



**HAL**  
open science

## Migration Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa

Thibaut Jaulin, H el ene Thiollet

► **To cite this version:**

| Thibaut Jaulin, H el ene Thiollet. Migration Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa. 2021. hal-03832189

**HAL Id: hal-03832189**

**<https://hal.science/hal-03832189>**

Submitted on 27 Oct 2022

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destin ee au d ep ot et  a la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publi es ou non,  emanant des  tablissements d'enseignement et de recherche fran ais ou  trangers, des laboratoires publics ou priv es.

# POLICYBRIEF

## Migration Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa

Thibaut JAULIN, Research fellow, Sciences Po Bordeaux  
Hélène THIOLETT, Researcher, CNRS-CERI, Sciences Po.<sup>1</sup>

During the 2015 ‘migration crisis’, the Horn of Africa became the target of the European Union’s (EU) external migration policy. This brief explores the historical roots of this recent development in migration and asylum diplomacy. It shows that migration gradually became both a security and a protection concern for those foreign powers and international organizations involved in military and humanitarian operations in the sub-region in the 1990s and 2000s. It moreover examines the ways in which the expansion of EU external migration policy into the Horn since the 2015 ‘migration crisis’ has led to the mainstreaming of migration and asylum containment into foreign aid objectives.

**31 October 2021**

### Introduction

The Greater Horn of Africa has long been home to some of the world’s largest numbers of refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>2</sup> Every country in this region is simultaneously a country of origin, of transit and of destination for various populations on the move. As is the case in other regions of the global South, conflict-induced forced migration in the Greater Horn of Africa has been closely linked to seasonal and long-term migration for labour, education

---

<sup>1</sup> This policy brief has been reviewed by Nicole Hirt (GIGA) and Shoshana Fine (Liège-Université de Lille) as part of MAGYC’s internal review process.

<sup>2</sup> The ‘Greater Horn of Africa’ is commonly understood to comprise countries located in the Horn of Africa itself – Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti – as well as Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda, sometimes also including key adjacent maritime areas – the southern Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. For the purpose of this brief, we discuss migration diplomacy in the Greater Horn of Africa region (thereafter the Horn).

and family purposes, which has been driven by urbanization, cross-border flows, and nomadism.

Such movements have occurred in political and institutional contexts that have been both consistently welcoming and extremely volatile. Since the end of the Cold War, the Horn has been a key site of military and humanitarian interventions involving the United States (US) and Western powers, along with international (IOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seeking to address the crises, both systemic and contingent, that have plagued this region, from state failure to war and famines. While such interventions have almost never been primarily designed to manage mobility as such, migration and asylum have become part and parcel of their mission prerogatives and mandates.

This brief explores the ways in which **since the 1990s, international intervention and foreign aid have become an instrument of migration and asylum governance in the Horn.**<sup>3</sup> It examines the manner in which foreign and international actors have gradually established discursive and operational linkages between mobility, security and development in order to channel their funding and operations into the containment of migrants and refugees in countries of origin, transit and primary asylum. This brief argues that such containment objectives have become integral to international interventions and foreign aid in the Horn, thus complementing, and sometimes even superseding, the broader, long-standing goals of peace, state-building and socio-economic development.

The first section shows that migration gradually became both a security and a protection concern for those foreign powers and international organizations involved in military and humanitarian operations in the sub-region during the 1990s and 2000s. The second section argues that the expansion of EU external migration policy into the Horn since the 2015 ‘migration crisis’ has led to the mainstreaming of migration containment into foreign aid objectives.

## Evidence and Analysis

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, several conflicts and crises in the Horn generated massive refugee flows within the region. The following figures represent the five main refugee-sending countries in the Horn from 1961 to 2018 (figure 1) and the five main host countries in the Horn from 1990 to 2019 (figure 2). First, they demonstrate that refugees from the Horn remain mostly in the region and constitute a very sizable proportion of refugees worldwide, regardless of the period under consideration. These figures, moreover, show that the size of the refugee population remained consistently high throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. After a relative drop in the early 2000s, the number of refugees surged again in the late 2000s and in the 2010s. These variations are related to new crises and conflicts, but they also result from the cumulative effects of protracted crises.

---

<sup>3</sup> This brief does not engage in the scholarly debate on the failures of liberal interventionism, as exemplified by the case of Somalia. See John Prendergast and Colin Thomas-Jensen, ‘Blowing the Horn’, *Foreign Affairs* 86: 2, March-April 2007, pp. 59–74, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20032284>; Matthew Jamison, ‘Humanitarian intervention since 1990 and “liberal interventionism”’, in Brendan Simms and D. J. B. Trim, eds., *Humanitarian intervention: a history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 365–380; Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, eds., *Learning from Somalia: the lessons of armed humanitarian intervention* (Boulder CO; Oxford: Westview Press, 1997).

Figure 1. Refugees from the Horn: five main countries

of origin 1960-2019.<sup>4</sup>

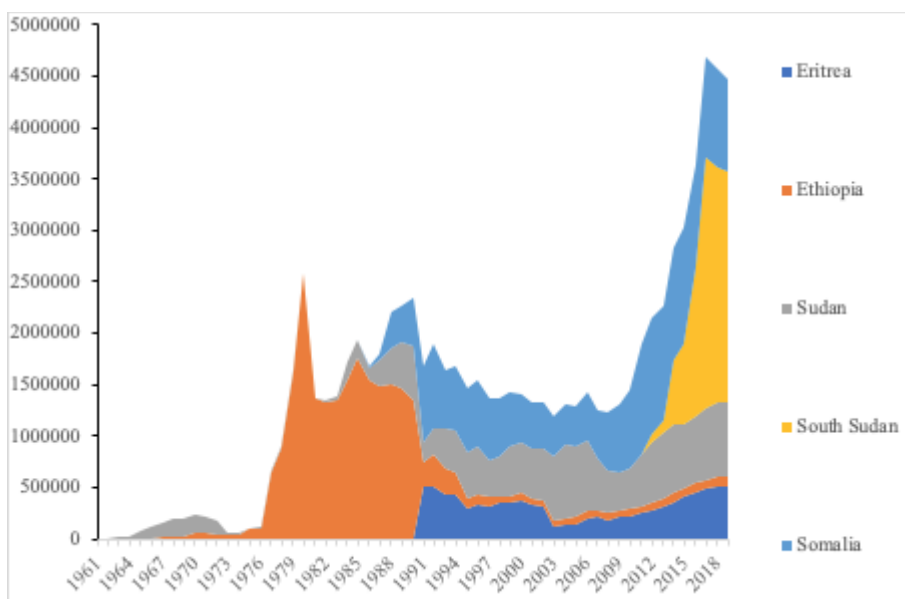
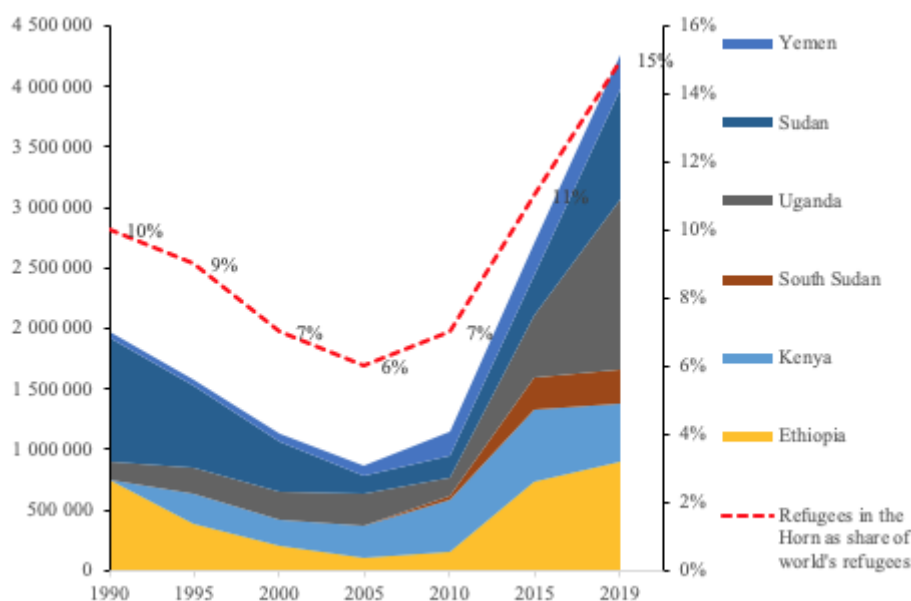


Figure 2. Refugees in the Horn: five main countries of asylum 1990-2020.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Official statistics usually do not differentiate between Ethiopian and Eritrean asylum seekers prior to the independence of Eritrea in 1991. Source: World Bank, 'Refugee population by country or territory of origin', World Development Indicators, World Bank, 2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.REFG.OR>.

<sup>5</sup> Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019.

## International interventions and migration control

During the second half of the twentieth century, there were not many barriers to cross-border mobility. Exile and emigration were largely seen as a resource to mitigate the negative impact of economic, environmental and political crises.<sup>6</sup> Migrants and forcibly displaced persons would leave their homes to reach the nearest safe haven in their country or to travel to the closest neighbouring state, and even farther afield, to the Middle East and the rest of the African continent. Governments in the Horn generally adopted open-door policies, with little distinction made between the various groups of people on the move. These governments' political commitment to the principle of *non-refoulement* regarding the forcibly displaced was de facto extended to non-registered refugees or non-persecuted migrants. People on the move were hardly ever stopped at the border, where little to no formal screening was conducted. Moreover, migrants and refugees were usually allowed to settle in rural or urban areas, under the control of local authorities and according to the constraints of land use regulations. They were often given access to the (limited) public services (e.g. schools, healthcare facilities) available in these areas.

However, such relatively free cross-border mobility did not take place in a vacuum in terms of asylum and migration policies, and the implementation of welcoming policies at the local and national level was largely dependent on international donor support, channelled through IOs and humanitarian organizations. Host countries in the Horn, usually working in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), defined both formal and informal requirements for displaced persons to be entitled to the right of asylum. Some states, such as Sudan, developed fairly sophisticated asylum policies,<sup>7</sup> and 41 member states of the Organization of African Unity signed the 1969 Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, which was initially signed by.

From the 1990s onwards, foreign governments became key players in migration and asylum governance in the Horn. While military operations did take place in this region during the Cold War, they were not concerned with population movements as such, and the issue of mobility was not part of these missions' mandate. Until the 1990s, United Nations (UN) organizations and international NGOs would deliver humanitarian assistance every time a displacement crisis occurred. By contrast, the 1990s signalled the beginning of a new kind of interventions, one that encompassed migration and asylum policies. These interventions combined military and humanitarian operations and they involved foreign powers. This change in the nature of international interventions was, moreover, accompanied by a concomitant increase in the number and size of foreign military operations after 2001.<sup>8</sup>

After Siyad Barre was overthrown and the Somali civil war broke out, a series of international interventions led to the formation and consolidation of a military-humanitarian-development complex.<sup>9</sup> These interventions came with extensive military support and they pursued a combination of political, humanitarian and development objectives.<sup>10</sup> Following a series of local

---

<sup>6</sup> W. Neil Adger et al., 'Migration, remittances, livelihood trajectories, and social resilience', *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment* 31: 4, June 2002, pp. 358–366, <https://doi.org/10.1579/0044-7447-31.4.358>.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Nobel, *Refugee law in the Sudan: with the refugee conventions and the regulation of Asylum Act of 1974* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1982).

<sup>8</sup> Neil Melvin, *The foreign military presence in the Horn of Africa region* (Solna: SIPRI, 2019), <https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/sipribp1904.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> These international interventions were the United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) from April to December 1992, Unified Task Force (UNITAF) from 5 December 1992 to 4 May 1993 (involving a US initiative code-named Operation Restore Hope), and UNOSOM II from March 1993 to March 1995.

<sup>10</sup> In 1994, the Clinton administration launched the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI) in order to compensate for the 1993 debacle of Operation Restore Hope. The GHAI was placed under the direct supervision of the President and the head of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The GHAI sought to reshape crisis management and development in the Horn by joining up disaster bureau teams, which were connected to US military operations, and development offices, which had been independent until then. The GHAI

attacks in the late 1990s and early 2000s as well as the start of the US-led ‘global war on terror’ after 9/11,<sup>11</sup> the Greater Horn of Africa region became a priority for the Bush administration. An integrated military command of the Horn of Africa was established,<sup>12</sup> and military-humanitarian-development inter-agency cooperation, along with local cooperation with regional powers such as Ethiopia, was declared to be of paramount importance.

Such events and processes led to the growing militarization of humanitarian and development aid and the increasing involvement of Western militaries in civil affairs through stabilization operations aimed at policing local communities.<sup>13</sup> Mobility came to be seen as an important dimension of the issues at the heart of the military-humanitarian-development complex, which had, indeed, been designed as a coordinated and integrated response to legal and humanitarian concerns regarding refugees (offering legal protection and providing assistance) and to security challenges (preventing and countering terrorist activities). For instance, the money transfer networks used by migrants to send remittances were accused of financing terrorism, and the fight against piracy led to the criminalization of informal means of mobility, which, rather paradoxically, created the conditions enabling smugglers to exercise a monopoly on population movements.<sup>14</sup> All in all, humanitarian assistance in Somalia, Sudan and Kenya, jointly delivered by Western militaries and IOs, went hand in hand with mobility control, as migration was increasingly framed as a threat, including by African states such as Kenya.<sup>15</sup>

During this period, IOs and other international actors in the Horn were confronted with recurring crises and the resulting long-term displacement of people, all of which was underpinned by complex social, political and economic processes.<sup>16</sup> Although both the UNHCR and national governments sought to implement large-scale ‘voluntary repatriation’ programs, forcibly displaced persons across the region were neither ready nor willing, it seemed, to move back permanently to the ‘homeland’, especially when the latter remained beset by endemic and continuing violence, political instability, and economic insecurity.<sup>17</sup> Living conditions worsened in refugee-hosting regions,<sup>18</sup> and anti-immigrant sentiment arose in some areas.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the

---

became the overarching umbrella for the network of US agencies and programs in the Horn.

<sup>11</sup> These attacks were the 1998 bombing of US embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) by Al-Qaeda, the 2000 bombing of the *USS Cole* in Aden (Yemen), and the 2002 attacks on the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel and an Israeli charter plane in Mombasa (Kenya).

<sup>12</sup> Camp Lemonnier (United States Naval Expeditionary Base), the first and only permanent US military base in Africa and formerly a garrison for the French Foreign Legion, was established in Djibouti in 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Jan Bachmann, ‘Policing Africa: the US military and visions of crafting “good order”’, *Security Dialogue* 45: 2, April 2014, pp. 119–136, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614521267>.

<sup>14</sup> Currin Singh and Arjun Singh Bedi, ‘War on piracy: the conflation of Somali piracy with terrorism in discourse, tactic, and law’, *Security Dialogue* 47: 5, October 2016, pp. 440–458, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010616665275>.

<sup>15</sup> James Milner, ‘A history of asylum in Kenya and Tanzania: understanding the drivers of domestic refugee policy’, *Monde(s)* 15, 2019, pp. 69–92, <https://doi.org/10.3917/mond1.191.0069>.

<sup>16</sup> Such crises were the 1998–2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Houthi rebellion in Yemen starting in 2005, post-electoral violence in Kenya in 2007, the partition of Sudan in 2011, etc.

<sup>17</sup> For example, the end of the Eritrea–Ethiopia war and the independence of Eritrea notwithstanding, most Eritrean refugees in Sudan refused to repatriate after the UNHCR announced in 2002 that the ‘ceased circumstances’ cessation clauses would apply to Eritrean refugees, who were thus no longer entitled to international protection. Around 300,000 ‘former Eritrean refugees’, in UNHCR parlance, remained in or returned to Sudan, and therefore the agency had no other choice but to continue to provide protection and assistance. See Hélène Thiollet, ‘Wad Sharifey, Kishm el-Girbâ, Asotriba... Métamorphoses d’un réseau régional de douze camps de réfugiés érythréens dans l’Est du Soudan (1962–2013)’, in Michel Agier, ed., *Un monde de camps* (Paris: La Découverte, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (thereafter UNHCR), ‘Malnutrition in Kenyan Refugee Camps’, UNHCR, 2007, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2007/7/468a3e3e6/kenya-malnutrition-levels-refugee-camps-cause-alarm.html>.

<sup>19</sup> In Kenya, for instance, the integration of refugees into local society became more difficult in the mid-1990s as a new influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees, mostly from Somalia, arrived.

notion of a protracted refugee situation was coined in 2004 to describe the predicament of refugees in the Horn.

