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**Article**

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Chang Woon Nam\*

# The Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund of the EU

The Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the EU,<sup>1</sup> established for the period 2014–2020 with a total sum of EUR 3.137 billion for the seven years, is designed to promote the efficient management of migration flows and their implementation, as well as to strengthen and develop a common EU approach to asylum and immigration. All EU member states except Denmark participate in the implementation of this fund. Major beneficiaries of the support programs and projects implemented under the AMIF include state and federal authorities, local public bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), humanitarian organizations, private and public law companies, and education and research organizations.

More precisely, the AMIF aims to contribute to the achievement of specific objectives in the following promotion areas:

- ‘Asylum’: development of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) by ensuring the efficient and uniform application of the EU legislation in this field;
- ‘Legal migration and integration’: promotion of the legal migration to EU countries in line with the labor market needs, and the effective integration of non-EU nationals; and
- ‘Return’: implementation of fair and effective return strategies, aimed also at preventing irregular migration, with an emphasis on sustainability and effectiveness of the return process.<sup>2</sup>

Of the total sum of EUR 3.137 billion, an amount of EUR 2.752 billion (= 88 percent) is earmarked for the EU member states’ ‘national programs’, and EUR 385 million (= 12 percent) for Union action, emergency aid, the European Migration Network

(EMN),<sup>3</sup> and technical assistance from the European Commission (the so-called ‘direct management’). In other words, the AMIF contributes mainly to the co-financing of national programs (the ‘shared management’). In this context, the EU countries are responsible for their multiannual national programs, covering the entire period 2014–2020. These programs are prepared, implemented, monitored, and evaluated by the responsible authorities in the individual EU nations, in partnership with the relevant stakeholders in the relevant field, including also the civil society. The EU co-financing share of the projects accounts for 75 percent in general. Under special circumstances, the share can reach up to 90 percent. The AMIF budget allocated for Germany for the same period of time amounts to approximately EUR 208 million.<sup>4</sup>

As mentioned above, the remaining 12 percent of the total amount aims at supporting the Union actions and emergency assistance: concrete actions to be funded through this instrument include improvement of accommodation and reception services for asylum seekers; information measures and campaigns in non-EU countries on legal migration channels; education and language training for non-EU nationals; assistance to vulnerable persons belonging to the target groups of AMIF; information exchange and cooperation between EU member states; and training for staff on topics of relevance to AMIF. Part of AMIF is also managed by the European Commission via EU actions, which include calls for proposals, procurement, direct awards, and delegation agreements (Table 1).

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMIF NATIONAL PROGRAM IN GERMANY

The individual EU member states shall designate their own (national) authorities responsible for implementing the AMIF national program. In Germany, the National Center for the Administration of the European Refugee Fund at the Federal Office for Migration

<sup>3</sup> The AMIF provides financial resources for the EMN activities and its future development. The EMN aims to respond to EU institutions’ and to EU member state authorities’ and institutions’ needs for information on migration and asylum by providing up-to-date, objective, reliable, and comparable data, with a view to supporting policy-making ([https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network_en); [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund/european-migration-network\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund/european-migration-network_en)).

<sup>4</sup> Around 11 percent of the funding under the shared management will be allocated to Specific Actions (implemented under the national programs of EU members, but responding to specific Union priorities) and to support the Union Resettlement Programs (URP). The URP are voluntary programs through which EU countries aim to provide international protection and a durable solution in their territories to refugees and displaced persons identified as eligible for resettlement by UNHCR. They include actions the EU members implement to assess the resettlement needs and transfer the persons concerned to their territories, with a view to granting them a secure legal status and to promoting their effective integration ([https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/e-library/glossary/resettlement-programme\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/e-library/glossary/resettlement-programme_en)). A similar financial mechanism is foreseen for the transfer of beneficiaries of international protection from an EU State with high migratory pressure to another.

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<sup>1</sup> See also <https://www.eu-foerdermittel.eu/asyl-migrations-und-integrationsfonds-amif-zum-thema-integration/>; and [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund_en).

<sup>2</sup> In addition, the AMIF also emphasizes the so-called ‘Solidarity’ objectives ensuring that EU member states that are most affected by migration and asylum flows can count on solidarity from other EU nations.

Table 1

**Expired EU Calls for AMIF Proposals**

	Deadline
Call for proposals in the area of integration of third-country nationals (2018) (AMIF-2018-AG-INTE)	31/01/2019
Call for proposals to support awareness raising and information campaigns on the risks of irregular migration in selected third countries (2017) (AMIF-2017-AG-INFO)	05/04/2018
Call for proposals in the area of integration of third-country nationals (2017) (AMIF-2017-AG-INTE)	01/03/2018
Call for proposals on the actions in the area of integration (HOME/2015/AMIF/AG/INTE)	29/02/2016
Call for proposals on the actions addressing trafficking in human beings, in particular the integration and the safe and sustainable return of victims of trafficking in human beings (HOME/2015/AMIF/AG/THBX)	16/02/2016
Call for proposals on the actions in the area of monitoring of forced return (HOME/2015/AMIF/AG/FRTM)	11/02/2016

