

UNHCR Recommendations to the European Union

EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027: Addressing forced displacement effectively

Today [over 65 million](#) people are forcibly displaced, including 22.5 million refugees, many of whom have been driven from their homes by a historic rise in conflict and violence. The global responsibility to respond to this mass movement has largely been shouldered by a small number of countries hosting refugees and other forcibly displaced as well as donors providing support to them.

The EU is a central partner to address forced displacement globally and assist the forcibly displaced and their hosts abroad and at home. With progressive policy frameworks in place¹, the EU seeks to find political solutions to the root causes of forced displacement, to ensure the operationalization of the humanitarian and development nexus and to pursue a development-led approach to forced displacement. Moreover, the EU has put mechanisms into place which address forced displacement through a whole of institution approach.

These encouraging trends speak to the principles of the [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) considers the EU as an important actor in the implementation of the New York Declaration's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and of the future global compact on refugees (GCR). The GCR is a historic opportunity to apply a new global approach to refugee situations. It seeks to bring humanitarian and development aid, economic and legal measures, as well as the resources of refugees and hosting communities themselves together so refugees and their hosts can be better in control of their lives. They can thrive rather than survive and forcibly displaced can stay closer to their home rather than risking their lives in dangerous secondary movements.

A key condition for the successful adoption and application of the GCR is the successful mobilization of **predictable and additional funding** to match renewed efforts of large refugee hosting countries. As a humanitarian donor, the EU continues to provide reliable financial support to assist people forced to flee and the communities that host them. As the biggest development donor globally, the Union has also taken action and mobilized additional funding under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 to ensure that neither forcibly displaced nor host communities are left behind as we progress towards the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

While UNHCR appreciates this increased commitment, it appeals to the EU to use the next MFF 2021-2027 to systematically consolidate and scale up its engagement in forced displacement. Its financial engagement should be needs- and rights-based, and as predictable as possible. This would send a strong signal of the EU's firm pledge to deliver on the paradigm of global responsibility-sharing enshrined in the New York Declaration and the future GCR.

Further, the EU's engagement does not stop at its external borders. Maintaining the integrity and efficiency of asylum systems within the EU is also key and represents a major and costly endeavour. As a democratic union, founded on the respect for human rights and the dignity of the person, the EU should, in compliance with its own Charter on Fundamental Rights and in particular its founding Treaty, sustain its engagement to ensure that persons

¹ Selection of EU policies: <https://goo.gl/jxadeo>; <https://goo.gl/pu1zdv>; <https://goo.gl/7uTTcc>; <https://goo.gl/Y99nTw>.

in need of international protection can access and benefit from asylum in Europe. In this context, addressing asylum and protection needs (including integration) inside the EU should remain a financial priority of the EU Member States and of the EU itself for its next budgetary period from 2021 to 2027.

In light of the above and in addition to the United Nations' position paper on the European Union's next MFF, UNHCR addresses the following recommendations to the EU for its next MFF :

ADDRESSING FORCED DISPLACEMENT GLOBALLY

Recommendation 1: Mainstream forced displacement across external instruments

In line with the 2030 Agenda, the World Humanitarian Summit and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the EU's approach to forced displacement recognizes that only humanitarian, development and political action together can address the displacement challenges effectively and holistically. It would therefore be important that forced displacement challenges are mainstreamed across and within all external instruments, from prevention and peace-building to the emergency and long-term response and from thematic support to geographic programmes. Instruments should be able to respond to the full range of displacement situations (cross-border or internal displacement; conflict/violence or natural disaster-induced displacement), in a cohesive and coherent manner. This would support partner countries in ensuring that the forcibly displaced and their host communities are not left behind in their progress towards the SDGs. It would also contribute to SDG 10 "*Reduce inequality within and among countries*"² and better respond to displacement easing pressures leading to secondary movements.

Recommendation 2: Develop sustainable asylum systems

It is key that EU increases its financial support aimed specifically at developing and strengthening fair and efficient asylum systems in non EU-countries, including in EU neighbouring and candidate countries. Such support would be an expression of global solidarity. It would ensure that asylum-seekers are able to access asylum and effective protection in the places where they first seek protection, thus addressing a major driver of dangerous onward movement.

Recommendation 3: Ensure support for the eradication of statelessness

In line with SDG 16.9 "*Provide legal identity for all*", and considering the nexus between statelessness and forced displacement, the EU should explicitly provide support to the prevention and reduction of statelessness in third countries. This should include, amongst others, the strengthening of civil registration mechanisms, and the establishment of procedures to provide nationality documentation to individuals with entitlement to it.

Recommendation 4: Ensure timely, adequate and needs-driven funding for emergency responses and protracted situations

The next MFF should ensure adequate financing for emergency responses and protracted situations, including flexible, un-earmarked, and multi-year funding wherever possible, in line with commitments made as part of the Grand Bargain. The next MFF should maintain a **separate instrument** for **EU humanitarian aid** to ensure the neutrality and independence of humanitarian action from security and geo-political interests. This would match

² See Target 10.7 "*facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.*"

the operational necessity of reaching people in need of life-saving assistance quickly. Welcoming the growing mobilisation of development assistance for forced displacement, UNHCR encourages the EU to develop policies and guidelines to maximize the European added value of the respective instruments while ensuring that **increased development assistance** does *not* lead to a **reduction in humanitarian funding** as long as humanitarian needs persist.

