sectors.

With these measures, and with the recent reinforcement of the staff in the Operational sector of the Delegation, the Commission does its utmost to respond to its obligation of control.

With regard to the EU Delegation to Syria, its Operational Section was relocated to Beirut in early 2017 and this continues to prove very relevant, as it allows closer follow-up, coordination, dialogue and involvement with international and Syrian implementing partners that are based in Syria and in neighbouring countries.

In terms of control measures, expenditure verification missions, financial audits and Results Oriented Monitoring Missions take place. In view of the complex conflict environment in Syria, in addition two mechanisms for "third-party monitoring" of projects inside Syria have been put in place. Moreover, the Delegation has taken other mitigating measures through:

Systematic insertion of specific remote monitoring and evaluation measures in the contracts and increased requests for ad-hoc updates and analyses from all implementing partners, in order to have more frequent and regular information on the implementation of our projects in between the annual progress reports but also to have partners' views on the situation on the ground in their specific geographical areas of operations. For new contracts, more frequent updates / reports are also being explicitly inserted in the contracting documents.

- Independent strategic reviews on large projects such as the Syria Resilience Consortium.
- Cross-checking and cross-referencing oral, written and visual information obtained from project partners, Syrian interlocutors, like-minded donors and Syrians participating in meetings/conferences outside Syria.
- Regular visits and follow-up of projects with implementing partners located in Beirut, Amman, Gaziantep and Damascus.
- Gathering information from specific projects that have a strong research focus. A project currently ongoing, managed by GIZ has a large dedicated research and analysis component, thereby serving to increase the Delegation's understanding of local dynamics, allowing a closer and more apt monitoring of developments and hence the ability to steer and adapt projects as the context evolves. This will be complemented by a new project to be launched soon with the European University Institute and the Centre of Operational Analysis and Research fully dedicated to research and analysis, both on the ground developments / very localised analysis, and on topics of interest for operations in the mid- to longer-term. Another project (UrbAN-S Consortium) provides granular analysis on the situation in specific locations (30 urban centres and their rural catchment areas will be assessed by the project) and provides useful information for EU implementing partners looking at those specific locations.

The EU Delegation to Syria is ensuring compliance of the actions funded in Syria with EU restrictive measures. This is being done through the inclusion of a specific clause in contracts being signed both with UN agencies and NGOs. With regard to contracts signed with UN agencies and after lengthy negotiations, it was agreed to establish an ex-ante compliance mechanism that aims to screen all potential recipients of EU funds.

2. Reservation concerning the expenditure in direct management grants

DG NEAR has already undertaken specific actions aimed at intensifying its checks on these projects and at reducing the error rate for grants, in particular:

- revision of the terms of reference for expenditure verifications in collaboration with DG DEVCO, including the reception of the exhaustive list of items tested by the auditors. The new expenditure verifications will identify the total ineligible amount of the expenditure reported and will replace financial audits which focused on the opinion of the auditor (qualified/ unqualified) and did not allow the detection of all the ineligible amounts reported;
- extension of the scope of the checks on grants, by increasing the number of grants reviewed within the RER study;
- organising training sessions for applicants and/or new grantees in order to describe in detail the contractual requirements on eligibility of costs;
- increase of the number of verifications: mid-term evaluations, on-the-spot verifications, periodic reporting, risk-based audits, etc. that should detect any shortcomings of the beneficiaries.

2. In 2017, DG NEAR had its third residual error rate (RER) study carried out by an external contractor. ECA found a number of areas with scope for improvement, for example the insufficient checking of second-level procurement or the lack of stratification of the RER population based on the inherent risk of the projects. (Grant projects are more prone to error budget support.)

- Did you take any steps in order to explore with the RER contractor ways of improving the employed methodology?

In its Annual Report 2017, the Court has issued 3 recommendations for improvement of the RER study: 1) disclose the limitation of the study in the Annual Activity Report; 2) provide more precise guidelines to check second level procurement; 3) put more weight on checks on direct management grants and less on budget support transactions.

DG NEAR has accepted all 3 recommendations and is currently implementing them. In particular it is currently working with the RER external contractor on the update of the methodology in order to comply with the recommendations issued. The new RER methodology will foresee a larger sample of direct management grants for which a separate error rate will be calculated.

The new methodology will also include more precise guidelines for checking second level procurement. The final version of the new methodology is expected by the end of October 2018.

3. In the Annual Activity Report is stated: “the ECA pointed out deficiencies in the competence of the audit authorities in IPA II beneficiary countries. DG NEAR is taking action to mitigate the risks relating to these issues.” Could the Commission provide more information on this issue? Where were the main issues found? What is the practical solution put in place?

The main issues found at the time were the following:

DG NEAR auditors detected weaknesses in the indirect management of the second Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) during 2016. More specifically these were found in the audit authorities of three IPA II beneficiary countries, Albania, Turkey and Serbia. These weaknesses ranged from the lack of qualifications held by the heads of the audit authorities to methodological shortcomings, as well as organisational issues such as a lack of proper supervision or weaknesses in staff planning, training and recruitment. While the Albanian and Serbian audit authorities have made significant improvements, there are some significant areas of the Turkish audit authority’s systems, which might still limit the assurance it could provide to the Commission.

It is important to note that DG NEAR does not use the error rate provided by the Audit Authorities in its annual assurance exercise. Rather it relies on the RER, within which a specific indirect management by beneficiary country (IMBC) rate is calculated. This rate was 0.10% in 2016 and 0.36% in 2017.

The recommendation issued by the Court in DAS 2016:

Work together with the audit authorities in IPA II beneficiary countries to improve their competence, particularly by organising seminars, setting up networks and using the tools available, such as twinning or technical assistance.

Since then, the following measures have been implemented:

DG NEAR has been actively taking steps to resolve the remaining issues by providing the tools for the audit authorities to improve the professional capacity of their staff. This has been done mainly by using tools such as TAIEX (3-5 day expert missions and seminars) and technical assistance (experts providing methodological and practical auditing advice during their long-term missions in the country – in 2018 the Albanian audit authority benefited from this measure).

In 2017 DG NEAR finalized a quality review of each audit authority and proposed recommendations to address deficiencies identified during the entrustment missions

and desk reviews. All the audit authorities have prepared the actions plans, which they have mostly implemented.

