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P9_TA(2021)0411

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

European Parliament resolution of 7 October 2021 on the implementation report on the EU Trust Funds and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (2020/2045(INI))

(2022/C 132/08)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 208, 210, 214 and 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the general budgets of the European Union for the financial years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 18 November 2011 on the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) (COM(2011)0743),
- having regard to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, both adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2018,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 7 June 2016 on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration (COM(2016)0385),
- having regard to the Action Plan of the Valletta Summit of November 2015,
- having regard to the EU-Turkey statement of 18 March 2016,
- having regard to the new European Consensus on Development ‘Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future’ published on 30 June 2017,
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 30 April 2014 entitled ‘Tool-box — A rights-based approach, encompassing all human rights for EU development cooperation’ (SWD(2014)0152),

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

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- having regard to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid of 30 January 2008,
- having regard to the original constitutive agreements of the Bêkou EU Trust Fund (EUTF), the Madad EUTF, the Africa EUTF and the Colombia EUTF, and their revised constitutive agreements of December 2020,
- having regard to Commission Decision C(2015)9500 of 24 November 2015 on the coordination of the actions of the Union and of the Member States through a coordination mechanism — the Refugee Facility for Turkey ⁽⁴⁾, as amended by Commission Decisions C(2016)0855 of 10 February 2016 ⁽⁵⁾, C(2017)2293 of 18 April 2017 ⁽⁶⁾, C(2018)1500 of 14 March 2018 ⁽⁷⁾, and C(2018)4959 of 24 July 2018 ⁽⁸⁾,
- having regard to the Commission's Fourth Annual Report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey of 30 April 2020 (COM(2020)0162), as well as to its previous reports,
- having regard to the 7th Results Report on the Madad EUTF,
- having regard to the European Court of Auditors special reports entitled 'The Bêkou EU trust fund for the Central African Republic: a hopeful beginning despite some shortcomings' (No 11/2017); 'The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for money' (No 27/2018); and the 'European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: Flexible but lacking focus' (No 32/2018),
- having regard to the Commission's decisions to extend the EUTFs until December 2021 in line with Article 234 of the Financial Regulation, and to Parliament's positions on the draft extension decisions,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 April 2018 on the implementation of the EU external financing instruments: mid-term review 2017 and the future post-2020 architecture ⁽⁹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on the implementation of the Development Cooperation Instrument, the Humanitarian Aid Instrument and the European Development Fund ⁽¹⁰⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2016 on the EU Trust Fund for Africa: the implications for development and humanitarian aid ⁽¹¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 March 2021 on a new EU-Africa Strategy — a partnership for sustainable and inclusive development,
- having regard to its resolutions of 20 January 2021 on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy — annual report 2020 ⁽¹²⁾, of 18 May 2017 on the EU strategy on Syria ⁽¹³⁾, of 6 October 2016 on Syria ⁽¹⁴⁾, of 24 November 2016 on the situation in Syria ⁽¹⁵⁾, and of 6 July 2016 on the Council position on Draft amending budget No. 2/2016 of the European Union for the financial year 2016: Entering the surplus of the financial year 2015 ⁽¹⁶⁾,

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 407, 8.12.2015, p. 8.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 60, 16.2.2016, p. 3.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 122, 19.4.2017, p. 4.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 106, 21.3.2018, p. 4.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ C 278, 8.8.2018, p. 3.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 76.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 33.

⁽¹¹⁾ OJ C 204, 13.6.2018, p. 68.

⁽¹²⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0012.

⁽¹³⁾ OJ C 307, 30.8.2018, p. 117.

⁽¹⁴⁾ OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 44.

⁽¹⁵⁾ OJ C 224, 27.6.2018, p. 88.

⁽¹⁶⁾ OJ C 101, 16.3.2018, p. 179.

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- having regard to its resolutions of 13 March 2019 on the 2018 Commission Report on Turkey ⁽¹⁷⁾, of 12 December 2018 on the Council position on the second draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019 ⁽¹⁸⁾, and of 4 July 2018 on the Council position on Draft amending budget No. 3/2018 of the European Union for the financial year 2018, Section III — Commission: Extension of the Facility for refugees in Turkey ⁽¹⁹⁾,
 - having regard to Draft amending budget No. 5/2020 ⁽²⁰⁾ and the accompanying decision on Mobilisation of the Contingency Margin in 2020: continuation of humanitarian support to refugees in Turkey ⁽²¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2021 on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Turkey ⁽²²⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission's decisions in 2019 and 2020 to extend the Madad EUTF until 14 December 2021 in line with Article 234 of the Financial Regulation,
 - having regard to the commitments to addressing the Syrian crisis and supporting its people, made by the EU and its Member States at the London and Brussels conferences held between 2016 and 2021,
 - having regard to Commission's mid-term evaluation 2018 and regular results reporting on the Madad EUTF,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid ⁽²³⁾, the proposal of 14 June 2018 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe) 2021-2027 (COM(2018)0460), and the proposal of 14 June 2018 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA III) 2021-2027 (COM(2018)0465),
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure, as well as Article 1(1)(e) of, and Annex 3 to, the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 12 December 2002 on the procedure for granting authorisation to draw up own-initiative reports,
 - having regard to the joint deliberations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Development and the Committee on Budgets under Rule 58 of the Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and of the Committee on Budgetary Control,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Development and the Committee on Budgets (A9-0255/2021),
- A. whereas four EUTFs have been established since 2014 to respond to the need for flexible and quick instruments to provide a coherent and reinforced aid response to crises: the Békou EUTF, established on 15 July 2014, with the objective of supporting all aspects of the Central African Republic's exit from crisis and its reconstruction efforts; the Madad EUTF, a European Union Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis to allow for the pooling and tailoring of resources and response at a regional level, established on 15 December 2014; the Africa EUTF, a European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa, established on 12 November 2015; and the Colombia EUTF, established on 12 December 2016 to support the implementation of the peace agreement in the early recovery and stabilisation post-conflict;

⁽¹⁷⁾ OJ C 23, 21.1.2021, p. 58.