Inter-governmental and non-governmental humanitarian agencies relied on mega camps, seen as easier to manage by the UNHCR. For example, between 1997 and 1999, all of the eight small camps that existed in Kenya in the coastal area of Mombasa, near Nairobi, and in the North were closed, and the remaining refugee population was relocated to the Dadaab and Kakuma camps.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, in eastern Sudan, the UNHCR developed and carried out an ambitious policy of camp closure and camp consolidation.<sup>21</sup> Although African borders remained open, refugees were strongly encouraged to settle in camps in order to benefit from humanitarian aid. Camps were meant to be neutral spaces where refugees could be temporarily accommodated, with little prospect of integration into society and with no avenue for political engagement with local communities and governing bodies.

The UNHCR's strategy was, moreover, to gradually transfer responsibility for the management of refugees and displaced persons to local authorities. In Kenya, for instance, the Refugees Act, which came into force in 2007 and was complemented by the Refugees Regulations in 2009, established the Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA), meant to take over Refugee Status Determination operations, which had been processed by the UNHCR up until then.<sup>22</sup> Foreign actors, claiming that they were promoting the empowerment of African governments and societies, wanted to ensure that local communities and host countries also benefited from the humanitarian assistance that they provided to refugees. There was a flurry of initiatives to address the long-term settlement of refugees by involving local host communities as joint beneficiaries of development and capacity-building projects,<sup>23</sup> as aid and humanitarian agencies sought to challenge the lingering perception of refugees as a 'burden'.<sup>24</sup> The Refugee Aid and Development approach, 'based on achieving self-reliance for refugees, while simultaneously addressing the burden of refugees on developing host countries',<sup>25</sup> had originally been devised in the 1980s, but it really gained traction in the 2000s and thus became a cornerstone of UNHCR strategies and programs in the Horn, such as the Self-Reliance Strategy program designed by the Government of Uganda and the UNHCR Kampala Branch Office.<sup>26</sup>

It was also in the 2000s that the notion of 'mixed migration' gained salience and was proposed as a response to the challenges that complex migration dynamics – people on the move for a variety of reasons in times of crisis – posed to international protection.<sup>27</sup> In February 2006, António Guterres, then High Commissioner (UNHCR), gave a speech to the European

---

<sup>20</sup> Madeline Garlick et al., *Building on the foundation: formative evaluation of the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) transition process in Kenya*, PDES/2015/01 (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, April 2015), <https://www.unhcr.org/5551f3c49.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Thiollet, 'Wad Sharifey, Kishm el-Girbâ, Asotriba'.

<sup>22</sup> Refugee Status Determination (RSD) continued to be processed through UNHCR offices until 2014, when the DRA assumed a small share of RSD operations, in accordance with the UNHCR's plan to fully transfer RSD capacity and responsibility to the government of Kenya. See Garlick et al., 'Building on the foundation'.

<sup>23</sup> Lahra Smith et al., 'Local integration and shared resource management in protracted refugee camps: findings from a study in the Horn of Africa', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34: 1, March 2021, pp. 787–805, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez010>.

<sup>24</sup> Tom Kuhlman, *Burden or boon?: a study of Eritrean refugees in the Sudan* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1990); Merle Kreibbaum, 'Their suffering, our burden? How Congolese refugees affect the Ugandan population', *World Development* 78, February 2016, pp. 262–287, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.10.019>.

<sup>25</sup> Sarah Meyer, *The 'refugee aid and development' approach in Uganda: empowerment and self-reliance of refugees in practice* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, October 2006), p. 2, <https://www.unhcr.org/4538eb172.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> Meyer, *The 'refugee aid and development' approach in Uganda*.

<sup>27</sup> Johannes van der Klaauw, 'Refugee rights in times of mixed migration: evolving status and protection issues', *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28: 4, 2009, pp. 59–86, <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdq003>; Nicholas Van Hear, *Mixed migration: policy challenges* (Oxford: The Migration Observatory, 2011).

Parliament, in which, drawing on the example of migrants and refugees smuggled across the Gulf of Aden and the Mediterranean to support his argument, he declared that a change of paradigm had occurred, in that migration was now characterized by mixed motives for moving as well as by mixed flows of irregular migrants, refugees, and trafficked people.<sup>28</sup> The notion of mixed migration was developed into an ad hoc framework of action, the 10-Point Action Plan, as a result of which new programs were designed and implemented across the Horn, including on both sides of the Gulf of Aden, and new organizations, such as the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, were established.<sup>29</sup> With the creation of the Global Protection Cluster under the aegis of the UNHCR, the landscape of international organizations changed and new power configurations emerged. A competition arose between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UNHCR: both organizations assumed prominent roles in migration governance, but they pursued markedly different agendas. While the UNHCR led the Cluster with a clear protection-oriented agenda, IOM developed a mandate geared towards mobility containment and strongly influenced by Western donors' agendas.<sup>30</sup> More recently, the expansion of EU external migration policy into the Horn of Africa since the 2015 'migration crisis' has led to the mainstreaming of the EU objective of migration containment into the mandates and activities of humanitarian and development organizations.

### Mainstreaming migration containment: European policies in the Horn

The EU's external migration policy, which some scholars have characterized as externalization,<sup>31</sup> seeks to transfer European legal norms, policies and practices to non-EU states in order to shift the responsibility for controlling migration flows and managing refugee populations to states of origin, primary asylum and transit. Externalization aims to contain migration outflows in countries of origin, primary asylum and transit, to facilitate return and secondary flows to 'safe third countries',<sup>32</sup> and to institutionalize the procedures for the return of irregular migrants in Western states to sending or transit countries.<sup>33</sup> To achieve its objective of outsourcing migration control and asylum management to third countries, the EU has relied on conditionality,<sup>34</sup> issue linkage as a negotiating tool, divide-and-rule tactics, and the role of

---

<sup>28</sup> António Guterres, 'Statement by Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to the European Parliament', Brussels, 21 February 2006, <https://www.unhcr.org/admin/hcspeeches/43fb121d4/statement-mr-antonio-guterres-united-nations-high-commissioner-refugees.html>.