In 2018 DG NEAR has started a new practice of organising regular (quarterly) meetings between the DG and the heads of the audit authorities in order for them to exchange experience, share good practices and harmonise methodological approaches. It also serves as a forum for DG NEAR to elaborate on the expectations of the Audit Authorities work and to provide detailed feedback.

AAR 2017/annexes

4. Page 7 and following of the Annexes to the DG NEAR AAR for 2017 there is a description of the main outputs regarding the achievements of the 3 objectives of the external communication activities. Could you provide the Parliament with an analysis in terms of results and impact?

External communication activities conducted by DG NEAR and the EU Delegations in the regions covered by our policies address different audiences and generate results and impact on different levels: events and press trips for stakeholders, thematic campaigning towards specific or wider audiences, and general perception of the EU.

As regards the general level, DG NEAR's external communication activities have contributed to a continued overall positive perception of EU cooperation with the country or region concerned. This general trend is confirmed in opinion polls carried out regularly, which show that a clear majority of the population in the Western Balkans support the EU and EU accession; and also the population in the Neighbourhood region has overall a positive view of and trust in the EU¹. Results of opinion polls amongst the whole population are influenced by many factors and the overall political climate in the country and can thus only provide a broad indication of the state of relations and usually don't reflect the impact of single communication activities.

The direct impact of communication activities can be better identified on the campaign level. The "EU4You" communication campaign implemented by the Delegation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for example was very successful in increasing awareness of EU support to the country. Whereas in the first campaign (2017) 27% of the population were aware of EU support to their country, in the third campaign (2018) this figure increased to 50% of the population.

Communication campaigns on specific topics also contribute to increasing the knowledge and understanding of EU in the partner countries. In Montenegro, the public opinion survey following the EU supported campaign on the environment showed that

¹ Results for the neighbourhood region can be found under <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/publications/opinion-survey-2018-regional-overview> for the East (2018 polls) and South under <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/publications/opinion-poll-2017-report> (2017 polls). For the Western Balkans all Delegations conduct country polls and there is a regional annual poll conducted by the RCC – see <https://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-public-barometer>.

52% of the population had heard about it, and the use of alternatives to plastic bags increased by 6%.

In Egypt, the national campaign to end violence against children has been seen by 5 million Facebook users, and also reached other audiences through other means. The success of this campaign has led to a request to extend it to all schools in Egypt. If this happens, EU visibility will be substantially increased in the country, also in those regions where we might currently not be as present.

Also other activities, namely those which involve personal interaction, help to increase awareness and interest in the European Union and its policies. In the Eastern Neighbourhood for example, the “Young European Ambassadors” (YEA) outreach initiative is contributing to raising awareness about the EU among young people. The success of the initiative can be seen in the number of its “ambassadors” which increased substantially from 100 young people from EU Member States and Neighbourhood countries in 2016 to 500 in 2018. This year's call for interest for the selection of an additional 300 young ambassadors received some 1,200 applications. The YEAs are trained and visit schools and universities for outreach activities, which reached for example over 2,500 pupils in Moldova in 2017.

Another very successful activity are press trips organised for journalists from the EU towards the enlargement and neighbourhood policy regions and vice versa. The press reviews of the media products published/aired in EU media and in media of the partner countries following such press trips give a clear indication of the take up by journalists of the information and contacts provided during such trips, thus contributing to increased knowledge and understanding of the EU and the use of EU funding.

For each press trip, as well as for other events organised by DG NEAR, we do an evaluation amongst the participants. The results clearly show the very positive feedback from the participants that this action took place, but also provides a qualitative analysis that the vast majority of the participants made useful contacts, they are likely to share the information received and have a better understanding of the policy and the related funding. For the concrete figures please see page 7 and 8 of the Annex (separately for the neighbourhood and enlargement area).

As regards dissemination of information through the DG NEAR website and social media channels, in 2017 DG NEAR's social media presence increased substantially. On Facebook, outreach at more than 16 million people is almost eight times higher in 2017. Followers have increased fourfold, to 345,000 people in 2017. On Twitter, outreach has increased six times in 2017, to almost 7 million people, and the number of followers has doubled (26,500 people). Instagram was successfully launched in early autumn 2017, reaching over 300,000 people and having almost 1,000 followers.

This shows a huge interest in, and satisfaction with the quality of the information provided, and as a result we expect a further steep growth of our audiences there.

In implementing the actions to achieve the objectives of external communication activities, DG NEAR uses the DG COMM code of conduct to define indicators and prepare evaluation sheets.

5. Is the annual communication spending (based on estimated commitments) of EUR 7,100,000⁴ sufficient for the achievement of the objectives

For 2017, the estimated commitments for Delegations were EUR 20 million with about two thirds dedicated to the IPA zone and one-third to the ENI zone. Could you depict the communication activities lead by the delegations?

The external communication activities aim at increasing the knowledge about, and understanding of, the European neighbourhood and enlargement policies through targeted outreach activities and dissemination of information online, through relevant websites and social media channels. Achieving these objectives requires sustained long-term efforts. The budget allocated for this purpose allows for a reasonable range of activities that have been chosen and designed based on lessons learnt. They focus on stakeholder audiences, mainly from the Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions and, to a limited extent, from the Member States.

As of 2017, activities in the Western Balkans have been stepped up within the existing budget, to reflect the political priorities. The budget has also increased moderately from 2017 onwards, to achieve more results, in line with the enhanced engagement in the Western Balkans region.² For the ongoing accession process to be a success, and subject to the progress achieved by the candidate countries, it will be necessary to step up the efforts to inform EU citizens about the enlargement policy and its benefits for the acceding country and for the EU.

Main communication activities implemented by the EU Delegations/Offices in 2017:

- establishment and management of EU Information Centres and Info Points in the enlargement region;
- outreach and networking (e.g. organisation of visibility events, seminars, conferences, project fairs, study visits, workshops and trainings, including events for specific target groups, e.g. women, pensioners, business, youth);
- cultural diplomacy (e.g. film festivals, book fairs, youth and sports events, video and writing competitions);
- media relations and media rebuttal (e.g. media monitoring, production of media materials, press events, training for journalists, press and media trips);
- online and social media activities (websites, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Storify, etc.);

² In line with the State-of-the-Union Speech of President Juncker of 13 September 2017 and the Commission Communication on “A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans“, adopted on 6 February 2018.