⁽¹⁸⁾ OJ C 388, 13.11.2020, p. 326.

⁽¹⁹⁾ OJ C 118, 8.4.2020, p. 264.

⁽²⁰⁾ Definitive adoption (EU, Euratom) 2020/1157 of Amending budget No 5 of the European Union for the financial year 2020 (OJ L 299, 11.09.2020, p. 1).

⁽²¹⁾ Decision (EU) 2020/1268 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2020 on the mobilisation of the Contingency Margin in 2020 to provide continued humanitarian support to refugees in Turkey (OJ L 298, 11.9.2020, p. 21).

⁽²²⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0243.

⁽²³⁾ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

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- B. whereas the revision of the Financial Regulation in 2018 introduced provisions strengthening, to a certain extent, Parliament's scrutiny powers when new EUTFs are established or the current ones are extended; whereas the provisions remain too limited to ensure full democratic scrutiny by Parliament as well as complete Parliamentary scrutiny as the budgetary authority, as enshrined in the treaties;
- C. whereas Parliament issued mainly positive opinions in 2020 on the requests to extend the EUTFs until the end of 2021, while expressing concerns about the lack of transparency over the implementation of projects, with specific regard to the ones related to border and migration management, and under the condition, in the case of the Africa EUTF, of providing mandatory guarantees on respect for fundamental human rights in all funded projects;
- D. whereas the establishment of both the EUTFs and the Facility for refugees in Turkey (FRT) have been justified by the need for a flexible, ad hoc and swift reaction not possible under the classical institutional framework and the limited resources and flexibility available in the EU budget; whereas the EU's new external financial framework (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) — Global Europe) should overcome the constraints that have led to the need to launch trust funds to respond in a more flexible and rapid manner to specific crises; whereas the extra-budgetary instruments such as the EUTFs, as well as extraordinary tools such as the FRT, jeopardise the principles of democratic accountability, transparency and sound financial management, undermining the role of the European Parliament and also the integrity and unity of the EU budget; whereas Parliament was not consulted on the establishment of the extra-budgetary instruments; whereas the European Development Fund (EDF) contributed to the Africa and Békou EUTFs, and therefore Parliament was not involved at all in setting-up of these two EUTFs; whereas Parliament's possible involvement was limited to an objection to the draft implementing decisions on the constitutive agreements on the Madad and Colombia EUTFs;
- E. whereas when setting up an EUTF, the Commission has to justify its added value, visibility, complementarity with other EU financing instrument and alignment with policy objectives, and whereas it is essential to guarantee continuous monitoring and evaluation of the use of funds to ensure that their effects are always in line with EU law, fundamental values and objectives;
- F. whereas, according to the Financial Regulation, the EUTFs should be subject to an annual external and independent audit and the Commission has the power to suspend the financing agreement if the partner country breaches an obligation relating to respect for human rights, democratic principles or the rule of law and in serious cases of corruption; whereas European Court of Auditors recommended in its special reports on the EUTFs that the Commission improve donor coordination (Békou), remove weaknesses in implementation, increase efficiency and focused actions (Africa) and deliver better value for money (FRT);
- G. whereas according to the Commission's estimations, there are substantial refugee-related humanitarian needs beyond those covered by the Facility for Refugees in Turkey;
- H. whereas Parliament, while acknowledging their value-added, has repeatedly voiced the need for enhanced parliamentary scrutiny of the EUTFs and the FRT and for stronger involvement in the preparation and negotiation of future EUTFs and of the extension of existing EUTFs and other financial instruments in the domain of EU external action; whereas Parliament has called on the Commission to improve its communication on the EUTFs and noted that regular, figure-based information on the implementation of the EUTFs is essential to allow Parliament to exercise its democratic oversight and scrutiny role;
- I. whereas the biggest share of contributions to the EUTFs now comes from the EU budget itself, while contributions from Member States represent a very limited share of their total budgets; whereas, the Member States' contributions to the FRT are not voluntary, but based on the GNI contribution key and are directly included in the Union budget as external assigned revenue pursuant to Article 21(2)(b) of the Financial Regulation; whereas in the case of the EUTFs, Member States' contributions are not integrated into the Union budget pursuant to Article 187(6) of the Financial Regulation;

