



## EU cooperation with Niger

Brussels, 13 December 2017

**Niger is a priority country for the EU and one which it cooperates closely with under the Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel and the New Migration Partnership Framework.**

### Complex situation

Niger faces many challenges: security, migration, environment, demography, development and the humanitarian situation. In 2016 it was second from bottom of the United Nations Human Development Index, despite having made progress in recent years in terms of economic growth and social development. The food security situation is structurally fragile because of poor harvests caused by drought and recurring floods (the result of climate change). Population growth continues to be a huge challenge for the government, with a growth rate of 3.9 % and a fertility rate of 7.6 births per woman.

The socio-economic and security situation in Niger has worsened considerably in recent years, particularly in 2017, mainly because of the growing criminal and terrorist threats and the ensuing humanitarian crises in the Lake Chad region and in areas bordering Mali and Libya. Around 260 000 displaced persons, refugees and returnees have fallen victim to this lack of security and remain heavily dependent on international aid, particularly humanitarian aid. The [G5 Sahel Joint Force](#), which is about to become operational, should help reduce these security threats.

Despite these vulnerabilities and challenges, significant progress has been made in recent years in the economic and development sectors. This has been possible thanks to the considerable efforts made by the government to undertake reforms under the 2013-2016 «Economic and Social Development Plan» (PDES), the latest version of which for the period 2017-2021 will be presented at the Round Table in Paris on 13 and 14 December. These reforms must be consolidated if the country is to continue on the path of development. The EU is supporting Niger in its efforts and will continue to do so.

### Cooperation between the EU and Niger

In line with its integrated approach, the EU is mobilising all available support instruments to strengthen the government's capacities in the areas of governance, security, the fight against irregular migration and trafficking, humanitarian operations and sustainable development in all its forms.

- EU financial support for development in Niger (National Indicative Programme) amounts to EUR 596 million under the **11th European Development Fund (EDF)** over the period 2014-2020. Seventy-five per cent of this funding is provided in the form of budget support, in order to foster and strengthen the State's capacities, particularly in the areas of justice, sound management of public finances, security, education and food security.
- Previously, under the **10th European Development Fund (2008-2013)**, Niger received a total of EUR 508 million, allocated to three areas: rural development and food security, regional integration and governance. Thirty-five per cent of this funding was provided in the form of budget support, with the aim of supporting the country's efforts to improve access to basic social services, protect vulnerable sections of the population and promote good governance and the rule of law.

### Examples of cooperation with Niger:

**Sector Reform Contract for food and nutrition security and sustainable agricultural development (SANAD)** EUR 243 million from 2016 to 2020

Food and nutrition security and sustainable agricultural development, which affect 80 % of the population and involve the supply of raw materials to build up a strong agri-food sector, are the primary tool for development and the eradication of poverty in the country. This budget support programme aims to boost the government's financial capacity to achieve sectoral policy objectives, strengthen governance and promote sectoral reforms and policies, and to meet the basic needs of the population through improved access to services in the areas of sustainable agriculture, and food and nutrition security.

For example, the programme will help increase access to drinking water to 65 % nationwide by 2020 and reduce by 1 % each year the prevalence of chronic malnutrition in children under 5 years of age.

## **Sector Reform Contract for Education, EUR 77 million from 2016 to 2019**

The sectoral budget support programme for education is designed to support the efforts of the government of Niger to improve equal access, quality and governance in education. One of the main reforms targeted is the reduction of inequalities in access to education, particularly at primary and secondary level. In addition to respecting the fundamental right to education, keeping girls at school is closely linked with reducing cases of early marriage and fertility, thus contributing to better control of population growth. The Education SRC also supports improved quality of learning at school and increased efficiency in the education system, particularly by fostering reforms in the areas of management of teachers and public finances.

This programme has helped to increase the net enrolment rate from 62.6 % in 2013 to 66.1 % in 2017 and to significantly boost the primary completion rate from 78.4 % in 2016 to 83 % in 2017.

## **The Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa**

In order to manage migration and displacement in Africa, the European Commission created an «Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa». The Trust Fund benefits a wide range of countries in Africa, especially those located along the main African migration routes to Europe. Niger is one of those countries.

Nine projects, worth a total of EUR 190 million, have already been approved for Niger under the Trust Fund. These projects are the EU's practical response to commitments undertaken as part of the Action Plan adopted at the Valletta Summit on 11 and 12 November 2015, in which Niger will play a highly pro-active and constructive role. Niger is currently the main beneficiary of the Trust Fund. The activities under the Emergency Trust Fund in Niger focus on protecting migrants and facilitating reintegration, strengthening the government's capacity to combat criminal networks and better manage its borders, as well as supporting host communities by creating economic alternatives for populations who live from activities related to irregular migration.

Niger also receives funding from regional instruments (Regional Indicative Programme for West Africa, intra-ACP programmes), thematic headings and other instruments, such as the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

One example of a migration project in Niger is the Response mechanism and resources for migrants programme (EUR 7 million), in addition to the EU - IOM Joint initiative for migrant protection and reintegration (EUR 15 million from 2016 to 2020). The project aims to support Niger's response to the complex migratory flows passing through its territory, for example by promoting economic and social development through circular migration. The aim is to help national and regional authorities improve their governance of migration through the mechanism. From May to mid-November 2017, the initiative enabled the voluntary return of 3 603 migrants from Niger, who received assistance on arrival. Almost 49 000 migrants have benefited from awareness-raising activities since April 2017.

### **For more information**

[Press Release](#)

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MEMO/17/5234

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