EU Trust Fund for Africa: the implications for development and humanitarian aid

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The Committee on Development adopted the own-initiative report by Ignazio CORRAO (EFDD, IT) on the EU Trust Fund for Africa: the implications for development and humanitarian aid.

The Committee on Budgets, exercising its prerogative as associated committees in accordance with Article 54 of the Rules of Procedure, also gave its opinion on the report.

Members recalled that the main goal of the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) is to help foster stability in the regions and contribute to better migration management. It aims to address the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration by promoting resilience, economic opportunities, equal opportunities, security and development.

Financial allocation and budgetary aspects: Members regretted the fact that to date Member States' contributions have remained too low, amounting only to a small fraction of the Union contribution and are thus **far from reaching the official commitment**, totalling only EUR 81.71 million in April 2016 (or 4.5 % of the projected EUR 1.8 billion). They called for fresh appropriations to be used wherever possible and for full transparency to be ensured as to the origin and destination of funds.

Members encouraged the Member States to honour their pledges and to rapidly and effectively match the Union contribution in order to allow the trust fund to develop its full potential.

Deploring the fact that the trust funds result in bypassing the budgetary authority and undermining the unity of the budget, Members consider that setting up the EUTF is de facto tantamount to revising the ceilings for the current MFF by **increasing Member State contributions**. They stressed that the creation of funding instruments outside the EU budget must **remain exceptional** as it bypasses the budgetary authority and undermines budget unity.

Members noted that the EU's financial allocation for the EUTF for Africa currently comes mainly from the 11th EDF because the EU budget and the MFF lack the resources and the flexibility needed to address the different dimensions of such crises. They called on the EU to agree to find a more holistic solution for emergency funding in the framework of this year's revision of the 2014-2020 MFF.

Members also observed that Parliament has demonstrated responsibility, as one arm of the budgetary authority, by agreeing to release emergency funds. They deplored the fact, however, that, as a result of the proliferation of emergency instruments, the Community method is being abandoned.

Role of the civil society, ONGs and local authorities: according to Members, civil society, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations and diaspora communities should play a complementary and pivotal role. Open and participative consultation processes prior to the definition of projects is called for as a key contribution to development needs assessment.

Transparency and clarity for better achievement of goals: Members warned against the serious risk of misuse of EU development aid, in particular in conflict-affected countries where security, migration and development issues are closely interconnected. They emphasised strongly that the ultimate purpose of EU development policy must be the reduction and eradication of poverty. They also stressed that a clear, transparent, and communicable distinction must be made within the EUTF between the funding envelopes

for development activities on the one hand, and those for activities related to migration management, border controls and all other activities on the other.

EU policy coherence and commitment on human rights: Members called for the EU to show greater coherence when acting in the field of international cooperation for development in the African region. They stated that the funds should reflect the principles of policy coherence for sustainable development and complementarity between all development stakeholders, and should avoid any contradiction between development aims and security, humanitarian and migration policies. The trust funds should contribute to achieving the long-term objectives of ensuring peace and strengthening governance in recipient countries.

Objectives and follow-up: the report called on the Commission to systematically monitor how the EUTF funds are employed and how they are allocated, and to increase Parliament's scrutiny powers over the EUTF. Members deplored the lack of clarity and transparency regarding the funding criteria and the volume of funds available for civil society under the EUTF. They recalled the need for better communication between the Commission, the Member States and Parliament in programming and implementing actions of the EUTF in general, in the interests of the further planning of potential additional Trust Funds. They insisted on the need to guarantee, through detailed and regular reporting by the Commission, Parliament’s scrutiny as to how the Fund is being implemented. Transparency, communication and visibility are of the utmost importance with a view to disseminating the results and involving and sensitising European private actors, local and regional authorities, NGOs and civil society.

Lastly, Members recalled that EU migration policies should address the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration by promoting resilience, economic opportunities, equal opportunities, security and development.