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LEGAL MIGRATION PATHWAYS ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN: ACHIEVEMENTS, OBSTACLES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

This policy brief reviews the state of legal migration across the Mediterranean: it examines the existing migration links between the South Med countries and the EU, attempts to uncover the obstacles to legal migration and suggests ways to improve migration management. We argue that, if used strategically, even small-scale projects to foster legal migration can contribute to expanding legal migration opportunities and reducing irregular crossings in the longer term. However, this can only occur if projects are implemented in close cooperation with governments of the South Med countries and if they can contribute to capacity building of the national labour market and educational institutions. Further, given the prevalence of the family migration channel between the South Med and the EU, one way to foster legal migration is to leverage existing social networks, i.e. by engaging the South Med diaspora residing in the EU and supporting labour market integration of family migrants.



INTRODUCTION

The geographic proximity calls for close economic cooperation between the South Med region and the EU, with migration being one such linkage. According to the UN, in 2017, the EU hosted 5.3 million or close to 40% of South Med emigrants. The volume of remittances from the EU amounted to about 16% of South Med countries' exports to the EU. All South Med countries concluded Association Agreements with the EU, where migration is listed as one of the working areas. In addition, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia signed 'Mobility Partnerships', which though legally non-binding, stipulate the commitment of countries to cooperate on the issues of legal and irregular migration.

Yet, a number of challenges in migration management between the South Med region and the EU exists as manifested, for instance, by limited labour migration and high number of irregular border crossings. Between 2008-17, labour migration reasons accounted for less than one fifth of all first residence permits issued by the EU Member States to nationals of the South Med countries. Moreover, since 2011, labour migration showed a declining trend. In contrast, irregular border crossings from the South Med countries to the EU have increased over recent years. In 2017, the number of South Med nationals entering the EU irregularly approached almost 30,000, close to the number of South Med migrants who, in the same year, legally arrived to the EU for work. In this context, providing more legal (in particular, labour) migration pathways is often considered a way forward (see, for example, [this Communication](#) from the EU Commission to the EU Parliament and the Council). However, is it a plausible and feasible solution?

This policy brief reviews the state of legal migration between the South Med countries and the EU. It first characterises the existing migration links across the Mediterranean and summarises achievements so far. It then tries to identify the obstacles to legal migration and investigates the ways to improve migration management. To that end, we analyse the recent migration data, as well as legal frameworks and policy documents. We complement the analysis with semi-structured interviews with the EU and South Med stakeholders who have been involved in projects geared to fostering legal migration pathways.

Our analysis highlights that, first, it is not sufficient to establish a formal legal pathway to labour migration: high cross-border matching frictions often inhibit a pathway's effectiveness. A policy solution becomes a typical policy for improving labour matching, albeit in the context of large geographic, cultural, and institutional differences, and, hence, high costs. Second, even if matching



frictions are removed, the scope for migration can be constrained by misalignment between the demand for labour in the EU Member States and the supply of adequately qualified workers in origin countries. Adjusting skills requires a proper information base, time and monetary investments. Consequently, it is hard to expect that the existing (mainly small-scale due to financial constraints) projects for fostering legal migration will have a large-scale impact on the size and composition of migration flows in the short term.

What are, then, the ways to foster legal migration pathways between the South Med and the EU? We argue that even small-scale projects can be used strategically to expand legal migration and reduce irregular crossings across the Mediterranean in the longer term – in particular, if such projects contribute to capacity building of the national labour market and educational institutions, enhance the information available to would-be migrants and if they are implemented in close cooperation with governments of the South Med countries. Further, given the prevalence of the family migration channel between the South Med and the EU, we highlight that one way to contain high matching costs across the Mediterranean is to leverage existing social networks. This means empowering the South Med diaspora residing in the EU and supporting labour market integration of family migrants.

The rest of the brief is structured as follows: We first provide a statistical overview of existing migration links between the South Med region and the EU. We then outline the EU legal and policy frameworks and instruments that presently govern the migration channels between the South Med region and the EU. Further, we summarise the existing obstacles to migration across the Mediterranean. We conclude by discussing ways to improve migration management between the South Med region and the EU.

THE CURRENT STATE OF MIGRATION BETWEEN THE SOUTH MED AND THE EU

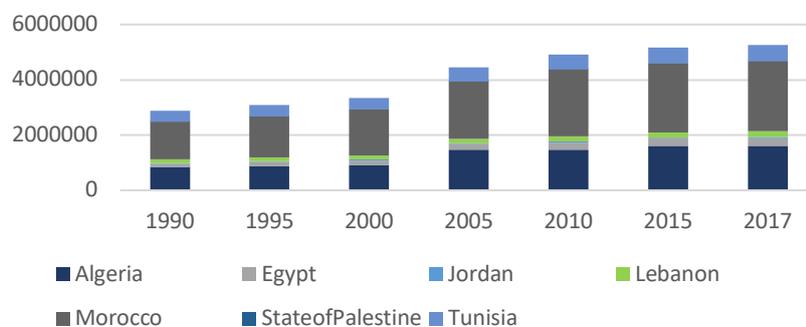
The importance of migration links to the EU for the South Med countries