Source: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund/union-actions\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund/union-actions_en).

tion and Refugees (BAMF) is responsible for awarding grants within this financial support framework.<sup>5</sup>

### Common European Asylum System (CEAS)

In the context of the asylum and refugee policy, Germany attempts to ensure an adequate reception of asylum seekers and a speedy and constitutional asylum procedure, and also strives to continuously develop it further. The implementation and completion of the CEAS is acknowledged crucial for this purpose. Of the aforementioned EUR 208 million earmarked for the period 2014–2020, approximately EUR 60 million of AMIF's fund will be allocated to this area, which promotes the earlier identification of asylum seekers with special needs in reception (and also in the asylum procedure) as well as better consideration of their (specific) needs in a more standardized way.

For the field of 'admission', Germany sees further enhancement of national standards with regard to admission conditions as urgently necessary, which will in turn enable more flexible adaptation of accommodation capacities and continuous development of other activities related to the reception (e.g., access to first orientation, care, counselling, assistance, and information services). Moreover, the speed-up of the asylum procedure should ideally be combined with high quality decision-making, which can also be guaranteed, for example, by standardizing the information quality on countries of origin.

Better professional exchanges and further training of those actors who are involved in reception and asylum procedures are also required on the national level. In addition, closer cooperation with all relevant counterparts on the EU level also appears to be desirable for the further development of CEAS. In this context, Germany is also striving to expand its 'Resettlement Program', which was implemented in 2012.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/EU\\_AMIF/nationales-programm.html?nn=5045180](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/EU_AMIF/nationales-programm.html?nn=5045180).

<sup>6</sup> In the framework of the German Resettlement Program, a contingent of refugees in need of special protection has been permanently admitted to Germany every year since 2012. These are persons who reside in the first receiving states and have neither a positive perspective for the future nor a prospect of return – see <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/migration/asyl-fluechtlingsschutz/>

### Integration of Third-country Nationals and Legal Migration

German integration policy aims at providing the people with a migration background equal opportunities for education, personal development, and career advancement as well as for their professional and social participation, which will in turn strengthen the social cohesion in this country. This objective applies equally to third-country nationals and EU citizens. Yet, according to Articles 8–10 of Regulation 516/2014/EU, AMIF's funds will directly benefit only third-country nationals and, if it serves the effective implementation of the measure, their closest relatives. Germany intends to use approx. EUR 92 million of AMIF funds in this area.

As was the case with the European Integration Fund (2007–2013),<sup>7</sup> the AMIF is intended to supplement and further develop the existing strategic instruments of integration policy in this country, enforced on the basis of the German Residence Act, which additionally encompasses the measures for establishing a culture of welcome and recognition of third-country nationals.

### Return

German 'return' policy applies the so-called integrated return management approach, which combines various strategic measures such as counselling, return support, enhanced reintegration in the country of origin, etc.<sup>8</sup> Here, the voluntary return takes precedence over the forced repatriation. Germany plans to spend around EUR 45 million of the avail-

[humanitaere-aufnahmeprogramme/humanitaere-aufnahmeprogramme-node.html](http://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/migration/asyl-fluechtlingsschutz/humanitaere-aufnahmeprogramme/humanitaere-aufnahmeprogramme-node.html).

<sup>7</sup> The European Integration Fund (EIF) was merged into the AMIF in 2014. The general objective of the EIF was to support EU member states' efforts to enable third-country nationals of different economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds to fulfil the conditions for residence and to integrate more easily into European society. Refugees and displaced persons, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and EU citizens were not promoted. Projects for this target group were supported in five different fields of action: (1) integration and language; (2) integration and community; (3) intercultural dialogue; (4) indicators and evaluation methods to measure progress, adapt policies and measures, and facilitate coordination of comparative learning; and (5) national networking, exchange, and intercultural capacity building (<http://www.bamf.de/DE/DasBAMF/EU-Fonds/SOLID/EIF/eif-node.html>).

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/migration/rueckkehrpolitik/rueckkehrpolitik-node.html>.

able AMIF funds on this important migration policy. These AMIF funds will primarily be used to support the continuation and expansion of initiatives, particularly in the fields of better coordination of national measures to promote and repatriate people, and the networking of the actors involved at the federal, Länder, and local levels as well as of the NGOs. Additional support strategies addressing the voluntary return include: the need-based further development of the German REAG/GARP support program;<sup>9</sup> the stimulation of greater publicity for the possibilities of return support in Germany; and the creation and expansion of sustainable, social, and economic reintegration opportunities in the country of origin, etc.

<sup>9</sup> With the Reintegration and Emigration Program for Asylum Seekers in Germany / Government Assisted Repatriation Program (REAG/GARP), the Federal Government and the Länder support persons in their voluntary return to their country of origin or in their onward migration to a host country – see <http://www.bamf.de/DE/Rueckkehr/FoerderprogrammREAGGARP/foerderprogramm-reag-garp-node.html>.