<sup>29</sup> See UNHCR, 'The 10-Point Plan in Action', <https://www.unhcr.org/the-10-point-plan-in-action.html>; *Refugee protection and mixed migration: the 10-point plan in action* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, June 2009), <https://www.unhcr.org/4a855cd52e.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Antoine Pécoud, 'What do we know about the International Organization for Migration?', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44: 10, 2018, pp. 1621–1638, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1354028>.

<sup>31</sup> Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig define externalization as 'the attempt to transfer the EU's rules and policies (*acquis communautaire*) to third countries and international organizations': 'EU rules beyond EU borders: theorizing external governance in European politics', *Journal of European Public Policy* 16: 6, 2009, p. 791, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760903087696>.

<sup>32</sup> Sandra Lavenex, *Safe third countries: extending the EU asylum and immigration policies to central and eastern Europe* (Budapest; New York NY: Central European University Press, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Jean-Pierre Cassarino, 'Informalising readmission agreements in the EU neighbourhood', *The International Spectator* 42: 2, 2007, pp. 179–196, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932720701406365>.

<sup>34</sup> Sarah Collinson, 'Visa requirements, carrier sanctions, "safe third countries" and "readmission": the development of an asylum "buffer zone" in Europe', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21: 1, 1996, pp. 76–90, <https://doi.org/10.2307/622926>.



IOs, especially the UNHCR and IOM, as intermediaries,<sup>35</sup> as country case studies in Morocco and Turkey have shown.<sup>36</sup>

Initially concerned with countries in eastern and central Europe, the EU's external migration policy has gradually expanded in scope to include southern European islands, North and West Africa since the Rabat Process started in 2006, and more recently, the Near East, the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa.<sup>37</sup> Although the EU began to develop migration-related cooperation with countries of the Horn as early as the 2000s,<sup>38</sup> such cooperation only really gained momentum in 2014 and 2015, partly due to the belief that large numbers of asylum seekers and irregular migrants from the Horn were heading for Europe, in particular Eritreans travelling through Libya to reach Italy. Contrary to this perception, however, FRONTEX records of illegal border crossings show that, except for a limited increase in Eritrean asylum seekers between 2013 and 2015, migrants and asylum seekers from the Horn represented only a very small percentage of the total number of undocumented people crossing into Europe in 2015.<sup>39</sup>

The Khartoum Process was spearheaded by the Italian government, then holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union, and was launched in November 2014. Unlike the Rabat Process, which initially focused on migration and development, this new regional dialogue 'amongst the countries along the migration route between the Horn of Africa and Europe' was, and remains, devoted to combating migrant smuggling and human trafficking, and thus to disrupting (irregular) migration flows to Europe.<sup>40</sup> In November 2015, at the Valletta Summit on Migration, the EU announced the creation of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa). Targeting three regions – North Africa, the Sahel/Lake Chad, and the Horn of Africa – and 26 countries, the EUTF for Africa received an initial endowment of €1.8 billion in 2015 and, by 2020, it was worth some €5 billion, out of which €1.8 billion were allocated to the Horn of Africa.<sup>41</sup>

However, both the Khartoum Process and the EUTF for Africa were widely, and promptly, criticized for transferring the responsibility for managing migration and asylum to regimes known to be directly responsible for refugee flows and involved in trafficking. Indeed, thanks to EU cooperation, repressive security apparatuses could indirectly have access to extra resources and gain international legitimacy. For instance, although the EUTF for Africa does not funnel money to states and governments as such, the regime of Omar al-Bashir in Sudan indirectly benefited from EUTF for Africa funding under the Better Migration Management program as early as 2015, that is two years before the US lifted economic sanctions on

---

<sup>35</sup> Philippe M. Frowd, 'Developmental borderwork and the International Organization for Migration', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44: 10, 2018, pp. 1656–1672, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1354046>; Martin Geiger and Antoine Pécoud, eds., *The International Organization for Migration: the new 'UN migration agency' in critical perspective* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

<sup>36</sup> Nora El Qadim, 'Postcolonial challenges to migration control: French–Moroccan cooperation practices on forced returns', *Security Dialogue* 45: 3, June 2014, pp. 242–261, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0967010614533139>; Shoshana Fine, *Borders and mobility in Turkey: governing souls and states* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

<sup>37</sup> Michael Collyer, 'Geopolitics as a migration governance strategy: European Union bilateral relations with southern Mediterranean countries', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42: 4, 2016, pp. 606–624, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2015.1106111>.

<sup>38</sup> EU cooperation with Tanzania began in the early 2000s. The European Commission launched the East Africa Migration Routes Initiative in 2007, and the EU-Horn of Africa Strategic Framework in 2011.

<sup>39</sup> FRONTEX, 'Detection of illegal border-crossings download (updated monthly)', <https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-map/>.

<sup>40</sup> See 'Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Khartoum Process', Rome, 28 November 2014, <https://www.khartoumprocess.net/resources/library/download/file?fid=20.60>.

<sup>41</sup> See European Commission, *Factsheet EUTF for Africa* (Brussels: European Commission, 2020), [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/factsheet\\_eutf-for-africa\\_january\\_2021\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/factsheet_eutf-for-africa_january_2021_0.pdf).

Sudan.<sup>42</sup> In 2016, the European Parliament raised concerns that Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary group directly involved in the war in Darfur, purportedly fought illegal migration on behalf of the EU.<sup>43</sup> EU cooperation with the regime of Omar al-Bashir continued nonetheless until the 2018 revolution.