According to the UN, in 2017, 14.2 million migrants from the South Med region resided in other countries of the world. This corresponds to 6.8% of the region's population which, as of 2017, constituted about 206 million. The EU Member States hosted 5.3 million or close to 40% of South Med immigrants. However, the intensity of migration links with the EU has been uneven across the

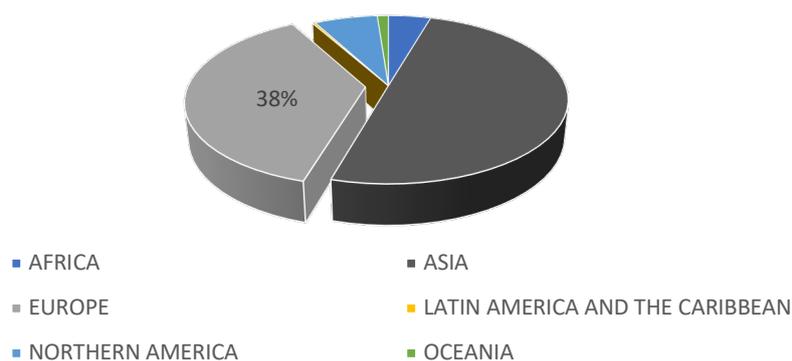
region’s countries. The EU hosts almost 90% of all immigrants from Algeria and Morocco and almost 80% of immigrants from Tunisia. The largest diaspora from these countries reside in France, Spain and Italy, followed by Germany and Belgium. For migrants from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, the EU has historically been a less important destination vis-a-vis the Gulf States, the US, Canada and Australia.

Figure 1 Stock of South Med migrants in the EU and other destination regions (see Annexe I for country details)

Panel A. Stock of South Med migrants in the EU28 (1990-2017)



Panel B. Destination regions of South Med migrants (2017)



Source: UN, International Migration Matrix, 2017.

Note: Europe comprises both EU member states and other European countries. However, the EU28 account for 97% of the South Med migrant stock in Europe.

The economic role of migration links between the EU and the South Med countries can be illustrated by the role of remittances sent by emigrants. On average, the volume of remittances from the EU is equal to about 16% of the South Med countries' exports to the EU (see Table 1 below). There is, however, large heterogeneity. Two countries, in particular, stand out. In Lebanon, the amount of remittances surpasses total exports to the EU (although the export base is low). Morocco has the second highest export volume to the EU after Algeria; however, the monetary contributions from emigrants still amount to more than 30% of exports. This is not surprising, as the Moroccan diaspora of 2.5 million is the largest in the EU compared to other South Med origin countries. In Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt – that have relatively large export volumes to the EU – remittances are of lesser relative importance. For Jordan - with weaker trade potential - remittances from emigrants living in the EU constitute about 20% of the countries' export volumes.

Table 1. Remittances from the EU

	Migration, 2017		Remittances, 2015		
	Total in EU	EU share,%	Total from the EU, \$ mln	EU share	Relative to total exports to EU
Algeria	1603297	89.4	1795.25	89.8%	7.1%
Egypt	289233	8.5	1103.69	6.0%	8.0%
Jordan	35657	4.8	201.49	3.8%	20.2%
Lebanon	210529	25.6	1859.61	24.9%	119.7%
Morocco	2532896	87.4	6148.22	87.0%	31.3%
Tunisia	578610	75.4	2007.84	85.6%	13.8%

Sources: Based on data from UN bilateral migration stocks, [World Bank bilateral remittance matrix](#), and UNCTAD

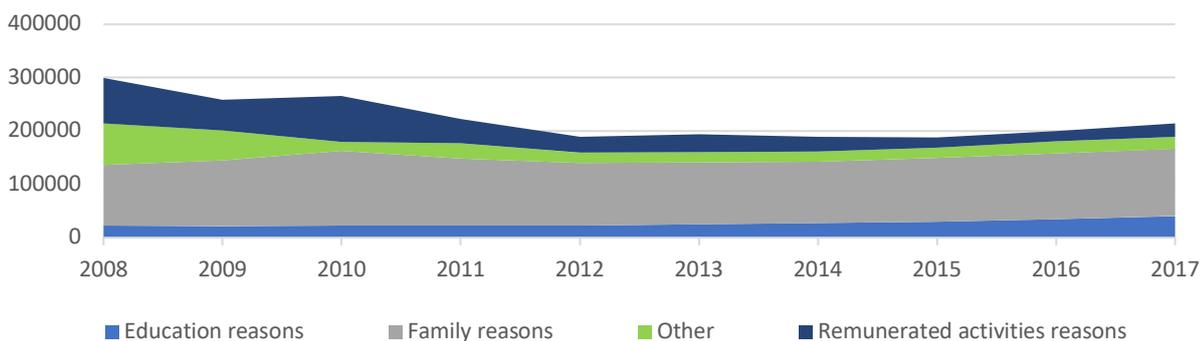
*Note: State of Palestine is omitted due to the small number of migrants residing in the EU.

