Implementation report on the EU Trust Funds and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey

2020/2045(INI) - 07/10/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 493 votes to 88, with 103 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the EU Trust Fund and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey.

Budgetary aspects

Parliament noted that as of 31 December 2020, total pledges for all EU trust funds amounted to **EUR 7 691 million**, with the EU budget contributing EUR 3 170 million, of which EUR 3 534 million came from the European Development Fund (EDF), and Member States and other donors contributing EUR 988 million.

As of 31 December 2020, the implementation rate for commitment appropriations of all EU trust funds was 98% (while the overall implementation rate for payment appropriations was 63%).

Parliament's involvement in the decision-making framework

Members regretted **Parliament's limited role** in the decision-making, supervision and control of EU contributions to the Trust Funds, reiterating that existing legal, regulatory and budgetary solutions should have been used to their full extent before creating and/or extending these Funds, which must remain an instrument of last resort.

The resolution called on the Commission to provide detailed information on the decisions taken by the operational committees so that Parliament can use its powers of scrutiny over implementation and budgetary control. It insisted that the extensions of the EU trust funds until December 2021 should be mainly technical in order to allow for a smooth transition to the new multi-annual financial framework (MFF).

Bêkou Trust Fund

Parliament considered that the Bêkou Trust Fund has partially contributed as one of the tools to address the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR), as well as to the nexus approach of development and humanitarian needs in the CAR.

Given the humanitarian crisis, poverty and new security challenges in CAR, Members believe that continued EU support will be achieved through well-targeted programmes and, where appropriate, flexible EU funding under the Neighbourhood, Development Cooperation and International Cooperation Instrument (NDIC) to strengthen humanitarian action, peace and security, democratisation and the strengthening of democratic institutions and respect for human rights.

Madad Trust Fund

In response to the Syrian crisis, the Fund was established in December 2014 to address the long-term resilience needs of Syrian refugees and displaced persons in neighbouring countries, as well as to support host communities and their administrations. According to the October 2018 strategic mid-term evaluation report, the Madad Fund has been large and cost-effective, reaching a large number of beneficiaries at a comparatively low cost, and it has allowed the EU to operate flexibly.

Parliament highlighted the importance of continuing to support refugees, internally displaced people and vulnerable host communities affected by the continuing conflict.

Trust Fund for Africa

The Fund was established as an emergency trust fund to help resolve crises in three regions of Africa, with the aim of achieving long-term stability and development goals.

Members believe that the EU must help partner countries to tackle the root causes of irregular migration flows, smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

Noting reports of ongoing human rights abuses in Libya in the context of Libyan coastguard operations, Members called for a review of cooperation activities with the relevant authorities in border and sea surveillance and management, financed under the Fund, to ensure an objective assessment of respect for human rights.

Trust Fund for Colombia

The fund was established in December 2016 to support the implementation of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC. The fund has mobilised more than EUR 128 million from the EU budget, 20 Member States, Chile and the UK. Members called for the implementation of the Colombian peace process to remain a priority in funding programmes.

Facility for Refugees in Turkey

With nearly 4 million registered Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan refugees, Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees in the world. Parliament recalled the important role played by the facility in welcoming refugees from Syria. It called for a thorough human rights impact assessment of the EU-Turkey declaration.

The EU should continue to provide the necessary support by ensuring that funds are primarily channelled directly to refugees and host communities and are managed by organisations that guarantee accountability and transparency. Members stressed the importance of the transition from humanitarian relief to development cooperation and called on the Commission to implement a transition strategy, focusing on helping to create livelihood opportunities for refugees.

Perspectives and recommendations

Parliament considered that **external assistance should be financed in full from the EU budget** and be implemented in a coherent way following a streamlined set of rules, based on co-legislated instruments and in full respect of Parliament's legislative, budgetary and control prerogatives. The EU Trust Funds and the Refugee Facility in Turkey should be considered as exceptional or truly emergency-led instruments whose added value and effects on the ground should be very well justified and carefully monitored.

Members expected the Commission to fully make use of the possibilities afforded by the programme-based approach under the geographic pillar of the **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)** and IPA III. They advocated that the potential of the NDICI-Global Europe should be fully used and, where necessary, improved, while the use of extraordinary financing tools should be limited to unforeseen emergency situations, in order to preserve the unity and democratic accountability of the EU budget.

Should the need for a new EU Trust Fund or an ad hoc instrument arise in the future, Members believe that the contribution mechanism from the EU budget should be clearly defined and **negotiated from the outset with the full involvement of Parliament**.

The Commission is called on to withhold or review the cooperation with third countries that do not fully respect fundamental rights, including suspending specific funding and projects which endanger or undermine human rights.