

## UNHCR Updated Recommendations to the European Union Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027<sup>1</sup>

August 2020

The European Union (EU) is a key partner when it comes to addressing asylum and forced displacement challenges and assisting forcibly displaced people and their hosts abroad and at home. At the first Global Refugee Forum (2019), the EU strongly committed to further engage in forced displacement and asylum, as a reliable partner for protection and solutions.

With more than [79 million people](#) forced to flee - 1% of the world's population - continued, increased and predictable EU engagement on their behalf is needed now more than ever. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, appeals to the EU to translate its commitment to a reliable partnership on forced displacement and asylum into sound instruments and sufficient resources in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF 2021-2027), both within and outside its borders.

In line with its founding Treaty and its Charter on Fundamental Rights, the EU needs to have adequate mechanisms in place as well as appropriate resources at hand to ensure people in need of international protection can access its territory, benefit from asylum in Europe, and contribute to societies through well-funded avenues for integration. Regarding its investments outside of the EU, with more predictable funding in place, the EU can meet growing humanitarian and development needs, save lives, help to ease pressure on large refugee-hosting countries, and provide forcibly displaced people with a future, wherever they are.

More particularly, and taking into account the [21 July 2020 Agreement](#) reached at the Special Meeting of the European Council, UNHCR presents the following updated Recommendations:

### I. **Migration and Border Management (Budget Heading 4)**<sup>2</sup>

- UNHCR welcomes the substantial increased funding of this budget heading and insists that **maintaining the efficiency and integrity of asylum systems within the EU** is key. Substantive investment in these areas is much needed and will be beneficial in the long run. In accordance with Article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, **solidarity and responsibility-sharing** should be driving principles of all related policy developments as well as related expenditures.
- More EU funding will be key to support **resettlement** efforts as well as the development of complementary pathways of admission to the EU and **family reunification**. More support to the latter would help address some of the drivers of onward movement.
- Within the budget of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), **addressing protection needs**, including of the most vulnerable, **and investing in integration** inside the EU in a comprehensive manner should remain a strong financial priority of the EU. In this context, UNHCR recommends that at least **20% of the future Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund be spent on asylum**, including through dedicated resources to increase resettlement in the EU, and **30% on integration measures**.

<sup>1</sup> [UNHCR Recommendations to EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027: Addressing forced displacement effectively](#), April 2018

<sup>2</sup> [UNHCR's comments to the EU proposal for a Regulation establishing the Asylum and Migration Fund \(2021-2027\)](#), February 2019

- The **Partnership Principle** should remain a strong and efficient consultation tool with civil society for planning, implementing and monitoring the use of funds. Relatedly, a minimum of **earmarking of EU funds to civil society as well as local and regional actors** is needed to ensure support for the key role these front-line actors are playing.
- UNHCR recommends that **Budget Heading 4 funding in non-EU countries**, whether by the European Commission directly or by EU Member States, **is clearly and strictly limited in size and scope**, to avoid diverting needed resources to other priority areas usually cared for by external affairs funding. Such spending should be accompanied by appropriate safeguards to ensure overall **EU Policy Coherence for Development** is implemented and monitored in practice.

## II. Security and Defence (Budget Heading 5)

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The use of the Internal Security Fund to finance actions dedicated to “migration management in relation to illegal migration and human trafficking”, within the EU and even more for outside the EU, should be strongly monitored, ensuring effective investment in **protection-sensitive border management** projects. The principle of Policy Coherence for Development should also prevail under Heading 5 migration investment in non-EU countries.

## III. Neighbourhood & the World (Budget Heading 6)

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With the number of people forced to flee having doubled in the course of the last ten years, an increased **EU Humanitarian Budget** is essential to address growing needs, save lives, provide for basic services of people in need, and to manage the transition to development cooperation effectively. The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating and compounding existing fragilities, further justifying the need for increased EU humanitarian support worldwide.

- UNHCR appeals to the EU Institutions to follow the Commission’s proposal of a substantially increased humanitarian budget that is fit for purpose.

UNHCR welcomes the EU’s intention to safeguard 10% of its future **Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)** for migration.

- UNHCR appeals to the EU to ensure that a certain percentage or amount of NDCI funds for migration is **reserved for forced displacement**. Dedicated resources for forced displacement and its distinct root causes would give major clout to the EU’s commitment to multilateralism to address this global challenge. It would also provide for the much-needed **predictability and additionality** for refugee hosting countries and communities as they progress towards the SDGs. By providing development investments for forced displacement over and above standard bilateral development assistance, the EU would also continue on its good path to couple significant funding with **political leverage**, so refugees and their hosts can thrive rather than survive.
- With regard to **mixed migration and asylum** governance and management, UNHCR calls for a **holistic and right-based approach**, including systematic respect for the principle of non-refoulement. It also calls for the NDCI envelope to be used to advance and provide refugees with more opportunities / complementary pathways to the EU.
- UNHCR welcomes the proposals for continued and strong funding allocated to **Pre-Accession Assistance** in the Western Balkans, that should assist in strengthening the capacity of asylum systems in the region. Likewise, UNHCR agrees with the strong support the EU continues to provide to **Turkey**, the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world, with more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees.