



Roundtable & Interactive Dialogue
The EU in Libya: A New Migration Policy for Long-term Stability
European Parliament – Room A1E1
16h-18h, 30 January 2018

Since 2015, European leadersⁱ have taken increasingly drastic measures to reduce migratory flows, bowing to internal political pressures at the expense of human rights concerns and African interests. After years of largely failed attempts to prevent new arrivals from Northern Africa, the EU made its most controversial move in July 2017 by allocating 46 million euros to the UN-backed Libyan Government of National Accord to thwart irregular migration. These funds directly financed the Libyan Coast Guard, and indirectly funded local authorities and militias.ⁱⁱ

This combination of shortsighted policies has done little to help stabilize the country, which indefinitely postponed the UN-led peace talks on 21 October due to escalating violence and deepening political divisions.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet instead of encouraging political cohesion, the EU is sending the opposite message by allowing actors to profit off instability and crisis, thereby diminishing the political will to establish peace.^{iv} By financing armed groups and the Libyan Coast Guard for cooperation, the EU reduces incentive to respect rule of law, and sets a dangerous precedent of rewarding leaders for supporting the highest bidder's political priorities at the expense of human rights and humanitarian law.^v

In recent months, abuse against migrants has received unprecedented exposure,^{vi} reaching a zenith with a November report by CNN^{vii} that revealed migrant slave auctions outside major Libyan cities, including Tripoli. The political fallout subsequently dominated the agenda of the 2017 AU-EU Summit in Abidjan, pushing leaders to issue an emergency Joint Statement^{viii} to boost AU, UN, EU, and Libyan cooperation to better facilitate voluntary repatriation of migrants to their countries of origin. The continued emphasis on returns not only demonstrates true lack of concern for the well-being of those affected, but also the absence of a cohesive long-term strategy.

The EU's shortsighted approach to managing migration is quickly proving unsustainable, both in Libya and throughout Africa. Boosting border controls, for example, has reduced migration from countries of origin and transit, but has also crippled intra-African migration. These migratory flows make up between 70- 80% of movement on the continent, as locals habitually travel short distances for temporary work to survive.^{ix} With Africa's population expected to double over the next 30 years,^x the EU should be working to strengthen regional economic integration, as opposed to destabilizing the region by undermining basic freedoms and human rights principles.

As the EU moves to reopen its embassy in Tripoli this year,^{xi} it will have a key opportunity to implement long-term migration strategies that will support African interests and the Libyan peace

process. This roundtable discussion will bring together a small group of experts, EU officials, and civil society to develop pragmatic, value-based strategies to reform the EU's migration policy towards Libya, and shift stakeholders' incentives towards cooperation. Having proven itself capable of using its political weight to sway local actors, it is now more important than ever that the EU leverage its influence for long-term solutions and political cooperation.

Draft Discussion Questions:

- How does the EU's migration policy affect the UN-led peace process? What are the political consequences of prioritizing migration management in fragile and conflict-affected countries?
- What are the potential consequences of the AU-EU Summit Libyan Declaration? How could the immediate humanitarian crisis be better addressed?
- How can the EU's Migration Partnership Framework be improved to better reflect longer-term goals? How can the EU reframe its migration policies to improve human security and political cohesion?
- How can the EU work to credibly provide legal alternatives to illicit activities, such as smuggling? How can the EU North Africa Trust Fund work to better support education, health, and marginalized communities?

ⁱ Since 2014, the influx of migrants and refugees have strained European cohesion, with individual EU Institutions disagreeing widely on how to address external challenges. The European Commission and Council have endorsed neorealist, real-politic solutions to bolster state resilience and respond to immediate security concerns. Conversely, the European Parliament has largely pushed for approaches that first and foremost respect human rights, development principles and European values.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/libyan-militia-chief-admits-deal-with-tripoli-to-stem-migrant-flow-ahmed-dabbashi-brigade-migrant-crisis-italy-538lwtgf5>,

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/october-2017#libya>

^{iv} <http://www.bic-rhr.com/oil-in-libya-a-two-faced-inheritance/>

^v <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/quick-fixes-wont-block-libyas-people-smugglers-long>

^{vi} <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde19/7561/2017/en/>

^{vii} <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/14/africa/libya-migrant-auctions/index.html>

^{viii} <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/33437-pr-libya20statement20283020nov2010.pdf>

^{ix} Clingendael. "Turning the tide: The politics of irregular migration in the Sahel and Libya." 2017.

^x Population Reference Bureau. 2016. Available at: <http://www.prb.org/Publications/DataSheets/2016/2016-world-population-data-sheet.aspx>

^{xi} <http://www.africanews.com/2017/10/12/eu-plans-to-reopen-embassy-in-libya/>