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- J. whereas the EU-Turkey statement of March 2016 and the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement give special regard to the prevention of new sea or land routes for illegal migration, dismantling of smuggling networks, control of Turkey's borders and acceptance of returns, in a non-discriminatory manner;
- K. whereas the primary objective of the Union's development cooperation policy is the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty as enshrined in Article 208 TFEU; whereas the new European Consensus on Development remains the doctrinal framework for EU development policy, and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid reaffirms the fundamental principles of humanitarian aid; whereas the EU and its partners in the humanitarian field must be able to ensure assistance and protection based on needs and on respect for the principles of neutrality, impartiality, humanity and independence of humanitarian action; whereas funds from official development assistance (ODA) sources must be devoted to economic, human and social development, particularly to securing access to quality education, local resilience building, including related to climate change, and peacekeeping operations for delivering development and/or humanitarian assistance, with a particular focus on the development challenges identified in the Trust Fund decision;
- L. whereas the constitutive agreement on the EU Trust Fund for Africa clearly put border management projects in Libya within the scope of the mandate of the EUTF, as well as the regulation of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI); whereas since July 2017, almost EUR 90 million have been allocated through the Africa EUTF to train, equip and support the capacity of the Libyan coastguard and EUR 49 million have been allocated to address the conditions in which returnees are detained; whereas the constitutive agreement on the EUTF clearly states that the Trust Fund will finance activities that contribute to improving migration management in all its aspects in line with the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, including containing and preventing irregular migration and fighting against trafficking of human beings; whereas, nevertheless, there have been allegations of cases of human rights violations in the context of the activities of the Libyan coastguard;
- M. whereas in 2020, Parliament considered that in order to proceed with the extension of the EUTF for Africa, mandatory guarantees on respect for human rights should be provided in all projects that received funding, with particular attention to migration management and also ensuring that these guarantees be established in case of a need for a duly justified new trust fund in the future;
- N. whereas the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (Madad Trust Fund) has mobilised EUR 2,3 billion, including voluntary contributions from 21 EU Member States, Turkey and the United Kingdom; whereas its programmes focus on education, livelihoods, health, protection and water, benefiting refugees, internally displaced persons and local communities and supporting more than 7 million beneficiaries; whereas as the Syrian civil war became protracted, the Madad Trust Fund response evolved further along a humanitarian development nexus, with a greater focus on strengthening systems to support the host countries' efforts and capacities to respond to this protracted crisis, notably through the provision of public services in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon;
- O. whereas according to its evaluation, the Madad Trust Fund is comparatively faster for launching projects than the standard procedures under the European Neighbourhood Instrument and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance; whereas the Madad Trust Fund has also managed to achieve an economy of scale, with large-scale projects of an average volume of EUR 20 million and an average implementation period of around 30 months;
- P. whereas the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRT) differs from the EUTFs, mainly because it remains embedded within the Union budget;
- Q. whereas according to the Commission, the FRT is designed to coordinate existing EU financing instruments so they are mobilised in a consistent and joined-up manner to address the needs of refugees;

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I. General considerations

Budgetary aspects

1. Notes that, by 31 December 2020, the total pledges to all of the EUTFs amounted to EUR 7 691 million, with the EU budget contribution amounting to EUR 3 170 million, of which EUR 3 534 million originated from the European Development Fund (EDF), and with EUR 988 million originating from Member States and other donors' pledges; notes further that, by the same date, EUR 7 141 million had been contracted and EUR 4 869 million had been paid by the EUTFs; also notes that, by 31 December 2020, the implementation rate of commitment appropriations for all the EUTFs was 98 % (the EUTF Madad had committed over 95 %, the EUTF Békou 99 %, the EUTF Africa 99 % and the EUTF Colombia 94 % of the commitment appropriations available), while the overall implementation rate of payment appropriations was 63 % (with the EUTF Africa at 62 %, the EUTF Békou at 66 %, the EUTF Colombia at 52 % and the EUTF Madad at 64 %);
2. Recalls that the Turkey Facility is made up of two tranches of EUR 3 billion each; regrets the fact that, unlike in the first tranche 2016-2017, where the EU budget contributed EUR 1 billion and Member States EUR 2 billion, in the second tranche 2018-2019 the ratio of contributions was reversed, to the detriment of existing Union projects;
3. Recalls that while for the first tranche of the FRT, IPA II contributions represented 52,4 %, humanitarian aid 46,6 %, the Instrument contributing to Security and Peace 0,7 % and the Development Cooperation Instrument 0,3 %, for the second tranche, IPA II contributions represented 64,5 % and humanitarian aid 35,5 %;
4. Notes that by the end of 2020, 36,6 % of the FRT first tranche allocation had been implemented through direct management and 63,4 % through indirect management (of which over four fifths by international organisations); further notes that for the second tranche, direct management represented 32,1 % (100 % by the European Commission) and indirect management 67,9 % (with three quarters by international organisations);
5. Further notes that international organisations have been the biggest implementing actors of the EUTFs (36,8 %), ahead of the European Commission (35,7 %), Member States agencies (24,2 %) and public service bodies (3,4 %);

Parliament's involvement in the decision-making and results-monitoring frameworks and in reporting and/or evaluation

6. Notes that Committee Chairs and relevant Members have been granted observer status in meetings of the Strategic Boards of the Trust Funds and in the FRT Steering Committee; regrets that this status has not been formally reflected in the Constitutive Agreements of the Trust Funds; strongly urges that invitations to board meetings take into account Parliament's official calendar and that all relevant information and documents to be discussed at the board meetings be provided well ahead of the meetings in order to enable the active participation of Members and staff of the Secretariat;
7. Regrets the limited role of Parliament in the decision-making, supervision and scrutiny of the Union contributions to the EUTFs and reiterates that existing legal, regulatory and budgetary solutions should have been used to their full extent before creating and/or extending the EUTFs, which should remain a last resort instrument; recalls its earlier unanswered requests and reiterates that Parliament should be represented at the meetings of, and able to monitor the activities of, the Operational Committees, and calls on the Commission to provide in good time detailed information on the decisions taken in those Committees; believes that Parliament must make full use of its powers of scrutiny of implementation and budgetary control and ensure that EU funding decisions and related allocations comply with the Union's principles of legality and sound financial management, thus providing the EU action with democratic legitimacy and accountability;
8. Notes the Commission's efforts to closely monitor and evaluate interventions, and to generate knowledge about the activities of the EUTFs and of the FRT, through a dedicated set of reports; asks for these efforts to achieve greater transparency to be strengthened by publishing relevant data, including specific details of projects funded and results achieved vis-a-vis the stated objectives, on the web pages of the EUTFs and the FRT; stresses that the availability, level of details, completeness and factual consistency of such reports are essential for the support of Parliament as budgetary authority in order to adequately assess the implementation;