- production of different information tools and products (publications, audio-visual materials, EU-branded promotional materials);
- thematic awareness-raising campaigns linked to political priorities of individual candidate countries and potential candidates;
- opinion polling on awareness of and support for the EU, its values and its policies (Enlargement or Neighbourhood) and EU-funded projects in the region concerned,
- communication training for staff and implementing partners;
- assessment of information and communication actions (survey-based evaluations).

6. Average payment times for 2017: there is 11% of late payments; how do you evaluate the situation, how can you ameliorate the score?

In 2017, the rate of late payments was 11%. This is a significant improvement on the rate for 2016, which was nearly 19%.

Late payments can be attributed to a large extent to a number of clerical errors and technical problems.

DG NEAR is striving to improve this score through more sophisticated, automated follow-up tools such as a Portfolio Management Dashboard, allowing for more frequent and accurate monitoring of open invoices at the various steps of the approval process. Furthermore, awareness-raising and training measures have been enhanced in order to support staff in the correct and timely treatment of payment requests.

7. Table 9: ageing balance of recovery orders at 31/12/2017 for DG NEAR: there are recovery orders opened since 2002-2005 and 2006; it seems that there is no evolution of the files. Why? What is the problem?

There are five recovery orders still open from 2006 and earlier. All have been subject to extensive legal proceedings. A short summary is provided below.

2002 (1 case): contract with ASSOCIAZIONE PIEMONTESE CONZORSI.
A recovery order was issued in 2003, which the contractor refused to pay. In 2008 the contractor was ordered by the Court of First Instance to pay; the case went to Court of Appeal; the Commission won; the legal service is still attempting to recover the funds through legal means.

2005 (2 cases) and 2006 (1 case): All 3 recovery orders with contractor MIDDLE EAST CENTER FOR LEGAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH are linked and related to an OLAF enquiry. Legal proceedings are now at the Court of Appeal.

2006 (1 case): a contract terminated on grounds of serious breach of contract. The Commission has used every legal mean possible to recover the funds to no avail and is now going to proceed with a waiver.

8. There had been one recovery order waiver in 2017 of more than EUR 100 000. Could you briefly describe the case?

The case relates to the “Yemeni Development Foundation”; at the time of the issuing of the recovery order, the delegation in Yemen was based in Jordan, hence it came into DG NEAR’s accounts.

Two payments were made under this contract. The first was cleared on the basis of the project reports provided; the second payment never reached Yemen. OLAF investigated the case, and reported that the beneficiary had been dissolved, and both the chairman and the Yemen contact person had passed away. The Foundation is no longer active.

The amount of EUR 136,236 was thus deemed irrecoverable and the recovery order waived.

9. The performance reported in Annex 12 of the 2017 AAR is based on a set of indicators that were established in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 of DG NEAR;

To which extend are those indicators connected to those used in the statements of operational programmes that we can find in Annex 1 to the Budget

The indicators of the programme statements are connected to the indicators of the Strategic Plan of DG NEAR in the sense that the financial instruments IPA and ENI contribute directly to implementation of the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 of DG NEAR, which, in turn, contributes to the overall Commission objectives for the mandate of the current Commission.

During the strategic planning period DG NEAR works towards the achievement of 7 specific objectives, which make a contribution to 4 general objectives of the Juncker Commission.

The ENI and the IPA II instruments are the key tools facilitating year-on-year progress towards fulfilling the 7 specific objectives. To this end, under each specific objective a reference is made to the spending programme that supports the objective (IPA II or ENI) in the Performance Tables of Annex 12 of the AAR.

The purpose of ENI and IPA II is laid down in the respective legal basis covering the period of the financial perspective 2014 to 2020. Their objectives and indicators have been feeding the establishment of the strategic planning 2016-2020 and, therefore,

indicators reported in this Annex generally reflect the legal requirements of the 2014-2020, programmes also laid down in the programme statements on a year-to-year basis.

The achievements of DG NEAR presented in the AAR 2017 are therefore– to the greatest possible extent– aligned with the performance information included in the programme statements for the Draft Budget 2019.

10. What is the link between the EAMR and the key performance indicators we can find under Annex 11 of the 2017 AAR?

The key performance indicators under Annex 11 of the 2017 AAR represent a summary of the key performance indicators included in each Delegation's EAMR and EAMR HQ reports (i.e. also including key performance indicators concerning funds managed at HQ). The analysis consists of KPI results at global DG NEAR level (Chapter I.1) and detailed level of Directorates (Chapter I.2). It allows the detection of trends and decision making on mitigating actions if required.

EAMRs

11. In its AAR 2017 (p. 143 of the annex), DG NEAR indicated the frequencies of type of problems or risks encountered in 2017.

a. What is the total amount affected in 2017 by these problems?

The total value of active projects for which a potential problem in implementation has been indicated in the AAR 2017 amounted to EUR 5,134 million (34% of value of all ongoing projects).

Projects are flagged as problematic as the result of a proactive risk assessment approach of the Commission. Problematic projects do not mean that these projects are not achieving their results or that their resources are not used. It is the flagging of a potential risk that a project might deliver less outputs than foreseen or might use less resources reserved for it than foreseen. It allows the Commission to prioritise corrective actions, and as such is in essence a management tool.

A distinction must be made between projects flagged in ORANGE– and projects flagged in RED.

Projects flagged in ORANGE mean either that the level of use of project resources is expected to be between 75% and 90% as compared to use of full resources (KPI 5); OR it may also mean that the achievement of project targets is likely to be between 75 and 90% (KPI 6).

Projects flagged in RED mean either that the level of use of project resources is expected to remain below 75% as compared to use of full resources (KPI 5); OR it may also mean that the achievement of project targets is likely to remain under 75% (KPI 6).

- b. An important proportion of "problematic" projects, 218 of the total number of projects at NEAR, is related to low capacity of the implementing partners or beneficiaries. How does the Commission intend to improve the situation? Which steps are taken to improve the commitment of implementation partners and the resources in European projects?

The Commission intends to improve the situation in cases of low capacity of the implementing partners and beneficiaries, by a variety of measures, especially by intensifying political dialogue and donor co-ordination, increasing monitoring and strengthening control mechanisms, but also by anticipating the extension of projects, carrying out moderate adaptations of activities/budgets, suspending or terminating a project.

- c. Can the Commission facilitate the list of these "problematic" projects including the MS and organisations participating in them? Could the Commission indicate in which of these "problematic" projects has the EIB participated with its "famous signed contracts" and little or nothing implemented?