The allocation for the humanitarian aid budget line should **increase to a minimum 2 billion EUR per year** as opposed to the current 1 billion EUR annually. When the last MFF was designed in 2012, 62 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance as opposed to 164 million in 2017.³ EU spending for humanitarian aid in previous years has systematically reached more than 1.5 billion EUR while starting from a lower budget line. A lot of welcome efforts have been undertaken in order to mobilise more funds to answer growing humanitarian needs, using the Emergency Aid Reserve but also drawing from other EU instruments. However, striving for more efficiency, an increased allocation from the start would allow for better planning and more efficient administration of the EU's financial support during the year.⁴ Some form of standby support to countries facing large crises, for essential functions such as reception and registration, should be considered.

Recommendation 5: Ensure systematic, predictable and additional development funding

UNHCR recommends to translate the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) promise to leave no one behind into impactful financial instruments and budget lines. The EU should **ensure that the specific protection needs of refugees and the particular impact of forced displacement on host countries and communities are taken into due account**. Host communities that seek to strengthen policies and institutions for the resilience of local and forcibly displaced communities require significant, systematic and reliable contributions from donors like the EU to accompany their efforts, until solutions can be found. The **particularities of forced displacement require well-funded instruments** that improve shock responsiveness, foster host community leadership to enable protection, self-reliance and resilience, and promote evidence based interventions.

The EU's leadership should translate into systematic, predictable and flexible funding to help **manage the shock** caused by an inflow of forcibly displaced persons. Moreover the next MFF should allow the EU – the biggest provider in development aid globally - to step up its engagement in support of the forcibly displaced, host countries and host communities, and systematically reflect the impact of forced displacement situations in the design of its external actions. This should involve dedicated development resources, **over and above regular development programmes**, provided under favourable terms through both bilateral and multilateral channels, with direct benefits to host countries and communities, as well as to the forcibly displaced. Such resources should provide for crisis response, as well as for the longer-term by, for example, increasing country allocations through reserve funds. This would create more favourable policy outcomes and improve the protection and material conditions of the forcibly displaced in host countries. Further, the next MFF should also enable **systematic development action in favour of countries of origin** in addition to financing for peace building and state building. This would enable conditions for sustainable and voluntary return, where appropriate.

Recommendation 6: Track and showcase EU support

It is hard to evaluate how much EU aid is allocated to assist forcibly displaced and their hosts. A robust tracking system which monitors EU spending would help to showcase the EU's continued and possibly increased support to address forced displacement. With precise data in place the EU would be able to showcase its engagement as a reliable global actor to address forced displacement. It could thus send a strong signal of global responsibility-sharing to large refugee hosting countries, the key principle enshrined in the future global compact on refugees.

³ <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GHA-Report-2017-Executive-summary.pdf>

⁴ Voice "Post 2020 Multiannual Financial Framework. What EU humanitarian aid needs and why": <https://ngovoice.org/publications>

ADDRESSING ASYLUM AND PROTECTION NEEDS INSIDE THE EUROPEAN UNION

Recommendation 7: Invest in protection systems within the EU

As highlighted in the the 2018 [ECRE-UNHCR](#) report "Follow the money" on the use of the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), EU funding should seek to complement, not to substitute, national envelopes. This would ensure giving a European added value to EU financing, one of the core principle that should guide EU spending in the next MFF. EU funding should thus aim at investing in protection systems within the EU in a comprehensive manner, including investment in protection-sensitive border management, establishing reception capacity and common registration and identification systems, developing fair and efficient asylum procedures, establishing systems for unaccompanied and separated children, as well as ensuring better preparedness. As per the abovementioned report, UNHCR recommends that at least 20 per cent of the future AMIF be allocated and spent on asylum-related activities. To support the succesful integration of refugees and stateless persons in their host communities in the longer-term, UNHCR recommends that a minimum of 30 per cent of the future AMIF and other relevant structural instruments be allocated and spent on integration measures.

Recommendation 8: Foster greater solidarity and responsibility-sharing

UNHCR very much welcomes the important contributions that EU institutions and Member States have made to increase resettlement to the EU. Yet, in light of the global resettlement needs and the current decrease in resettlement spaces available globally, more support is needed. EU funding will therefore be key to support additional resettlement efforts as well as the development of complementary pathways of admission to the EU, including family reunification. More support to the latter would in particular address some of the drivers of onward movement. Solidarity and responsibility-sharing also need to be supported within the EU. In that context, UNHCR favourably considers the possibility of granting additional funding per person transferred under the corrective allocation mechanism of the future Dublin system.

Recommendation 9: Support the identification and protection of stateless migrants

There are over 400,000 stateless persons in the EU, including a sizable number of stateless migrants. Future funding for EU Member States needs to explicitly provide support to the identification and protection of stateless persons. This includes, amongst others, support to the establishment of procedures for the determination of statelessness and the inclusion of stateless persons as a beneficiary group in all EU funded integration and social cohesion programmes and projects.

Recommendation 10: Foster partnerships and support civil society actors

The partnership principle which is meant to foster consultations among all stakeholders is an important tool for ensuring a balanced and fair implementation of AMIF funds. It is thus recommended that the partnership principle be made mandatory at national and EU levels. In that context, taking into account the key role played by the civil society in upholding protection standards and principles, it is recommended that part of the MFF be earmarked for civil society actors. This would be in line with the whole-of-society approach promoted in the GCR.

UNHCR, April 2018