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9. Notes that information on the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs) was made available in the Annual Reports of 2019 and 2020 of the EUTF for Africa; regrets that this information is not openly available due to the low transparency of subcontracting; notes that, where possible, such information should be broken down at project level having regard to the duly justified requirements of confidentiality and security;

10. Regrets the late notice from the Commission on its intention to extend the duration of the EUTFs and the late evaluations of some of the Trust Funds, which did not allow Parliament to arrive at full and precise conclusions in a timely manner in the case of the Trust Fund for Africa, thus limiting democratic oversight and accountability;

11. Reiterates its insistence that the extensions of the EUTFs until December 2021 to which it has agreed must be mainly technical to allow for a smooth transition into the new MFF and efficient contracting and use of the funds already committed; highlights the Commission's assurances that the extensions sought to ensure a continued legal basis for payments of commitments made under the previous MFF 2014-2020, and that no new commitments to the EUTFs will be made under NDICI or IPA III;

12. Underlines that in its reports the Commission should illustrate the complementarity of different financial instruments dedicated to the areas covered by the EUTFs and the FRT, including the EU External Investment Plan, as well as generated added value;

II. *Assessment per EU Trust Fund / FRT*

Békou

13. Considers that the Békou 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;

14. Further refers to the conclusions of its Committee on Development's delegation to the Central African Republic in February 2018, which note that the Békou Trust Fund is visible and seems well perceived in the country, with projects adequately addressing needs transiting between rehabilitation, livelihood provision and longer-term development, at least at local level and on smaller scales;

15. Highlights the conclusions by the European Court of Auditors, published in its 2017 special report, that the Békou Trust Fund has had positive achievements overall and has attracted aid, but few additional donors, and that most of its projects have delivered their expected outputs and provided enhanced visibility to the EU; indicates, however, that the report recommended a better definition of the intervention scope, improved donor coordination, project selection procedures, monitoring and performance measurement, as well as optimisation of costs and increased transparency in the selection of implementing organisations; notes that in the Operational Committee Member States are represented by their own national development agencies, which are also selected as projects implementers, and is concerned that this could lead to a potential conflict of interests in the projects selection procedure of the Operational Committee;

16. Notes that due to the humanitarian crisis, poverty and the new security challenges ongoing in the CAR, further EU support will require well-targeted programmes and, where relevant, flexible EU funding under the NDICI-Global Europe to enhance humanitarian response, peace and security, democratisation and strengthening of democratic institutions and the respect for human rights in the CAR;

17. Considers that despite the intervention of the EU and other donors, the situation in the country remains unstable due to the emergence of new conflicts and severe food insecurity;

Madad

18. Considers that the Madad EUTF has proven its added value in response to the crisis and for the EU in terms of higher external visibility and clout, increased control, coordination and leverage of funds from various sources, as compared to national level or other international channels; notes that its spending was aligned with the legal bases or the Union instruments used and with their objectives; recalls, therefore, that projects funded under the Madad Trust Fund must promote and protect dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and promote social and economic inclusion, in particular of minorities and vulnerable groups; regrets that the conflict in Syria is still continuing, and stresses that the needs of the Syrian refugees, unable to return to their home country in the foreseeable future, and the needs of their host communities in terms of longer-term integration and employment, still require EU and international long-term assistance to secure capacity for longer-term integration and employment in a cohesive way with the host communities; points out that the conflict-prone areas in Syria do not permit long-term reconstruction to take place at present;

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19. Notes that the Mid-Term Strategic Evaluation report from October 2018 concluded that the Madad Trust Fund has been 'large and cost-effective, reaching a large number of beneficiaries at a comparatively low cost', and that it has 'allowed the EU to operate flexibly';
20. Welcomes the rapid and flexible reaction of the Trust Fund in support of partner countries and communities during the coronavirus outbreak, showing active engagement in the realignment and refocusing of activities, not only in the domain of health, but also in other areas, such as livelihoods, protection, education or social cohesion in Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Jordan;
21. Emphasises the importance of continuous support for refugees, internally displaced persons and vulnerable host communities, including in the wider region, affected by the continued conflict, by means of a mix of longer-term, predictable, fully transparent and rapidly deployable funding under instruments established for the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF) and potential contributions from the Member States as external assigned revenue, taking into account all financial instruments provided under the Financial Regulation;
22. Recalls the vulnerability of the Palestine refugee communities in Syria and the region, and calls for continuous support and for their inclusion in the EU's humanitarian plans and responses regarding the Syria crisis;

