

EU migration and asylum funds for third countries ¹

ABSTRACT

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the LIBE Committee, provides an overview of EU funding for asylum and migration in third countries. It considers funding both from the Justice and Home Affairs funds and the external action funds, covering the previous Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) (2014-2020) and the current MFF (2021-2027) funding periods. The study seeks to identify good practice in EU funding, including but not limited to the two country case studies on Afghanistan and Niger. It proposes a set of recommendations to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and transparency of EU funding.

Background

The prominence of asylum and migration at the EU policy level has increased over the last two decades, particularly since the increase in arrivals of people in need of protection in 2015. EU funding plays a significant role in the EU's response to these developments. While the overall amount of EU funding dedicated to asylum, forced displacement and migration has increased, the relevant oversight and transparency mechanisms and structures have not followed suit.² The plethora of funding sources and funding modalities mean that it is difficult to gain an overview of how EU funding, both from home affairs funds and from the external action budget, have in the past and can currently support asylum and migration priorities outside the EU. This study contributes to filling the gap, building on previous research and studies. It aims to answer the following overall research question: **How can EU migration and asylum funds for third countries be demonstrably more efficient, effective and coherent, including with EU values?**

This study is based on publicly available academic and policy reports, official evaluations and knowledge and expertise available within the research team. It focuses on expenditure during the previous Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) (2014-2020) and the current MFF (2021-2027). Data collection focused on a review of accessible databases, including the Financial Transparency System (FTS) of the EU,³ the EU Aid Explorer⁴ and EDRIS,⁵ and of open-source information, including legislative texts determining EU spending, programming documents, evaluations and mid-term reviews of funds, programme statements, and annual activity reports. In addition, studies from academics and civil society experts were analysed. The analysis for the home affairs funds benefits from a dataset developed in the framework of the ECRE and UNHCR Follow the Money IV research.⁶

¹ Full study in English: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/737870/IPOL_STU\(2022\)737870_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/737870/IPOL_STU(2022)737870_EN.pdf)

² Davis, L., *EU external expenditure on asylum, forced displacement and migration 2014-2019*, ECRE Working Paper, 2021, available online at: <https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Working-Paper-14.pdf>

³ European Commission, 'Financial Transparency System', 2022, available online at: <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/>

⁴ European Commission, 'EU Aid Explorer', 2022, available online at: https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/index_en

⁵ European Commission, 'EDRIS', 2022, available online at: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hac/>

⁶ Casajuana, E., Westerby, R., *Follow the Money IV: The use of AMIF and ISF-BV funds outside the EU*, 2022, ECRE & UNHCR.



Recommendations

Availability and transparency of data:

- The focus of efforts to **improve transparency and accessibility of data** should be on strengthening overall accountability of EU funding **including through scrutiny by the European Parliament**, rather than on increasing communication about it. The introduction of the **migration marker** should be used to improve overall transparency and accountability for migration-related EU funding, also going **beyond NDICI-Global Europe**. It should lead to a revision of EU databases of aid expenditure to enable scrutiny of migration-related expenditure across all funds.
- The **European Parliament should request detailed information for migration-related spending**, broken down to show how much funding is committed to different aspects of migration (e.g. addressing root causes of forced displacement, supporting rights of people who are displaced or are migrating, border management, return and readmission, labour mobility etc). **The European Commission should provide the European Parliament with the same level of detail regarding migration-related spending as the Council.**
- **DG HOME should develop a template** with the information that MS would be expected to include on the implementation of projects in or in relation to a third country in their annual performance reports.

Coherence:

- The **European Parliament should require the EC/EEAS/TEIs and EUMS to account for disparities in the prioritisation of different types of migration-related programming**. The lack of resources dedicated to strengthening access to legal migration and increased protection of labour migrants within Africa, and between Africa, the Gulf States and Europe is notable.
- DG HOME, DG INTPA, DG NEAR and the EEAS should **define how external policy coherence will be assessed** for both national programmes and the thematic facilities of Home Affairs funds. **The European Parliament could encourage this process through questions to Commissioners.**

Effectiveness and efficiency:

- **DG HOME, DG INTPA and DG NEAR should ensure that the interim evaluations of the AMIF, BMVI and NDICI-Global Europe** (expected in 2024) will **include specific efforts to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the actions** and projects supported by them, even if these actions and projects are not fully implemented by that point due to the late approval of the AMIF, BMVI and NDICI-Global Europe Regulations.
- **More consistent evaluations of migration-related programming** should be introduced in order to give an overview of how the EU is supporting people on the move. Outcomes rather than outputs should be measures. Similar instruments (e.g. TEIs) should be evaluated against the same migration-related objectives and indicators in different contexts. **These evaluations should be available to Parliament and to the public.**

Monitoring mechanisms:

- DG HOME should implement the obligations required for actions with or in third countries for funding in shared and direct management. It should consider the adoption of a delegated act in accordance with Article 31 of the BMVI Regulation and Article 33 of the AMIF Regulation to **amend, review and complement monitoring and evaluation frameworks**, including on information to be provided by the Member States in relation to third countries.
- The European Parliament should ensure that any budget support provided in relation to migration-related programming should be preceded by a **rigorous public finance management assessment**

and conflict analysis, and accompanied by robust Public Financial Management (PFM) and human rights monitoring.

Compliance with fundamental rights:

- Given that migration-related programming has been shown to have exacerbated conflict dynamics in certain situations (e.g. Niger), the Parliament should require TEIs to conduct a **rigorous conflict analysis that integrates gender analysis, as a precondition for all interventions**. This would build on and be coherent with the excellent example of the conflict analysis requirement for all NDICI-Global Europe interventions.
- **Budget support may be a political necessity but carries high risks in states with weak accountability, including where there is limited control over state security actors.** Therefore, any such support (as in Niger) should be accompanied by rigorous public financial management and human rights monitoring. It is important to note that in some circumstances budget support may also be destabilising for host governments.
- DG INTPA and DG NEAR should consider developing a **specific risk assessment and management framework for expenditure on displacement and migration** as per Article 8 (14) of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.
- DG HOME and Member States should ensure that national programmes include enough **information on how MS plan** to fulfil the enabling condition **"to have in place effective mechanisms to ensure compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights"**.
- **DG HOME should commission a study on the most significant human rights impact of the Funds and how the AMIF and ISF-BV ensure compliance with fundamental rights.**

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