As well as increasing the bargaining power of authoritarian states, and thus reshaping migration diplomacy in the region,<sup>44</sup> the Khartoum Process and the EUTF for Africa have served to extend, deepen and routinize the rationales and practices of migration and asylum containment, beyond cases of emergency intervention per se. As a result of the creation of the EUTF for Africa, together with the adoption of the Migration Partnership Framework in 2016,<sup>45</sup> all European development projects in the targeted regions were brought in line with EU external migration policy. Funding for the EUTF for Africa was, for the most part, reallocated from the European Development Fund (EDF), the main Official Development Assistance (ODA) framework for EU development cooperation in the countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). Whereas migration and asylum were seldom, and only marginally, mentioned in early EDF framework documents,<sup>46</sup> the EUTF for Africa proposes to earmark ODA money to address the ‘root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa’.<sup>47</sup> EUTF for Africa projects are directly proposed and designed by EU member states’ embassies and EU delegations, working in conjunction with partner governments in the region.

<sup>42</sup> The Better Migration Management (BMM) program was the first major multi-country project launched under the EUTF for Africa in 2016. Coordinated by the German development agency (GIZ), it aims to develop national legislation, improve migration management, and promote access to justice and protection for smuggled migrants and human trafficking victims. Its budget was €46 million – the EUTF for Africa and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) contributing €40 million and €6 million respectively – for phase I (2015–2019) and €35 million (€30 million from the EUTF for Africa and €5 million from the BMZ) for phase II (2019–2022), the latter including Egypt, Libya and Tunisia in regional activities, in addition to the initial recipient countries from the Horn. See European Commission, ‘Better Migration Management Programme’, [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/horn-africa/regional/better-migration-management-programme\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/horn-africa/regional/better-migration-management-programme_en); The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (thereafter EUTF for Africa), *Action fiche for the implementation of the Horn of Africa Window*, T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-09 (Brussels: European Commission, December 2018), [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/t05-eutf-hoa-reg-09\\_-\\_better\\_migration\\_management\\_incl.\\_2\\_addenda.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/t05-eutf-hoa-reg-09_-_better_migration_management_incl._2_addenda.pdf); EUTF for Africa, *Better Migration Management programme phase II*, T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-78 (Brussels: European Commission, n.d.), [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/t05-eutf-hoa-reg-78\\_-\\_bmm\\_ii\\_ochhpwq.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/t05-eutf-hoa-reg-78_-_bmm_ii_ochhpwq.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Such concerns arose as a result of a statement by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) Commander that his troops were patrolling the border with Egypt and Libya and, as such, fighting illegal migration on behalf of the EU. See European Parliament, ‘European Parliament resolution of 6 October 2016 on Sudan (2016/2911(RSP))’, 6 October 2016, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4e04fc78-738e-11e8-9483-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>. A year later, the vice-chair of the European Parliament’s subcommittee for human rights called for a thorough EU investigation of the BMM program. See Arthur Neslen, ‘EU urged to end cooperation with Sudan after refugees whipped and deported’, *The Guardian*, 27 February 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/feb/27/eu-urged-to-end-cooperation-with-sudan-after-refugees-whipped-and-deported>.

<sup>44</sup> Fiona B. Adamson and Gerasimos Tsourapas, ‘Migration Diplomacy in World Politics’, *International Studies Perspectives* 20: 2, May 2019, pp. 113–128, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/eky015>.

<sup>45</sup> Elizabeth Collett and Aliyyah Ahad, *EU migration partnerships: a work in progress* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, December 2017), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/TCM-EUMigrationPartnerships-FINAL.pdf>; Matthieu Tardis, *European Union partnerships with African countries on migration: a common issue with conflicting interests* (Paris: IFRI, March 2018), [https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tardis\\_eu\\_partnerships\\_african\\_countries\\_migration\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tardis_eu_partnerships_african_countries_migration_2018.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> The seventh and eighth EDF (1990–2000), based on the fourth renegotiation (Lomé IV) of the Lomé Convention (first signed in 1975), include non-binding recommendations regarding migrant and refugee rights. Following the Cotonou Agreement (2000), which extended ACP-EU development cooperation and paved the way for the ninth (2000–2007) and tenth (2008–2013) EDF, there were more references to migration and asylum. See EDF archives: European Commission, ‘EU and EDF annual accounts’, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/eu-budget/eu-budget-news-events-and-publications/documents/european-development-fund\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/eu-budget/eu-budget-news-events-and-publications/documents/european-development-fund_en).

<sup>47</sup> European Council, ‘Valletta Summit on migration, 11-12 November 2015’, 11 November 2015, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/11/11-12/>. On development aid and migration containment, see Oliver Bakewell, ‘“Keeping them in their place”: the ambivalent relationship between development and migration in Africa’, *Third World Quarterly* 29: 7, 2008, pp. 1341–1358, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590802386492>.

## Minutes of EUTF for Africa Strategic Board meetings

reveal that the amount of funds allocated to a particular country is sometimes determined by the number of its nationals crossing the Mediterranean and, moreover, that funding of development-oriented projects is contingent on the outcome of negotiations over readmission agreements.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, countries that actively cooperate with the EU on migration issues can expect to have access to larger cooperation funds and to be offered visa and travel facilitation agreements as well as labour migration programs. Finally, the assessment of a EUTF for Africa project's performance also depends on its contribution to migration management and the reduction of irregular flows, even if the project in question, focusing on livelihood opportunities or resilience-building for instance, is not actually concerned with migration governance as such.