Africa

23. Notes that the Trust Fund for Africa was created as an emergency trust fund to help address the crises in three regions in Africa, with the aim of achieving long-term stability and development goals; considers that the EUTF for Africa represents a swift and flexible tool to help address common, global challenges, such as migration and forced displacement, the impact of climate change and economic crises; highlights that the unprecedented situation caused in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic required all necessary flexibility and rapidity; stresses, however, that flexibility must always be combined with full transparency and accountability; believes that there could be room for improvement, with more focused steered action across the three windows and support for the measuring and reporting of results;
24. Takes note that 78 projects contributed to greater economic and employment opportunities, 97 projects were undertaken to strengthen resilience, 75 projects were dedicated to migration management, and 75 projects contributed to improving governance and conflict prevention; notes with concern that, due to specific circumstances, migration management has become the focus of EU response in some projects; reiterates, however, that the original objectives of improving resilience and tackling the root causes of migration should be maintained;
25. Welcomes the fact that the EUTF for Africa has in some cases contributed to the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach, which was not possible with the EU financial instruments under the previous MFF; recalls that funding of the EUTF must be implemented and evaluated on the basis of ODA criteria and that all expenses falling outside this requirement have to be funded from different sources that are pooled in the Trust Fund, and condemns any use of ODA funds that contradicts development objectives; recalls that as a fundamental principle, humanitarian assistance must be independent;
26. Regrets the fact that as much as 37 % of the EUTF for Africa is allocated to measures intended to restrict and reduce migration, while less than 9 % is allocated to addressing the drivers of migration and forced displacement; notes that less than 1,5 % of the EUTF for Africa was allocated to regular migration channels; acknowledges that security is essential for the stability of African partner countries and that the EU must support partner countries in tackling the root causes of irregular migration flows, smuggling and human trafficking;
27. Notes the reports on continuing human rights violations taking place in Libya in the context of actions by the Libyan coast guard; stresses that many of the people rescued or intercepted by the coast guard are returned to arbitrary detention in horrendous conditions in Libya; underlines that the return of refugees to countries in which they are not safe is in violation of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; notes that in the context of the Emergency Transit Mechanism there are concerns about the respect for human rights in the implementation of projects; notes the failure to respect the principle of non-refoulement in Libya; recalls, however, that any intervention should ensure full protection of human lives, dignity and human rights; calls in this regard on the Commission and the Member States to review and conduct a specific risk assessment, in consultation with CSOs, of the cooperation activities with the competent authorities in maritime and border surveillance and management, funded under the EUTF for Africa, to ensure an objective assessment of the respect for human rights;

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28. Underlines the importance of cooperation and dialogue with local partners; hails the consultations and studies carried out to identify priority needs; strongly calls on the Commission to properly involve local authorities and CSOs in projects supported by the EUTF for Africa;

29. Notes that one of the key objectives of the EUTF for Africa, as determined in its Constitutive Agreement, is addressing the root causes of migration, in particular by promoting resilience, economic and equal opportunities, security and development and addressing human rights abuses; calls for greater emphasis on long-term development goals such as employment, education, food security and improving the living conditions of the local population;

30. Notes that Special report No 32/2018 of the European Court of Auditors pointed out various shortcomings, including the failure to apply EU public procurement law and opaque management, recommended an improved project selection procedure, higher implementation speed and a more systematic performance monitoring process, covering the full range of projects, and noted that due to the fund's broad scope, it often lacked efficiency due to an absence of adequate quantification of the needs and means through which measured impact could have been achieved; calls for simplification and better communication regarding applications for procurement procedures in order to facilitate access to EU funding for smaller and local NGOs;

31. Notes that the EUTF for Africa made a contribution to strengthening resilience and implementing the humanitarian-development nexus in fragile contexts; notes further that it also fostered cooperation between different stakeholders, and allowed contributions from non-EU donors, which in the post-Brexit context have acquired particular importance, and increased the visibility of the issue of migration and forced displacement and the EU's response to it; regrets at the same time that the monitoring of the implementation of this fund has not been adequate and requests that SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) objectives be included in the project logframes, and that quantifiable targets be established for evaluating projects;

32. Welcomes the proposal by the Commission to decommit funds originating from the EUTF for Africa that were initially allocated to Eritrea, in particular for the procurement for road renovation that used forced labour;

Colombia

33. Considers that the Trust Fund for Colombia has proven its value and represents, under the current circumstances, an important tool to support the implementation of the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); points out that the extension of the Colombia EUTF has further reaffirmed the EU's commitment and provided much-needed support to the Colombian peace process; recalls that the EUTF for Colombia is established under the Development Cooperation Instrument, and must be aligned to the primary objective of the development policy of the European Union: the 'Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty' and 'the Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries';

34. Underlines its important role in supporting Colombia in the area of comprehensive rural development and economic growth; calls for the implementation of the Colombian peace process to continue to prioritise long- and medium-term, fully transparent funding programmes and monitoring, and for these programmes to benefit from the appropriate democratic scrutiny and involvement of the European Parliament and appropriate, transparent and inclusive stakeholder consultations, notably of the local civil society;

35. Congratulates Colombia on its efforts, despite its own challenges with the implementation of the peace agreement, to provide support for over 1,7 million Venezuelan migrants who have fled to Colombia, in particular by granting them a 10-year temporary protection status;

36. Welcomes the involvement of the Republic of Chile as a donor in the Trust Fund; notes that the participation of regional partners is of high value added, and has increased both local recognition and the legitimisation of the EU's engagement and cooperation;