Examples of organisations participating in projects of this category include: the Development Bank of the Council of Europe, EBRD, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, UNWRA, GIZ, IBRD, European Border and Coast Guard Agency, EIB, European Maritime Safety Agency, Council of Europe or the International Organisation for Migration, UN Entity for General Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations Environment Programme, Agence Française d'Expertise Technique Internationale, Agence Française de Développement.

A variety of organisations from MS and beneficiary countries participate in those projects including from the following countries in descending order in terms of project numbers involved: United Kingdom, France and Belgium (14 projects each), Italy and Germany (12 projects each), Armenia (11), Albania (10), Kosovo (9) the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Morocco (8), Lebanon (7) Ukraine (6), Austria, Palestine, Switzerland and Turkey (5);

In value terms of projects the following are the 5 states or organisations registered in states for which projects were flagged as problematic: Turkey, Morocco, Albania, United Kingdom, France.

From among all projects in this category, two thirds (in project numbers) concern the ENI region and one third the IPA region. In value terms, higher shares concern the IPA region (60%).

Out of the total of problematic projects with low implementation capacity, 19 are budget support operations.

The EIB participated in 4 projects active in the ENI region for a total value of EUR 33 million, which are flagged as problematic concerning the capacity of implementing partners and beneficiaries.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Low capacity / performance of impl.partner/T.A./beneficiaries (absorption/procedures)						
LEF						
Project Reference	CTR numt		Managing Entity	Project title	Project value	Domain
CTR334371	334371	EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK	NEAR B 02	Fostering EU-policy implemen	5200000	ENPI
CTR353950	353950	EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK	Tunisia TN	Integrated Depollution Prograi	8746000	ENPI
CTR355328	355328	EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK	NEAR C 02	Municipal Project Support Faci	12300000	ENPI
CTR355439	355439	EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK	Tunisia TN	Integrated Depollution Prograr	6670000	ENI
					32916000	

EIB project 1: The progress of this Facility was flagged for follow up at the EIB Steering Committee (spring 2018);

EIB project 2: This project was delayed due to the complexity of the institutional setup and an insufficient mobilisation of resources by the lead organisation.

EIB project 3: The project was delayed due to administrative problems in one of the beneficiary countries; the project was subject to results oriented monitoring in 2017; a budget reallocation to other projects is planned and a possible implementation deadline extension may be undertaken; the project has been selected for internal audit under NIF;

EIB project 4: This project was delayed due to the complexity of the institutional setup and an insufficient mobilisation of resources by the lead organisation.

d. How does the Commission address these persisting problems in these affected projects in all other areas?

- In addition to other problematic areas included in descending order:
- blocking conditions largely outside the control of the Commission and mostly relating to the political situation of the beneficiary country;
 - political or economic stability or sector policy issues;
 - procurement issues and delays;
 - low interest or commitment of stakeholders;
 - insufficient co-financing or staff contribution by government or partner organization;
 - insecurity/unrest;
 - fiduciary risk (corruption, fraud);
 - natural disaster;
 - substantial mistakes in intervention logic.

Corrective measures in all these areas range from intensified political dialogue, increased monitoring, anticipated extensions, adaptations of activities or budget as well as project suspensions or terminations.

- e. Which countries are affected by blocking conditions? What are the blocking conditions in the respective countries? What does the Commission intend to do to remedy the situations?

92 projects worth EUR 1.3 billion in countries of the IPA region (Albania, Kosovo), ENI South region (Egypt, Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia) and ENI East region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine) are affected by blocking conditions.

The blocking conditions in those countries included:

- An administrative reform or changes in the government;
- Suspension of Budget support payments due to delays in sector reforms or not meeting eligibility criteria;
- Environmental issues;
- Insufficient co-financing;
- Nature of intervention is affected by political developments.

The Commission intends to remedy the situation for a high number of cases via an intensified political dialogue and/or donor co-ordination, followed by increased monitoring or anticipated project extensions, moderate adaption of activities or project suspension/termination if required.

ECA annual report

12. ECA describes in paragraph 9.12 a case when the salary of a resident twinning advisor during his secondment was incorrectly calculated.

- At which EU delegation did this case happen?
- Are you aware of similar cases occurring elsewhere, or is this an isolated case?

The weakness identified by the Court of Auditors was that EU Delegation to Morocco did not check the previous salaries of a Resident Twinning Advisor. This was necessary to make sure that the amount he received during his secondment to the EU project was not higher than the amount he would have received for the work for his home administration.

Indeed, the Delegation acted under a presumption of reliability of the information provided by the Member State administration seconding the advisor, assuming that the figures communicated corresponded to the actual salary cost.

The weakness is not systemic – i.e. for the whole DG – since the Twinning Manual applicable (but also its predecessor and successor versions) explicitly instructs the Delegation to check the upon "verifiable evidence of the real salary cost" (Manuals 2009 / 2012 / 2013-2014) or upon "accountancy statement" (Manual 2017).

Following the Court's observation, the Commission has reminded the EU Delegation concerned to fully respect the instructions provided in the Twinning Manual.

DG NEAR is not aware of similar cases occurring elsewhere.

Refugees

13. What is the average amount of money spent per refugee in 2017 in

a. Turkey,

Late in 2015 and in answer to the call from EU Member States for significant additional funding to support refugees in Turkey, the Commission decided to establish a coordination mechanism, the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. The first tranche (2016-2017) of EUR 3 billion was committed and contracted and more than EUR 1.8 billion was disbursed by the end of 2017 (EUR 1.945 billion early October 2018). In addition to the Facility, EUR 20.5 million was disbursed in 2017 by complementary EU actions under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace and the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis. The EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 provides for an additional EUR 3 billion of assistance to refugees in 2018 and 2019.

In 2017, Turkey was hosting over 3.8 million refugees and migrants. This included 3.5 million registered Syrian refugees, and more than 300,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers mainly from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Somalia.

The Commission does not have all the information required to calculate an average amount of money spent on a refugee in 2017. Most of the costs involved are borne by the Turkish authorities. Many of the activities funded are not of direct benefit to a specific refugee but rather to many (eg payment of a teachers salary)

b. Morocco

For Morocco, in 2017 no EU funds have been disbursed for refugees, as defined in 1951 Refugee Convention.