Ethiopia, for instance, was among the first recipient countries of the EUTF for Africa as well as one of the six priority countries targeted by the Migration Partnership Framework. Discussions between the government of Ethiopia and EU representatives about funding were linked to the negotiation of readmission procedures. Although it feared that the country would be turned into an asylum-processing centre, the Ethiopian government signed a readmission arrangement with the EU in December 2017<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, negotiations between Ethiopia and international donors, including the EU, led to the adoption of the Ethiopia Job Compact Sector Reform and Performance Contract (Ethiopian Job Compact) in 2016, co-financed by the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, and the EUTF for Africa. The Compact aimed to create 100,000 new jobs, of which 30 per cent would be allocated to refugees, through a package of \$500 million in concessional financing to support Ethiopia's industrialization strategy.<sup>50</sup> Like the Jordan Job Compact, the Ethiopian Job Compact illustrates the recent shift in policy discourse on refugees from humanitarian assistance to development aid, with greater emphasis now placed on projects promoting refugee employment in order to reduce reliance on foreign aid and facilitate refugee inclusion in host societies.<sup>51</sup> Although in January 2019, the Ethiopian government passed a law granting refugees the right to work and live outside refugee camps, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Tigray crisis have made it impossible to fully assess the Ethiopian Job Compact.

The EUTF for Africa has also taken over the funding of refugee programs, with a view to extending the benefits of humanitarian and development assistance to host communities and addressing the issue of long-term settlement and refugee integration into local economies and societies. In 2016, for instance, the government of Turkana County in Kenya proposed that the area of Kalobeyei be used as a site to establish a settlement for refugees from South Sudan, thus relieving the demographic pressure on the Kakuma refugee camp, which at the time was hosting a population of 183,000 compared to its capacity of 70,000.<sup>52</sup> The UNHCR and the DRA drew on international aid, including €15 million from the EUTF for Africa for the period 2017–2019, to accommodate up to 8,000 refugees alongside 23,600 locals in a 'hybrid settlement', as part of the Comprehensive Refugee and Host Community Plan in Turkana

---

<sup>48</sup> Tuuli Raty and Raphael Shilhav, *The EU Trust Fund for Africa: trapped between aid policy and migration politics* (Oxford: Oxfam GB, January 2020), pp. 3, 8–10, <https://doi.org/10.21201/2020.5532>.

<sup>49</sup> Tuuli Raty and Raphael Shilhav, *The EU Trust Fund for Africa: trapped between aid policy and migration politics* (Oxford: Oxfam GB, January 2020), pp. 14–15, <https://doi.org/10.21201/2020.5532>.

<sup>50</sup> EUTF for Africa, *Action document for the implementation of the Horn of Africa Window*, T05-EUTF-HOA-ET-60 (Brussels: European Commission, n.d.), [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/t05-eutf-hoa-et-60\\_-\\_ethiopia\\_job\\_compact\\_incl.\\_addenda.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/t05-eutf-hoa-et-60_-_ethiopia_job_compact_incl._addenda.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> On the Jordan Compact, see Christiane Fröhlich and André Bank, *Forced migration governance in Jordan and Lebanon: lessons from two EU Compacts*, MAGYC, Policy Brief D4.8, April 2021, <https://www.magyc.uliege.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/D4.8-v1April2021.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> UNHCR, 'UNHCR diagnostic tool for alternatives to camps: 2016 global results', 2016, <https://www.unhcr.org/5731adcc9>.

West.<sup>53</sup> This area-based approach, in effect replacing the population- or refugee-focused approach, developed out of a study, which concluded ‘that the existence of the Kakuma refugee camp had had a net positive impact on the County’s economy over the years, and that a policy of inclusion (rather than separated camps) would be even more beneficial for the host population’.<sup>54</sup>

Another case in point is Uganda, which has often been portrayed as a role model for refugee integration through land distribution and, indeed, serves as a pilot country for the UNHCR-led Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.<sup>55</sup> However, the management of the influx of South Sudanese refugees to Uganda since 2013 exemplifies the limitations and potential flaws of such a strategy. The government of Uganda used land distribution to refugees as a development policy in dry regions, where (non-farmer) refugees were sent to cultivate small plots of infertile land. This policy gave rise to tensions between refugees and locals in a context of scarce resources, thus hindering the dynamics of social and political integration, which, conversely, were relatively successful in urban settings.

Finally, it should be noted that, although it is supposed to be devoted to migration management, the EUTF for Africa also serves as a legitimizing tool for long-term state-building intervention. In Somalia, the EUTF for Africa acts as an umbrella program for all of the EU’s sustained state-building activities, designed to bolster the legitimacy and capacity of the fragile federal government. For instance, the Somalia State and Resilience Building Contract, adopted in 2018, merely mentions migration and protracted displacement as one of many circumstantial aspects of the country’s troubled context that provides justification for funding routine governmental activities.<sup>56</sup> In Eritrea, cooperation on migration issues is tenuous, and the EUTF for Africa has to navigate the limitations imposed by the authorities on any program to improve governance, including highly technical projects on national statistics, the judicial system or economic governance, or conversely, to deftly avoid the instrumentalization of such programs by the regime.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS), *Financing for solutions to displacement: Kenya country study* (Nairobi: Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat, April 2021), <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/87550>.

<sup>54</sup> UNHCR, *Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan In Turkana West* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018), p. ix, <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/wpcontent/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/KISED.PDF>.

<sup>55</sup> On the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in the Horn, see Laura Hammond et al., *Comprehensive refugee responses in the Horn of Africa: regional leadership on education, livelihoods and durable solutions* (London and Nairobi: EU Trust Fund for Africa and Research & Evidence Facility, December 2019), <https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/research-papers/file144905.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> EUTF for Africa, *Somalia state and resilience building contract and support to debt relief*, T05-EUTF-HOA-SO-59 (Brussels: European Commission, May 2018), [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/euetfa/files/t05-eutf-hoa-so-59\\_-\\_somalia\\_srbc\\_incl\\_3\\_addenda.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/euetfa/files/t05-eutf-hoa-so-59_-_somalia_srbc_incl_3_addenda.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Development assistance and humanitarian aid have, indeed, been repeatedly suspended in the name of sovereign autonomy. In 1997 and 2010, and again in 2011, the Eritrean government requested the support of NGOs and international donors, only to change tack and expel them.

