

H.O.P.E. Pilot

Human-Oriented Pathways for Europe

An EU-Partnership Model for External Processing and Pre-Integration Support Implemented in the Hopeland Cooperation Zone, Republic of Benin

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Overview

The H.O.P.E. Pilot is a time-limited, reversible, EU-partnership proposal for testing whether upstream migration processing preparation and integration readiness development can reduce irregular arrival pressure, lower costs, and improve outcomes — while operating under full host-state sovereignty, EU fundamental rights standards, and independent oversight.

It is proposed by Marouf Adeyemi e.V., a registered German nonprofit organization, and submitted for institutional technical consultation with the European Commission.

The Challenge

Irregular migration to the European Union generates persistent structural pressure because arrivals precede eligibility determination, documentation, language acquisition, and labour-market preparation. This sequence concentrates operational, financial, and political costs within Member State territories — while prolonging uncertainty for applicants and sustaining incentives for dangerous irregular routes.

The H.O.P.E. Pilot proposes to test a different sequence: what if a significant portion of that preparation happened before arrival, in a structured, rights-compliant environment?

What the H.O.P.E. Pilot IS

- ✓ *A pilot processing support infrastructure relocating preparatory functions upstream*
- ✓ *An integration preparation platform delivering language, skills, and employability training before arrival*
- ✓ *A voluntary return cooperation mechanism providing dignified alternatives and reintegration support*
- ✓ *A partnership framework between the EU, participating Member States, and the Republic of Benin*
- ✓ *A time-limited experiment with built-in evaluation, oversight, and reversibility*

What the H.O.P.E. Pilot IS NOT

- ✗ A substitute for EU asylum systems or Member State adjudication authority*
- ✗ An extraterritorial zone or transfer of sovereignty*
- ✗ A detention facility or involuntary processing center*
- ✗ An externalization of asylum responsibility*
- ✗ A permanent infrastructure or policy reform*

Location: The Hopeland Cooperation Zone, Republic of Benin

*The pilot would operate within a Designated International Cooperation and Operations Zone ("Hopeland") in the Republic of Benin — under **full Beninese sovereignty** and EU-aligned fundamental rights standards.*

The Republic of Benin was identified as the proposed pilot location based on its political stability, established EU partnership frameworks, strategic geography, and the development co-benefits the initiative would generate for local communities.

All territorial, legal, and security authority remains with the Government of Benin. Benin law applies throughout. No extraterritorial jurisdiction is created.

Four Core Functions

Function A — Initial Registration and Orientation *Voluntary identity verification, documentation preparation, vulnerability screening, and procedural orientation. No asylum decisions are made here. All protection status determinations remain with EU Member State authorities.*

Function B — Processing Support *Non-decisional case-file organization, documentation preparation, legal pathway identification, and qualification verification. The H.O.P.E. Pilot prepares files — it does not decide outcomes.*

Function C — Pre-Integration Preparation *This is the pilot's core innovation. Participants receive:*

- Intensive language training (CEFR-aligned, A1 to B1 level) in German, French, English, Spanish, or Italian*
- Civic and legal orientation for destination EU Member States*
- Skills assessment and employability development aligned with EU labour-market shortages*
- Psychosocial support and trauma-informed care*

Participants arrive employment-ready — reducing integration timelines by an estimated 12–18 months compared to the current model.

Function D — Voluntary Return and Reintegration Support For participants not entering EU pathways, fully voluntary, dignity-preserving assisted return is available — with economic and social reintegration support in cooperation with IOM frameworks. No coercion. No pressure tactics.

Participant Pathways

After processing support and preparation, participants may:

1. Enter EU legal pathways (asylum, resettlement, labour migration, family reunification, educational visas)
2. Choose voluntary return with reintegration support
3. Access alternative third-country pathways or regional mobility within Africa

Participation is entirely voluntary at every stage. The right to exit the programme at any time is unconditional.

Governance Architecture

The pilot operates under a tri-partite governance model:

The European Union — provides policy standards, financing coordination, independent monitoring, and oversight. The EU does not operate facilities or exercise territorial jurisdiction.

The Republic of Benin — retains full territorial sovereignty, legal framework authority, security oversight, and the unconditional right to inspect, suspend, or terminate operations.

The Implementing Operator (Marouf Adeyemi e.V. / consortium) — manages day-to-day service delivery, documentation logistics, reporting, and compliance. The operator holds no decision-making authority on asylum, legal status, detention, or law enforcement.

Rights and Safeguarding Framework

The H.O.P.E. Pilot is designed around non-negotiable rights protections:

- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights — human dignity, liberty, non-refoulement, right to asylum, right to remedy
- 1951 Geneva Convention — non-refoulement and access to asylum procedures
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child — best interests paramount, specialized guardianship for unaccompanied minors
- GDPR-equivalent data protection with cross-border safeguards

An **Independent Safeguarding Authority**, appointed jointly by the EU and Benin (not by the operator), holds unrestricted 24/7 site access and direct escalation authority to the European Commission.

Third-party monitoring includes UNHCR, IOM, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, civil society organizations, and independent academic evaluators.

How It Differs From Controversial Past Models

<i>Past Model</i>	<i>H.O.P.E. Pilot Approach</i>
<i>Libya (EU-Libya cooperation) — detention, abuse, no oversight</i>	<i>Voluntary, independent monitoring, safeguarding standards</i>
<i>Rwanda-UK Agreement — one-way transfer, no return option</i>	<i>Processing support for EU pathways, not deportation</i>
<i>Australian offshore detention — indefinite, isolated</i>	<i>Time-limited, voluntary exit, preparation and pathways</i>
<i>EU hotspots without integration preparation</i>	<i>Language, skills, and employability development built in</i>

Scale and Phasing

Pilot Phase (Years 1–2): 5,000–10,000 participants annually. Modular, scalable facilities. Continuous independent monitoring.

Evaluation and Scale Decision (Year 3+): Full independent evaluation determines whether to expand, modify, or terminate. No automatic scale-up. Expansion requires explicit EU and Member State approval based on verified evidence.

Financial Overview (Indicative)

<i>Cost Category</i>	<i>Indicative Range</i>
<i>Capital expenditure (land, infrastructure, utilities)</i>	<i>€150–240 million</i>
<i>Annual operational expenditure</i>	<i>€80–125 million</i>

Cost per participant per day €40–60 (vs. €80–150 in EU Member States)

Total cost per participant (12-month preparation) €15,000–20,000

Estimated EU Member State cost (equivalent period) €30,000–50,000

All figures are indicative and subject to detailed feasibility validation prior to any financing commitment.

Proposed financing instruments include AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund), NDICI-Global Europe, EIB blended financing, and voluntary Member State co-financing.

What We Are Asking For

Marouf Adeyemi e.V. has submitted the H.O.P.E. Pilot to the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs for preliminary technical consultation.

We are not requesting immediate funding, political endorsement, or commitment to proceed. We are asking for institutional dialogue — the first step in a responsible, evidence-based process.

Contact

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This document is a public information overview. It does not constitute a funding application or binding commitment.