However, European cooperation on migration in Morocco amounts to over €100 million (including ENI, EUTF, DCI and AMIF) since 2014 covering support to the integration of migrants in the country, access to basic services, assistance to the most vulnerable and to better migration management. With the establishment of EUTF Africa at the Valetta Summit in 2015, our efforts in supporting the Moroccan national migration strategy have substantially increased.

14. What is the average amount of money spent per refugee in 2017 and the number of beneficiaries in each MS and in the neighbourhood countries?

Member states:

The EU funding covers only a share of the Member States' spending in asylum, migration, integration and return. And it varies from one Member State to another and even between regions in Member States.

Moreover, EU funding is not always directly linked to the number of refugees, as it supports the development of Member States' capacity to manage migration.

Member States provide different services to asylum seekers, to refugees (and more generally migrants), taking into account their specific situation.

Therefore any figures would be imprecise and unreliable.

Neighbourhood countries:

Please see the reply to question 16 below.

15. Can the Commission inform about the provenance of asylum seekers and other useful information and other available information about their personal situation before leaving their country or region?

In 2017, 650 000 first time asylum seekers applied for international protection in the Member States of the EU. This was just over half the number recorded in 2016, when 1 206 500 first-time asylum applicants were registered, and is comparable to the level recorded in 2014, before the peaks of 2015 and 2016. Syrian (102 400 first-time applicants), Iraqi (47 500) and Afghan (43 600) continued to be the main citizenships of people seeking international protection in the EU Member States in 2017, together accounting for 30% of all first-time applicants. The other main citizenships of people seeking international protection in the EU were (by decreasing order of number of applicants): Nigeria (39.090), Pakistan (29.570), Eritrea (24.355), Albania (22.075), Bangladesh (19.280), Guinea (17.705), Iran (17.260), Turkey (14.630) and Ivory Coast (13.995).

Syria (16% of the total number of first-time applicants) was in 2017 the main country of citizenship of asylum seekers in the EU Member States, a position it has held each year since 2013. Iraq (7% of the total number of first-time applicants) was the second main country of citizenship of asylum seekers in the EU Member States in 2017. With 43 600 first-time applicants (or 7% of the EU total) in 2017, Afghanistan was the third main country of citizenship of asylum seekers in the EU Member States.

In 2017, 31 400 asylum seekers applying for international protection in the Member States of the EU were considered to be unaccompanied minors. This was nearly half

the number recorded in 2016 (63 200 unaccompanied minors registered) and almost one-third of the peak registered in 2015 (95 200), but over two and a half times higher than the annual average during the period 2008-2013 (around 12 000 per year). In total in the EU, unaccompanied minors accounted for 15% of all asylum applicants aged less than 18.

In 2017, a majority of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum were males (89%). Considering age, over two-thirds were aged 16 to 17 (77%, or about 24 200 persons), while those aged 14 to 15 accounted for 16% (around 5 000 persons) and those aged less than 14 for 6% (almost 2 000 persons). Afghan (17%, or around 5 300 persons) continued to be the main citizenship of asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors in the EU.

16. Which funds had been implemented for refugees in third countries and what was the contracted amount for operations related to refugees in third countries in 2017? How high was the absorption rate of these funds until 2017? How much money is still available? How many refugees had benefited of those funds? Which five countries received the highest and the lowest funding?

The Commission understands this question as relating to the geographical zone under the remit of DG NEAR. This means that it is difficult to identify the five highest and lowest recipients of funds.

Turkey

The first tranche (2016-2017) of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey – i.e. EUR 3 billion – was committed and contracted by the end of 2017, including EUR 1,486,619,830 contracted in 2017 alone in both humanitarian assistance, managed by DG ECHO, and non-humanitarian assistance, managed by DG NEAR.

In addition to the Facility, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) are funding projects to support refugees in Turkey. Only one project was signed in 2017 by the EUTF.

From the first tranche of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, more than EUR 1.8 billion was disbursed by the end of 2017 (EUR 1.945 billion early October 2018). In addition to the Facility, EUR 20.5 million was disbursed in 2017 by complementary EU actions under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace and the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis.

Amount contracted in 2017 in Turkey	
Instrument	EUR
Facility for Refugees in Turkey	1,486,619,830
EUTF – outside the Facility	12,352,942
Total	1,498,972,772

A significant share of the Facility portfolio was contracted at the end of 2017 and implementation for many projects started in 2018. However, Facility projects already had a significant and direct impact in 2017. Through the Emergency Social Safety Net, more than 1.175 million refugees benefited from monthly cash-transfers throughout 2017 (around 1.4 million in September 2018) and the families of 167 000 children attending school received financial support thanks to the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education programme (368 000 in July 2018). In addition, under the PICTES project³, 312 151 children have received Turkish language training by 5 486 Turkish language teachers employed under the project (as of 31 October 2017). On health, under the SIHHAT project in 2017, 12 Migrant Health Centres became operational to improve primary healthcare services, 813 staff have been employed in the centres, refugees have benefitted from 763,963 primary health care consultations and 217,511 Syrian refugee infants were fully vaccinated. More details can be obtained from the Second Annual Report on the Facility adopted on 7 March 2018⁴.

Western Balkans

Operations related to refugees in 2017			
Country	Contracted	Paid	Absorption rate
Albania	6 000 000 EUR	4 100 000 EUR	68%
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	700 000 EUR	400 000 EUR	57%
Serbia	24 000 000 EUR	0 EUR	0%
Regional funding	4 500 000 EUR	3 400 000 EUR	75%

In addition, IPA regional funds contributed to the Syria trust fund for an amount of EUR 20 million in 2017.

Being transit countries, it is difficult to calculate the overall number of the refugees/migrants that benefited from EU support as there was constant in and outflow.

Neighbourhood South

EU funds in relation to refugees, as defined in 1951 Refugee Convention, are used through bilateral country programmes and EU Trust Funds (in response to the Syria

³ PICTES stands for "Promoting Integration of Syrian Children into Turkish Education System".

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/14032018_facility_for_refugees_in_turkey_second_annual_report.pdf

crisis and North of Africa window). For the Trust Funds, Member States contributions are included in the EU funds.

For the bilateral programmes in 2017, €30.48m were paid in Jordan and €15,53m in Lebanon. The two EU Trust Funds for Syria and for North of Africa paid respectively €316,42m and €10.4m the same year (the latter mainly for Libya based programmes). Regarding the EU Trust Fund for Syria, it operates in the Syria neighbouring countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey) as well as in the Western Balkans.