## Policy Implications and Recommendations

This brief emphasizes the pivotal role that international interventions and foreign aid played in reshaping the governance of migration and asylum in the Horn in the post-1991 period. While there were not many barriers to people's mobility until the 1990s, since then the region has witnessed a significant shift in the perception and management of mobility by foreign and international actors involved in military, humanitarian and development operations. Mobility has been construed as a security threat, rather than as a source of safety from harm as well as a socio-economic asset for people on the move and their wider communities. Foreign and international actors have gradually established discursive and operational linkages between mobility, security, and development and, accordingly, they have channelled their funding and operations into the management of migration and asylum. Relying on a variety of governmental techniques and strategies, which have ranged from outright repression (border surveillance, encampment, deportation, repatriation) to political and socio-economic incentives, foreign and international actors have sought to make people either stay where they are or go back to where they came from. Since the 2015 'migration crisis', the objective of migration containment has complemented, and even sometimes superseded, the traditional goals of peace, state building, development, and poverty reduction. European leaders should reconsider their policy of migration containment and set out to create migration policy frameworks that genuinely take into account the political, social and economic costs that the lack of migration opportunities entails for African countries, especially refugee-sending and refugee-hosting countries.

## Research Parameters

This policy brief is based on research conducted as part of the Horizon2020 project "Migration Governance and Asylum Crises" (MAGYC, grant agreement number 822806) for the Work Package (WP) no. 8 "External dimensions of the crisis," led by Sciences Po in Paris. This WP seeks to understand how the EU's externalisation policy intersects with intra-regional dynamics in the Middle East and Africa. Research conducted under this WP pays particular attention to local and intra-regional political dynamics in non-EU countries, including inter-state and non-state relations, formal and informal dynamics, and the role of international organisations (IOs) operating locally. This WP examines the following issues: how policies deployed at the border and beyond the borders of the EU have an impact on mobility across different regions; how EU and international governance mechanisms intersect with local, national, regional and transnational dynamics; and how these mechanisms shape the interests and policies of target states, both in terms of migration diplomacy and domestic politics. The originality of this WP is that, drawing on the expertise of scholars of non-EU politics and partner research institutions in Middle Eastern and African countries, it looks at externalisation practices and policies from the perspective of non-EU countries.

As part of this WP, Task #4 "New governance frontiers: the Horn of Africa" looks at the changes in and prospects of migration governance in the Horn of Africa, by investigating local state and non-state actors, IOs and NGOs, as well as the EU's involvement in the region on various scales and in different spaces. It examines the impact of the recent expansion of EU asylum and migration governance into the Horn of Africa. What have been the consequences of this process for local actors and institutions, local communities, both migrant and non-migrant, and the EU itself? What are the prospects of the new lines of diplomacy that have been pursued as a result? How might the various ongoing refugee crises affect the EU's diplomatic ties with host countries in the sub-region?

This paper provides an inductive analysis of the discourses, policies and practices of political actors across the Horn of Africa, combined with an empirical analysis of the practices of African

states, foreign powers, and multilateral organisations.

Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fieldwork originally planned for this study, this brief is based on an extensive desk review and on previous fieldwork research carried out by one of the authors in the region. The analysis presented here relies on qualitative data collected during these fieldwork trips in the Horn of Africa between 2005 and 2012, as well as on semi-structured interviews conducted in Kenya, Sudan, and Yemen with refugees, both inside and outside camps, migrants, African government officials and civil servants, foreign diplomats, IOs and NGOs staff and representatives (UNHCR, Médecins Sans Frontières, the Danish Refugee Council, the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat). More fieldwork will be conducted to further the analysis towards the forthcoming deliverables on the Horn of Africa.

## Project Identity

<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	MAGYC - Migration Governance and Asylum Crises
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	The Hugo Observatory (Université de Liège), Liège, Belgium. hugo.observatory@uliege.be
<b>CONSORTIUM</b>	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - Institut français du Proche-Orient (Beirut, Lebanon) GIGA Institute of Global and Area Studies (Hamburg, Germany) IDMC (Geneva, Switzerland) Lebanese American University (Beirut, Lebanon) Lund University (Lund, Sweden) Sabanci University (Istanbul, Turkey) Sciences Po (Paris, France) SOAS University of London (London, UK) University of Economics in Bratislava (Bratislava, Slovakia) University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece) University of Milan (Milan, Italy)
<b>FUNDING SCHEME</b>	This project has received funding from the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme (2014-2020), Societal Challenge 6 – Europe in a changing world: inclusive, innovative and reflective societies", call MIGRATION-02-2018 — Towards forward-looking migration governance: addressing the challenges, assessing capacities and designing future strategies.
<b>DURATION</b>	November 2018 – April 2023 (54 months).
<b>BUDGET</b>	EU contribution: 3,175,263.70€.
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="https://www.magyc.uliege.be/">https://www.magyc.uliege.be/</a>
<b>FOR MORE INFORMATION</b>	<b>Contact:</b> Başak Yavçan: byavcan@uliege.be
<b>FURTHER READING</b>	Thibaut JAULIN, <i>Migration diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean</i> , MAGYC Policy Brief, D8.12, 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2021.  Thibaut JAULIN and Hélène THIOULET, <i>Migration and Interventions in the Horn of Africa</i> , forthcoming.

**Disclaimer:** The information and views set out in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.