

**November 2020**

The migratory challenge has put EU solidarity to the test. The Commission has proposed a new pact to improve migration management and asylum procedures, while also reinforcing international partnerships, in order to ensure effective returns, combat illegal migration and smuggling more effectively and develop legal migration channels. The EU's external policy also helps third countries tackle the root causes of illegal migration and the quest for asylum. The European Parliament often makes this point, while warning that security and migration management concerns should not result in funds being diverted from core EU development cooperation objectives. This topical digest offers a selection of EPRS publications on the EU's role in addressing the refugee and migration crises globally, as well as background briefings on international conventions and refugee policies. A parallel topical digest is dedicated to the migratory challenge within the EU.

Libya: Geopolitics of protracted civil war in the western Mediterranean

Briefing by Branislav Stanicek, EPRS, April 2020

Libya hosts around 45 000 refugees and asylum-seekers from troubled areas in the region. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Libyans have been internally displaced owing to ongoing military conflicts. Following the 90 % decrease in the number of Libyan migrants heading for Europe in recent years, compared with the peak in the 2014-2016 period, the international community's main efforts are focused on securing a ceasefire and bringing about a lasting political solution to the internal conflict, while honouring the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement.

EU-Turkey relations in light of the Syrian conflict and refugee crisis

Briefing by Branislav Stanicek, EPRS, March 2020

Over 3.6 million refugees have entered Turkey since the beginning of the Syrian civil war. Despite international and EU financial and humanitarian support, this presence has heightened social tensions in Turkey. Meanwhile various geostrategic issues have damaged EU-Turkey relations. A new refugee crisis erupted when Turkey opened its borders with Greece in February 2020. Despite a united EU response, EU migration policy has been found wanting. The EU has now to clarify its strategy and develop a new geopolitical blueprint for the region.

Situation of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Briefing by Branislav Stanicek, EPRS, November 2019

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has become a major transit route for migrants heading to western Europe. Reception capacities were expanded in 2018 using EU funds, but remain inadequate, sparking a humanitarian crisis in some places. Access to asylum in BiH is effectively being denied to migrants who seek to claim it. The Croatian government has meanwhile been accused of mistreating migrants and pushing them back into BiH, in violation of international norms on *non-refoulement*. Croatia has committed to investigating these allegations.

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[La mise en œuvre du nouveau cadre de partenariat avec les pays tiers: Le cas du Niger](#)

Briefing by Marta Latek, September 2019 [in French]

Niger, a crossroads for many Sahel migration routes, has responded to EU requests to fight irregular migration. This is a key objective of the EU's new partnership framework, which offers opportunities for cooperation in return for a tougher migration policy. Niger has criminalised assistance to foreigners in transit, but the resulting decrease in migratory flows is having a negative impact on the local economy, threatening the fragile balance between ethnic groups and with central government, and increasing insecurity for migrants and locals alike.

[Refugee policies in Africa: Open borders but limited integration](#)

Briefing by Ionel Zamfir, EPRS, October 2017

The EU is trying to build new relationships with African countries so as to curb the influx of people fleeing war, poverty or persecution, and address the plight of refugees. Africa also hosts high numbers of displaced people, many of whom qualify as refugees under the United Nations (UN) or African Union Refugee Conventions. Nevertheless, while many African countries have ratified these international norms, in practice the protection provided is often inadequate. This implementation gap contributes to protracted refugee situations and is likely one of the main drivers of irregular migration to Europe.

[Refugee status under international law](#)

'At a glance' note by Ionel Zamfir, EPRS, October 2015

Over the past few years, the number of migrants requesting international protection has increased exponentially. The Geneva Convention on refugees and its subsequent Protocol entitle refugees to international protection, most importantly to the right not to be returned to their home countries. However, they define refugees in a restrictive manner, thus excluding many other categories of international migrant from the rights they provide.

[The global compact on refugees: Strengthening international cooperation to ease the plight of refugees in the world](#)

Briefing by Ionel Zamfir, EPRS, January 2019

Recent large-scale flows of refugees and migrants have heightened global awareness of the plight of people forced to flee war, insecurity or persecution, exposing the international community's inability to respond and the uneven distribution of the burden among countries. A 2016 UN declaration paved the way for a 2018 compact focusing on international, regional and national mechanisms for achieving a fairer distribution of the responsibilities related to refugees. It has been criticised, among other things, for its non-binding nature and for excluding victims of natural disasters from its scope.