As regard contracting, since 2016 the EUTF for Syria is in charge of programmes for Syrian refugees. Its contracting level therefore reflects the unfolding of refugees related programmes in the Near East.

Implementation rates of the two Trust Funds are set out in the financial statements of the Trust Funds.

<i>Funds paid in 2017 for refugees related programmes</i>		<i>Funds contracted</i>
<i>Bilateral funds</i>		
<i>JO</i>	<i>30.480.000</i>	<i>1.400.000</i>
<i>LB</i>	<i>14.530.000</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>EU Trust Funds</i>		
<i>EUTF North of Africa (in Libya only) assistance to refugees</i>	<i>10.400.000</i>	<i>13.000.000</i>
<i>EU TF Syria (all countries except Turkey)</i>	<i>295.140.000</i>	<i>280.579.337</i>
<i>EUTF Syria (Turkey only)</i>	<i>18.200.000</i>	<i>247.494.844</i>

Given that some of these funds benefit refugees through government support and thus target the total number of (mostly) Syrian refugees (and host communities), we could estimate that a total of 5 million refugees have been targeted with the funding mentioned above. In Libya the estimated number of refugees/ persons of concern to UNHCR was 15,000 in 2017.

Palestinian refugees, in 2017, DG Near contributed € 102 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, of which 95% was paid in 2017.

The Agency works in the occupied Palestinian territory, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon and provides assistance and protection for some 5 million of Palestine refugees.

The biggest recipient of funding in terms of payments in 2017 was Turkey. The smallest recipient of funding in 2017 – Serbia.

Turkey

17. Could you please provide us with a complete overview for all projects/programmes with regard to refugees in Turkey that receive EU-money but not through the facility for refugees in Turkey at this moment in time?

Home affairs/migration is an important area of EU financial assistance through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), which is directly relevant to the European Agenda on Migration. In this area, IPA II supports legal migration, mobility, including through maximising the development impacts of migration, the development of functioning asylum systems, the improvement of integrated border management, and better management of irregular migration through both focused actions and technical assistance.

Support in this sector complements other funding instruments, such as the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, by focussing on the continued development of long-term sustainable strategies and policies. IPA is not designed for humanitarian aid to refugees as such. Pre-accession assistance is available to support a broader dialogue and cooperation framework between EU and Turkey. This will allow the EU and Turkey to address the full range of justice and home affairs policy fields in the framework of the visa liberalisation dialogue, in line with the visa liberalisation roadmap that was launched in December 2013 and reaffirmed in the context of the March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement.

Many of the programmes under the Home Affairs area are not targeting refugees specifically and hence it is difficult to make a precise calculation of funds that are specifically benefiting refugees. The complete lists of programmes under Home Affairs in the context of IPA II can be found at the following addresses:

- IPA 2014: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/turkey/ipa/2014/ipa2014-031-874.8-tr-home-affairs.pdf>
- IPA 2015 : https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/turkey/ipa/2015/ipa2015-038-404.5-home_affairs_new.pdf
- IPA 2016 : https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/6-ipa_2016_home_affairs_ad_-_final_for_ipa_committee_v2_clean.pdf

To note also that most of the programmes under IPA have not yet started their operations.

In addition to the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), complementary actions are financed by the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF), and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). An overview of non-Facility EUTF and IcSP refugee-related projects in 2017 can be found below:

EU 'Instrument'	Implementing partner	Description/objective	EU Contribution Amount (in €)
IcSP	ASAM	To increase awareness on the refugees and asylum seekers' rights and obligations, referral to protection mechanisms in place, support local authorities in the delivery of protection and promote social cohesion between the host community and refugees.	7,500,000
EUTF	KfW	Building and equipping new schools in provinces with a high concentration of Syrian refugees	70,174,976
EUTF	UNHCR	Increasing Access to Higher Education for Syrian Refugees in Turkey	12,352,942

For reference, a list of all projects under the Facility for the Refugees is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/migration_en

18. ECA Special Report No 7/2018 “EU pre-accession assistance to Turkey: Only limited results so far” concludes that funding did not sufficiently address some fundamental needs in the rule of law and governance sectors, where critical reforms are overdue. ECA found that the Commission had made little use of conditions to support reforms in the priority sectors. In particular, the Commission seldom used conditions such as the option of recentralising the management of projects or corrective measures if project conditions were not met. Furthermore, the possibility of suspending funding if the principles of democracy and rule of law were not complied with was not explicitly reflected in the regulations.

- How do these audit results feed into the Commission's mid-term review of funding, as well as into the design of future assistance programmes to EU neighbourhood and enlargement countries?

The Commission is well aware of some of the shortcomings and difficulties identified in the Court's report. We have accepted all the recommendations from the Court and we have already taken steps to address many of these recommendations. In 2017 we have reduced IPA assistance by EUR 89 million mostly in the large support programmes targeting sectoral cooperation (energy, transport, environment, etc.). In August 2018 the Commission, after consultation of the European Parliament and EU Member States, decided to reduce IPA II assistance significantly, by EUR 759 million

(- 40 %) in total for the 2018-2020 period (253 million per year for 2018, 2019 and 2020) based on backsliding on fundamentals and low absorption capacity.

Furthermore, we have also reoriented our assistance more towards areas of higher priority, in particular democracy, fundamental rights, civil society and participation in Union programmes. Also, we have put even more focus on conditionality in our programming approach. We have halted several projects with the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (CJP), due to serious concerns regarding the independence of that body. In addition, we have halted several other projects in the criminal justice domain due to insufficient assurance that objectives and results could be met in the current context. Strengthened conditionality has also been applied in the preparation of the 2018 programming. Finally, we have taken steps to increase the share of funds managed directly by the Commission. The CSO support for 2017 is managed by the Commission (Civil Society Facility) and not the Turkish authorities. Similarly for 2018 and until 2020, civil society support will be managed directly by the Commission.

19. Since the decision to mainly finance directly the civil society and the NGOs in Turkey has been implemented, what is the system put in place to ensure the effectiveness of the funding? Could the EC provide an overview on the funding and on the results achieved? What kind of control mechanism has been put in place?