Facility for Refugees in Turkey

37. Points out that Turkey hosts the largest refugee population in the world, with almost 4 million registered refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan; recalls the important role played by the FRT in welcoming refugees from Syria; calls for a thorough human rights impact assessment of the EU-Turkey Statement and underlines the importance of both parties'

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compliance with fundamental rights as part of its implementation; takes the view that the EU should continue to give the necessary support to Syrian and other refugees and host communities in Turkey, ensuring that the Turkish Government is not directly involved in the management and allocation of funds, which should primarily be given directly to the refugees and host communities and should be managed by organisations that guarantee accountability and transparency;

38. Considers that the EU FRT has proven its value as an innovative pooling tool and important coordinating mechanism for assisting Turkey in swiftly responding to the immediate humanitarian and development needs of refugees and their host communities, and stresses the need to ensure sustainability of these activities; notes therefore that the majority of projects needed to be extended to achieve the expected outcome; expresses its support to Turkish civil society and recalls the laudable efforts played by international organisations in implementing these projects; underlines the added value generated by involving local organisations, experts and NGOs, as well as those from across Member States, in the implementation of the FRT;

39. Welcomes the success of the first tranche of the FRT, in particular the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) — the biggest humanitarian project managed by the Commission; welcomes the progress of the second tranche, which is facilitating a gradual shift from humanitarian to development assistance;

40. Acknowledges the role played by FRT in providing some 1,8 million refugees with basic needs support, 668 900 refugee children with educational support, and millions of refugees with healthcare and protection services; stresses, however, that Special report No 27/2018 of the European Court of Auditors indicated inconsistency in the financing of health and education activities, with a parallel use of different management structures to fund similar projects; furthermore, the report highlighted that greater value could have been achieved in cash-assistance projects and called on the Commission to improve the programming for municipal infrastructure and socio-economic support, enable the operating environment for NGOs and improve the reporting on the Facility; notes in particular the impact of COVID-19 on the refugees and points out that the FRT was established despite the existence of serious concerns about the human rights situation of refugees in Turkey from the perspective of international asylum law; recalls that in 2020 the Commission requested the mobilisation of an additional EUR 481,6 million under the EU Budget Contingency Margin, which goes beyond the initially planned allocation for the FRT, in order to finance the activities under the Emergency Social Safety Net programme and the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education programme;

41. Reiterates its deep regret that Parliament was not formally consulted or asked to give its approval to the creation or extension of this Facility and was only involved as one arm of the budgetary authority, thereby undermining the democratic accountability of the FRT; insists that it should not be confronted with this situation again;

42. Underlines that the European Court of Auditors Special report No 27/2018 ⁽²⁴⁾ raises questions on the efficiency of the humanitarian projects financed by the Facility, since they did not consistently and comprehensively assess the reasonableness of the budgeted costs; notes that the report also raises concerns about the fact that it is not possible to monitor all the humanitarian projects during the audit; in this respect, stresses that the refusal by the Turkish authorities to grant access to beneficiary data for the two cash-assistance projects could raise questions as regards the soundness of financial management under the Facility, particularly taking into account Turkey's rapid backsliding on the rule of law and fundamental rights; recalls the need for scrutiny of the funds implemented by the Turkish Government and the local authorities; reiterates that the funds have to be exclusively used for accommodating all physical and psychological needs of refugees, including housing, food, education and guaranteeing a decent standard of living; calls on the Commission to improve monitoring and obtain the data on beneficiaries of all FRT programmes and projects; stresses that in order to achieve full accountability and to avoid double funding, the Commission should make the resources available on the basis of targets achieved by implementing partners on the ground and after the implementation assessment has been carried out in accordance with the Financial Regulation rules; calls, therefore, on the Commission to ensure that the objectives and the implementation of the FRT are consistent with the EU's general principles, policies and objectives, including democracy, the rule of law and human rights, and expresses its concern over the degradation of these principles in Turkey;

⁽²⁴⁾ Special report No 27/2018 of the European Court of Auditors, 'The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for money', p. 6 and p. 40.

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43. Stresses the importance of transition from humanitarian relief to development cooperation, and calls on the Commission to develop and implement a transition strategy, focused on helping to create livelihood opportunities for refugees so as to improve their self-reliance and social inclusion in their host communities; recalls the EU's long-term objective of a gradual takeover of EU-funded activities by the Turkish authorities in full respect of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights; calls on all parties involved in the upcoming Multilateral Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean to address this in a comprehensive way, along with humanitarian and development issues;

44. Reiterates its request that Turkey respect the principle of non-refoulement, in particular on the Syrian border, ensuring that the human rights of refugees and their status as guaranteed by the 1951 Refugee Convention are fully respected, and that it does not instrumentalise the migratory flows and use them as a source of blackmail against the EU for political purposes; expects Turkey to implement in full and in a non-discriminatory manner the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 and the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement; urges the Commission to ensure close monitoring of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, including in relation to the human rights situation of asylum seekers and migrants returned to Turkey as part of the EU-Turkey Statement, and to report back to Parliament thereon; calls on the Turkish authorities to grant the UNHCR full access to the removal centres at the Turkish-Syrian border to be able to monitor the respect for the principle of non-refoulement; stresses that the financial support to Turkey in the management of refugee flows must respect full budgetary transparency, as well as unrestricted involvement of civil society organisations; calls on the Commission to call upon the Turkish authorities to improve the working environment for international NGOs; calls on the Commission to build upon its experience in special third-party verification systems to strengthen the oversight of spending;

