



Press Release

The Sixth Meeting of the AU-EU-UN Task Force at the Working Level

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 24 January 2018- The AU-EU-UN Task Force on the Stranded Migrants situation in Libya on held its Second meeting of the year in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the Sixth since the establishment of the Task Force during the AU-EU Summit in Abidjan in November 2017. The meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson, H.E. Madam Amira Elfadil, and Commissioner for Social Affairs. It was attended by the EU Ambassador to the AU and the IOM representative to the AU.

The Commissioner of Social Affairs applauded the efforts of the Libyan authorities in facilitating the voluntary evacuations, particularly in expediting the issuance of landing rights permits and facilitating AU and other stakeholders' missions to Libya. The Commissioner also appreciated the swift response of some AU Member States to the Commission's call for them to get involved in return of their stranded nationals in Libya, and further pledged the Commission's support to Member States in the reintegration efforts. She also pointed out that the Member States would need support to develop comprehensive and context-tailored reintegration programs for their returning citizens. Beyond the immediate urgency to return stranded migrants to their respective countries of origin, there is equally critical need for comprehensive migration management and community development initiatives in support of the Libyan authorities in the medium to longer term.

The meeting was briefed by a recent AU mission to Tunisia and by the Committee of Intelligence & Security Services in Africa (CISSA) on their mission to Libya, as well as by the IOM Chief of Mission to Ethiopia and Representative to the AU, UNECA and IGAD on progress in the ongoing voluntary humanitarian returns from Libya, recent data on the intentions of migrant populations in Libya and longer term migration management challenges that Libya faces. The Task Force was informed that a total of

20,525 migrants had been returned in the course of 2017, of which 11,901 returns were undertaken after the Abidjan Summit. This figure also captures about 4,519 migrants who were assisted by their respective countries of origin to return home.

Appreciating efforts made thus far on returns, the meeting noted with concern that there was need for the Task Force to deploy and concentrate its efforts on dismantling the detention centers model and decriminalization of African migrants in Libya in collaboration with the Libyan Government, and at the same time step up support to the Libyan authorities on a range of capacity building needs. The need for more work with concerned Member States, the EU and other partners to enhance bilateral, regional and continental mechanisms to dismantle organized criminal networks that may be operating in Libya and neighboring countries, thereby addressing root causes of irregular migration, was also noted.

On the issue of reintegration, the Task Force emphasized the importance of Member States' involvement in the return programs and the need for continued close cooperation with the Permanent Representative Committee and concerned stakeholders. In this regard, the Task Force further noted with optimism the fundamental role that the proposed protocol on Free Movement of Persons in Africa to be adopted at the upcoming AU 2018 Summit, would play in creating more opportunities for Africans within Africa.

Finally, the meeting welcomed the EU proposal for a Tripartite Task Force mission to Libya in February 2018, as well as the proposal to establish a technical arm of the Task Force to be led by AU Commission's Migration Unit. The technical arm will engage all concerned stakeholders and feed any relevant information to the Task Force.

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