The Commission has not put in place any new system and relies on the existing monitoring systems (on the spot checks by EU staff, external monitoring through ROM, regular meetings with beneficiaries, audits, etc.). The Commission considers that effectiveness of the funding to CSOs is ensured first by the recentralisation of its management as it enables the EU to a) alleviate the potential backlog of Turkish authorities in absorbing the funds on Civil society and b) reach those groups and areas most in need, in the context of a deteriorating operating environment for the CSOs. In addition, the regular contacts of the Commission with civil society in Turkey ensures that priority areas are targeted and needs are addressed effectively. Control and monitoring mechanisms are the standard means for the delivery of EU funds in accordance with the principles of the Financial Regulation, notably sound financial management and aid effectiveness.

The Civil society facility (CSF) provides crucial grant schemes and capacity-building support that are considered essential for the development of Turkish civil society.

It allows the EU to directly support civic initiatives and right-based projects proposed by individuals and civil society organisations, including networks, to address particularly sensitive issues in various aspects of fundamental rights that could not be tackled via Turkish institutions. It is planned to make increased use of the mechanism of "financial support to third parties", through which the organisations awarded will be able to redistribute funds to Turkish grass-roots CSOs following a simplified application process, which includes the possibility to submit applications in Turkish.

On top of that, recentralisation has also enabled the allocation of additional funds to the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), which will continue to be used as a rapid and effective tool, thanks to its sub-grantee schemes, to complement the work carried out by other EU instruments and with a special focus on the media environment, journalism and freedom of expression.

After the decision to recentralise the EU funds, in 2017 alone, the Commission set aside EUR 18 million for the supporting CSOs through CSF and EED. In 2018, additional EUR 12.4 million have been allocated to CSF and the Commission expects to mobilise EUR 31.5 million for CSF and EED in 2019 provided that budgetary resources are allocated.

Regarding concrete results, in the past four years, 614 individuals/activists and 744 CSOs have been supported via the Sivil Düşün (Think Civil) initiative, which is the CSF flagship programme in Turkey. More recently, 50 Human Rights CSOs that are most at risk are benefitting from funding to support their core functions. The CSO Resource Center is another vital tool funded by the CSF to provide technical assistance to civil society organisations. This includes a helpdesk on legal issues and accurate communication tools that facilitate interaction and networking among CSOs. The CSF is also complemented by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) window for Turkey (which has a EUR 3 million annual allocation).

20. Could the Commission provide an assessment on the effectiveness of the management of the EU funding aid to refugees in Turkey and what are the results of the checks and monitoring in 2017?

The Facility for Refugees in Turkey has allowed for the swift mobilisation of EUR 3 billion in EU and Member State assistance to refugees in Turkey, using existing EU instruments in a coordinated way. In a politically volatile period, EUR 3 billion was committed and contracted and close to EUR 2 billion disbursed by the end of 2017, within the timeframe of 20 months, in full compliance with the EU's procedural and legal framework.

A significant share of the Facility portfolio was contracted at the end of 2017 and implementation for many projects started in 2018. However, Facility projects already had a significant and direct impact in 2017 and achieved their expected outputs.

Through the Emergency Social Safety Net, more than one million refugees benefited from monthly cash-transfers throughout 2017 (1.4 million in September 2018) and the families of over 200 000 children attending school received financial support thanks to the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education programme (312 000 in September 2018). In addition, under the PICTES project, 312 151 children have received Turkish language training by 5 486 Turkish language teachers employed under the project (as of 31 October 2017). On health, under the SIHHAT project in 2017, 12 Migrant Health Centres became operational to improve primary healthcare services, 813 staff have been

employed in the centres, refugees have benefitted from 763,963 primary health care consultations and 217,511 Syrian refugee infants were fully vaccinated.

In 2017, the first version of the Facility Results Framework was presented to the Steering Committee – to which the Members of the European Parliament were invited – and the first monitoring cycles were launched. The monitoring findings were presented to the Steering Committee in June 2017 and November 2017. In parallel, the Commission adopted a EUR 14.3 million Support Measure for the monitoring, evaluation, audit and communication of the Facility. More details can be obtained from the Second Annual Report on the Facility adopted on 7 March 2018.

Macro financial assistance - Tunisia

21. With regard to macro financial assistance, what are the specific benchmarks and what are the main results achieved during the 2017, in the Countries beneficiaries of the macro financial assistance?

As you know, this is a topic followed by my esteemed colleague Commissioner Moscovici, who is responsible for the Macro Financial Assistance.

In 2017, a total of EUR 1.01 billion was disbursed through macro-financial assistance (MFA) operations in Georgia, Jordan, Tunisia and Ukraine. All these countries have been facing external financing difficulties in recent years, which the MFA disbursements helped alleviate. The aim of this assistance is to support the economic and financial stabilisation and the structural reform agenda of the beneficiary countries. Further details can be found in the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of macro-financial assistance to third countries in 2017 (COM(2018)511 and accompanying SWD(2018)361) – see link: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2018/FR/COM-2018-511-F1-FR-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

22. With regard to Tunisia, during 2017, has the macro financial assistance achieved the expected results?

In 2017, the Commission disbursed Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) funds to Tunisia for a total of EUR 300 million (3rd instalment MFA-I: EUR 100 million; 1st instalment MFA-II: EUR 200 million).

This represented about 10% of Tunisia's external financing needs that year, helping alleviate external financing needs and balance of payments difficulties through an injection of foreign reserves. The assistance has also encouraged economic adjustment and structural reforms reflected in the economic policy and financial conditions set out in the respective Memoranda of Understanding. Further details can be found in the relevant sections on Tunisia in the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of macro-financial assistance to third

countries in 2017 (COM(2018)511 and accompanying SWD(2018)361) see link: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2018/FR/COM-2018-511-F1-FR-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

23. What was the funds absorption rate of Tunisia in 2017? The assistance has two objectives: good governance, and sustainable economy. Are there indicators to monitor the effect of European support in those two fields?

In 2017, a total of EUR 300 million was disbursed, equivalent to about 10% of Tunisia's external financing needs. MFA funds are paid to a beneficiary country's Central Bank, are not earmarked, and are not necessarily used to fund the policy actions mentioned in the Memorandum of Understanding.