45. Calls on Turkey to refrain from keeping refugees in detention centres with the purpose of making them sign voluntary return forms, and to guarantee their access to health care services regardless of their place of registration within the country;

46. Notes that the FRT supports only registered refugees; expresses its concerns that many refugees have been left without assistance since registration was made difficult in some provinces and cities;

47. Welcomes the Council's invitation to the Commission to present a proposal to the Council for the continuation of financing for Syrian refugees in Turkey, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon and other parts of the region;

III. *Future outlook and recommendations*

48. Underlines the necessity of better addressing the funding needs in situations of protracted crisis and with a view to the coordination and transition between humanitarian relief, reconstruction and development in a flexible and interconnected manner, in a way that is in line with international development policy targets, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Union's development policy principles, such as supporting poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities, and in the event of humanitarian intervention, fully respecting the humanitarian assistance principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, with full protection of human lives, dignity and human rights; insists on the need for efficiency and effectiveness of the EU assistance, so that it has genuine effects on the ground;

49. Stresses the need to take on board the lessons learned in the establishment, management and implementation of the Trust Funds and the FRT in order to apply them to the new generation of external financial instruments, as well as to enhance synergies and coherence of the EU external assistance and parliamentary scrutiny; urges the Commission to present the final comprehensive review on the implementation of the EUTFs, evaluating its alignment with the EU's development, human rights and humanitarian objectives; insists further that, should the need for any new EUTF or ad hoc instrument arise in the future, the contribution mechanism from the Union budget must be clearly defined and negotiated from the outset with the full involvement of Parliament; believes also that the impact and visibility of EU external assistance should be further increased, highlighting the EU's and its Member States' role as the biggest donors of global development financing;

50. Calls on the Commission to ensure a transparent impact assessment, carried out by independent EU bodies and experts, on the impact of EU-funded projects on the human rights of migrants and refugees, as well as on the wider population in the country concerned; calls for the establishment of an effective and independent monitoring mechanism to fully monitor and evaluate the final destination of these funds and protocols for action in the event of violations of fundamental rights; deems it necessary to fully involve regional and local authorities and civil society actors in their design

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and implementation; calls on the Commission and Member States to establish a complete and clear overview of the funds used to finance cooperation with third countries in the field of migration management across all financial instruments, and their implementation; underlines the importance of sharing the audit data with the EU financial scrutiny framework, including the ECA, OLAF and EPPO;

51. Points out the need to better address challenges related to intra-African migration, which makes up almost 90 % of migration flows in Africa, in close cooperation with the African Union and in line with its Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action 2018-2030; in the long run, insists, nevertheless, on the need for an approach that avoids creating dependencies on external intervention; in this respect, insists on empowerment through education and the importance of quality education in creating stronger support for development cooperation;

52. Notes that gender equality and social inclusion are two of the main spending targets of the NDICI-Global Europe programming; reiterates the EU's commitment to empowering women and girls, and calls on the Commission to integrate gender equality, along with resilience building and climate change adaptation, into planning and implementation of the Trust Funds and the FRT; recommends that a gender-sensitive analysis and consideration of the involvement of women in designing supported projects should be regularly carried out in the implementation of projects under both the EU Trust Funds and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey;

53. Calls on the Commission 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;

54. While noting that the Financial Regulation allows for the creation of Trust Funds for external action, reiterates further Parliament's long-standing insistence that external assistance be financed in full from the Union 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 monitoring prerogatives, and of the principles of the EU's budgetary unity, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and sound budgetary management; highlights that the adoption of extraordinary tools increases the complexity of financing governance and puts financial pressure on existing foreign policy instruments, thereby possibly affecting their efficiency; believes that EU Trust Funds should only be used to react to a sudden major crisis and to situations where multiple donor responses need to be coordinated and where the external policy objective cannot be fully achieved by the existing external financing instruments, and on the condition that they abide by the principle of sound financial management, and that the Union trust fund does not duplicate other existing funding channels or similar instruments without providing any additionality, and that the objectives of the trust fund are aligned with the objectives of the Union instrument or budgetary item from which it is funded; calls on the Commission to guarantee more efficient communication on the ground, highlighting the EU's role as the biggest donor of global development financing;

55. Points out that pooling resources from the EDF, the Union budget and other donors in trust funds should not alter the ability of existing EU policies and programmes to pursue their original objectives, such as the eradication of poverty and the promotion of fundamental rights;

56. Recalls that EUTFs and the FRT should be seen as exceptional or truly emergency-led instruments whose added value and effects on the ground should be very well justified and carefully monitored; expects the Commission to fully make use of the possibilities afforded by the programme-based approach under the geographic pillar of the NDICI-Global Europe and IPA III — which may no longer be used to finance pre-accession assistance to Turkey except for support to Turkish civil society organisations through the financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights —, complemented by global thematic programming, rapid response funding and the large unprogrammed reserve under the NDICI-Global Europe;

57. Recalls that the funds from the Emerging challenges and priorities cushion under the NDICI-Global Europe are expected to top up funding from the geographic and thematic programmes and rapid response actions; underlines that the Commission has committed to discussing the use of these funds as part of the geopolitical dialogue with Parliament, and to providing detailed information before their mobilisation, while fully taking into consideration Parliament's remarks on the nature, objectives and financial amounts envisaged;