[The concept of 'climate refugee': Towards a possible definition](#)

Briefing by Joanna Apap, EPRS, January 2019

According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre statistics, every year since 2008 an average of 26.4 million people globally have been displaced by floods, windstorms, earthquakes or droughts, with some forced to go abroad, in what is a growing trend. With climate change, the number of 'climate refugees' is set to rise, but there is no clear definition of them and they are not covered by the 1951 Refugee Convention. The EU has yet to recognise climate refugees formally, but it has expressed concern and taken action to support and develop resilience in countries potentially affected by climate-related stress.

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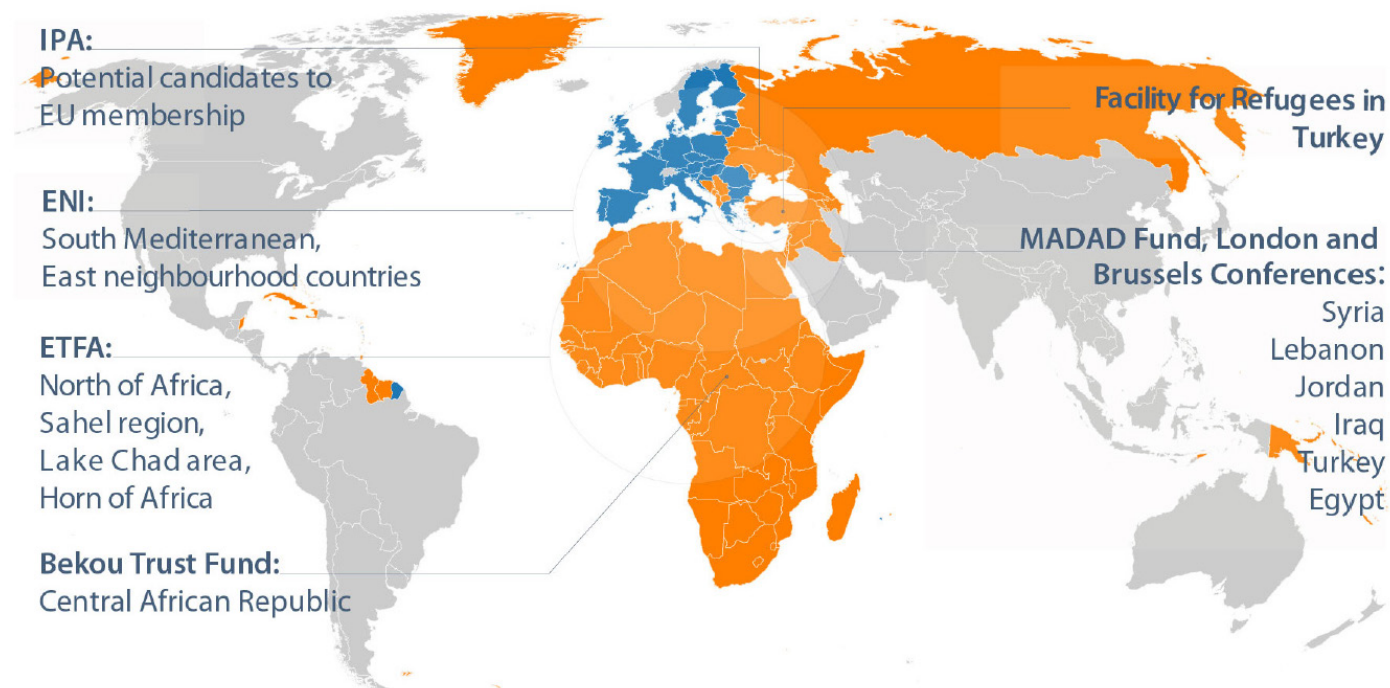
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Areas targeted by main migration funding programmes



European Fund for Sustainable Development, Development Cooperation Instruments

Source: *EPRS Graphics warehouse, 2018.*

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