The objective of MFA operations is to restore a sustainable external financial situation, while encouraging economic adjustment and structural reforms. The structural reform criteria (economic policy conditions) and the set of indicators to monitor macro-economic and financial developments and policies and of structural policies are laid down in the annexes of the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and the Republic of Tunisia. In 2017, considerable progress was achieved in a number of policy areas: launch of a comprehensive civil service reform; simplification of the VAT system; review of the national programme of social subsidies; implementation of active labour market reforms; implementation of a new law improving the business climate. Further details can be found in the relevant sections on Tunisia in the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of macro-financial assistance to third countries in 2017 (COM(2018)511 and accompanying SWD(2018)361) see link: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2018/FR/COM-2018-511-F1-FR-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

Miscellaneous

24. Could you please provide us with a list of aid organizations who have received EU money for project implementation in Syria together with the corresponding amounts for 2016 and 2017?

In 2016 and 2017, a total of 30 different aid organisations received payments for project implementation in Syria, according to the following breakdown:

YEAR	NAME OF ORGANISATION	AMOUNT in EUR (cumulative
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		per organisation)
2016	ABAAD RESOURCE CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY	789,164.96
2016	ASSOCIATION FEDERATION HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL	844,026.12
2016	CARE INTERNATIONAL UK	9,547,149.18
2016	CARE OSTERREICH	335,917.93
2016	PEOPLE IN NEED	545,174.42
2016	COSV (COMITATO DI COORDINAMENTO DELLE ORGANIZZAZIONI PER IL SERVIZIO VOLONTARIO)	158,116.39
2016	COMITATO NON C'E PACE SENZA GIUSTIZIA	467,014.95
2016	CONFIDENTIAL*	502,356.00
2016	GIZ	2,000,000.00
2016	NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE AISBL	653,156.89
2016	SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND	643,604.37
2016	STICHTING FREE PRESS UNLIMITED	659,822.30
2016	STICHTING WAR CHILD	63,183.42
2016	TRANSTELE CANAL FRANCE INTERNATIONAL	1,161.89
2016	UNDP	234,993.95
2016	UNRWA	11,103,844.00
	TOTAL 2016	28,548,686.77
2017	BBC MEDIA ACTION	48,692.84
2017	CHRISTIAN AID	1,654,203.06
2017	PEOPLE IN NEED	2,038,219.73
2017	COSV (COMITATO DI COORDINAMENTO DELLE ORGANIZZAZIONI PER IL SERVIZIO VOLONTARIO)	850,092.74
2017	CONFIDENTIAL*	1,470,918.00
2017	DANISH RED CROSS	1,612,091.00
2017	GIZ	7,500,000.00
2017	EUROMED RIGHTS - EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK	558,001.80
2017	IMMAP FRANCE	1,599,956.00
2017	INTERNEWS EUROPE	152,111.00
2017	JRC (JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE)	334,973.99
2017	NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE AISBL	329,032.28
2017	SOS VILLAGE D'ENFANTS BELGIQUE	286,395.27
2017	STICHTING WAR CHILD	609,803.98
2017	THE SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND LBG	1,866,901.91

2017	UNICEF	8,018,934.20
2017	UNDP	1,490,288.79
2017	UNESCO	759,641.62
2017	UN HABITAT	180,084.00
	TOTAL 2017	31,360,342.21
	GRAND TOTAL 2016 + 2017	59,909,028.98

* The name of the respective entities cannot be made public as it might put the implementing partners at risk.

25. Could the Commission please list the 10 International Organisations, which have received the highest amounts of financial support from the EU in 2017? In which countries were they operating? Which has been their capacity for absorption?

The tables below show the commitments and payments made in 2017.

The first table shows the commitments presented by order of magnitude to the ten biggest International Organisations. The second one shows the ten International Organisations receiving the highest amounts of payments in 2017.

The absorption capacity, defined as the ratio between commitments and payments made is, in 8 cases between 40% and 90%.

For EBRD the ratio is lower due to the fact that the contracts awarded to this IO (i.e. financial instruments or grants to support long term investments) cover long term operations.

The absorption rate for IBRD of 32% is adequate considering that this IO is mainly awarded contracts financed by the trust funds, of which operations have a timetable from 3 to 6 years.

Commitments to the ten biggest International Organisations made in 2017			
International Organisation - presented by order of magnitude of commitments made	Commitments made (EUR)	Paid (EUR)	Absorption capacity Ratio Commitment s/ Payments
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME - WFP	920.523.280	729.625.557	79%
EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY - ESA	775.462.215	397.056.529	51%
EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT - EBRD	440.282.300	60.332.557	14%

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT - IBRD	345.391.501	109.367.291	32%
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES - UNHCR	305.699.726	223.812.427	73%
UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND - UNICEF	259.617.667	187.602.326	72%
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - UNDP	206.396.959	83.212.720	40%
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION - IOM	163.835.016	94.071.936	57%
UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST - UNRWA	122.150.000	109.798.674	90%
COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE ASSOCIATION - CICR	119.840.000	93.440.929	78%

International Organisation - presented by order of magnitude of payments made	Paid (Eur)	Commitments made (EUR)	Absorption capacity Ratio Commitments/ Payments
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME - WFP	729.625.557	920.523.280	79%
EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY - ESA	397.056.529	775.462.215	51%
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES - UNHCR	223.812.427	305.699.726	73%
UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND - UNICEF	187.602.326	259.617.667	72%
UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST - UNRWA	109.798.674	122.150.000	90%
INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT - IBRD	109.367.291	345.391.501	32%

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION - IOM	94.071.936	163.835.016	57%
COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE ASSOCIATION - CIRC	93.440.929	119.840.000	78%
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - UNDP	83.212.720	206.396.959	40%
EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT-EBRD	60.332.557	440.282.300	14%

26. Could the Commission please list the 10 organisations ~~list of the ten organizations~~ in the Member States that have received more money from the EU and the name of the countries where they have been working?

NB: The reply of DG NEAR is based on the assumption that organisations in the Member States refers to legal entities registered in a Member State. International Organisations registered in a Member State (e.g. EBRD) are understood not to be included.

The 10 organisations of MS that have received more money from the EU in the NEAR region are Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau; Agence Française de Developpement, Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit, Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, Republic of Poland; Agence Française d'Expertise Technique Internationale, Hulla& Co Human Dynamic KG (Austria), IBF International Consulting (Belgium), Republic of Hungary, Particip Gmbh (Germany).

These organisations are working in a variety of countries covering the IPA, ENI South and East regions.