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58. Welcomes the new EU external financing instrument, NDICI-Global Europe, as it envisages increasing possibilities within the EU budget to respond to new emergencies; is confident that the NDICI-Global Europe will allow for more efficient allocation of resources, as well as sufficient flexibility and responsiveness, while learning from past experiences and assessments of the existing Trust Funds by the NDICI-Global Europe Instrument;

59. Underlines that NDICI-Global Europe should be used to its full potential, and where necessary improved, while the recourse to extraordinary financing tools should be limited to unforeseen emergencies, thereby safeguarding the unity and democratic accountability of the Union budget; underlines in this respect that an ordinary decision-making governance framework confers more legitimacy to the EU's external action, both within the EU and in the destination countries;

60. Requests that the funding of any successor to the current FRT not be done at the expense of the newly adopted financing instruments, especially IPA III and NDICI-Global Europe, including its emerging challenges and priorities cushion, as the FRT successor does not respond to a genuinely new challenge or crisis; strongly advocates the funding of any such initiative through fresh appropriations, reinforced, if necessary, by contributions from the Member States; reiterates that Parliament must be fully and from the outset involved in the discussions on the FRT successor, including its funding and governance structures, which must reflect the origins of the funding and the role of the budgetary authority;

61. In the event of greater needs in the MFF 2021-2027, advocates that the first and main solution to be explored should be through the co-legislated instruments, namely by increasing the NDICI-Global Europe envelope through a revision of the MFF and the NDICI-Global Europe regulations, or, as a secondary option, and under the condition that Parliament is fully involved in the decision-making process and endowed with the proper scrutiny power, a strengthening of the relevant NDICI-Global Europe budget lines with contributions in the form of external assigned revenue; expects, in this respect, that the upcoming revision of the Financial Regulation will ensure appropriate involvement of the budgetary authority in the governance of external assigned revenue; stresses that, should a need for a duly justified new Trust Fund nevertheless arise, following the outbreak of a major crisis, a sudden change in international relations requiring a major EU financial response, or the need to pool resources with third countries, which would not be feasible under the co-legislated instruments, Parliament must be fully involved from the very outset; considers, in this respect, that the Financial Regulation should be revised to guarantee the appropriate role of Parliament in the setting up and scrutiny of any new trust fund, including in the drawing up of the constitutive agreement and the mobilisation of the Union's contribution, the implementation, continuation and possible liquidation;

62. Calls on the Commission to prioritise the nexus approach in the implementation of the NDICI-Global Europe, and calls for the cooperation between EU humanitarian and development actors, notably in post-crisis settings and in protracted crises, to be increased in order to better adapt to local needs and deliver more efficient results;

63. Notes that the possibilities of mainstreaming migration policy in EU external policy are significantly broadened by the inclusion of migration in the thematic, geographical and rapid response component of NDICI; notes with concern, however, that through the 'rapid response' component, cooperation with third countries on migration management can be funded without the need for the Commission to publish any programming documents or consult civil society actors, and without the involvement of Parliament, including in the framework of the 'Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint', which lacks mechanisms to assess the possible adverse impact of such interventions; insists in this regard on the need to ensure that the 2021-2027 MFF is accompanied by a robust human rights framework for the identification, implementation and monitoring of future migration cooperation programmes;

64. Notes that NDICI-Global Europe envisages mid-term and final evaluations and detailed annual reporting by the Commission to Parliament and the Council on the ongoing activities, results delivered, effectiveness, and progress towards the thematic targets and objectives of the Regulation; calls on the Commission to develop and implement a precise methodology for tracking the 10 % expenditure earmarked for migration and forced displacement to effectively ensure proper transparency and accountability regarding this expenditure, as required by the Regulation;

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65. Welcomes the close-to-ground decision-making procedure and adaptation to the local realities and the possibility to implement cross-border and multi-year funded projects in the EUTFs and the FRT, as these are of high added value; calls for such aspects to be mainstreamed in the future programming exercises linked to budgetary instruments for EU external policy;

66. Acknowledges that cooperation with representatives of local communities and stakeholders, including local government bodies, civil society organisations, social partners and religious leaders, in settings affected by conflict is crucial to foster reconciliation, dialogue and peace; emphasises that local churches and faith-based organisations play an active role in development cooperation and in delivering humanitarian assistance to the people most in need, and calls on the Commission to engage with them, notably regarding the delivery of direct support to hard-to-reach communities in developing countries;

67. Stresses the importance of allocating a substantial share of future EU funding in the field of migration to civil society groups in third countries for providing assistance and for the protection and monitoring of the rights of migrants, and of ensuring that a significant part of EU funding is earmarked for the improvement of human rights, international protection and the future perspective of refugees;

68. Calls on the Commission to adapt the programming methods to the local realities and emerging local challenges and to support local ownership in the implementation of the new EU development instruments; calls further on the Commission to carry out a needs assessment and adapt the EU's response to local needs;

69. Calls on the Commission to examine the possibilities of involving third country partners in joint initiatives and financing to address common challenges such as migration, forced displacement, climate change, empowerment of women and protection of vulnerable groups;

70. Calls on the Commission to prioritise investments in education and job creation to provide possibilities for people in partner countries to engage in local income-generating activities;

71. Expects the Commission to address ongoing or future crises and potential reconstruction needs in a more efficient and targeted manner by using the existing ways and other means possible under the current Financial Regulation in close and coordinated cooperation with Member States and other EU institutions as part of the 'Team Europe' approach, and with like-minded international partners and donors;

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72. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and to the Council.