Decomposing legal migration flows from the South Med countries to the EU: main destinations and reasons for migration

When we look at migration flow data during the period from 2008 to 2017, the EU Member States issued above 2.2 million first residence permits to the nationals of South Med countries.¹ Italy, Spain, France and the UK issued the largest number of permits over that period. Other important destinations were Germany, Belgium, Greece and Cyprus. From 2008-17, 55% of permits concerned family reunification, 19% were issued for work-related reasons and 12% for education purposes; the remaining 14% fell under the category “other,” amongst them 16% concerned permits for international protection status, refugee status and other humanitarian reasons.

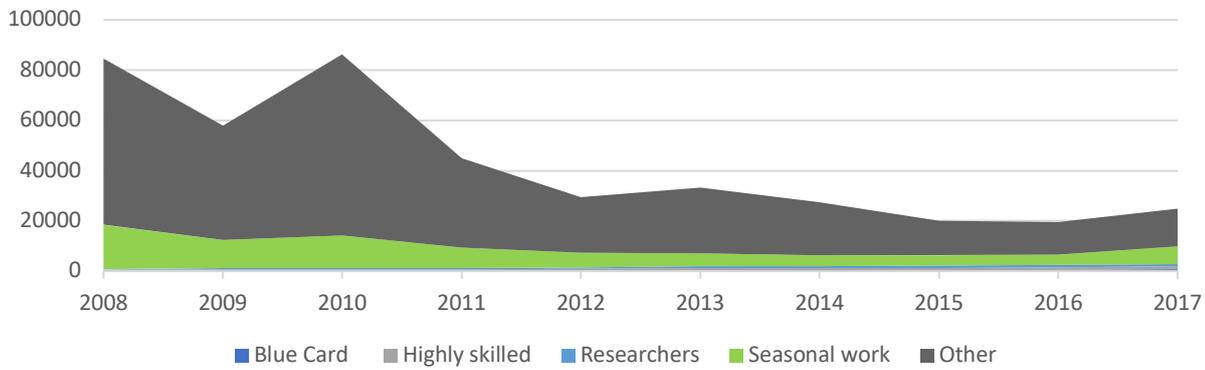
Figure 2. First residence permits issued to South Med migrants by EU Member States and irregular migration from South Med (see Annexe I for country details)

Panel A. All types of permits

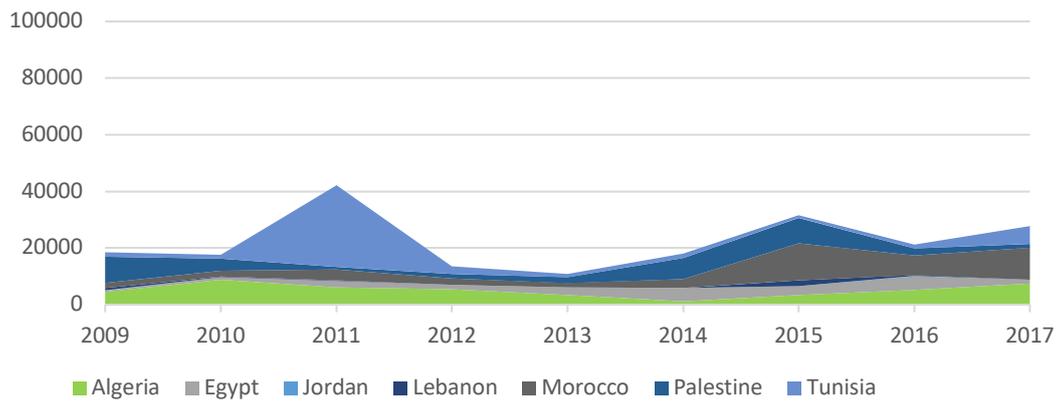


¹ Eurostat counts a residence permit as ‘first’ if it is issued to a person for the first time, or if the time gap between expiry of the old permit and the valid start of the new permit issued for the same reason is at least 6 months, irrespective of the year of issuance of the permit (Eurostat).

Panel B. Permits for work-related reasons



Panel C. Irregular border crossings



Source: Eurostat and Frontex

As **Figure 2** illustrates, the main legal migration channel for South Med nationals to the EU is through family reunification. The number of residence permits issued for this reason remained stable over the analysed period, with a slight increase in 2010 and for certain countries in 2016. Whilst family reunification is not directly related to labour migration, its role should not be neglected. Economic opportunities, both at origin and destination, matter also for the decision to migrate as a family migrant. Given a generally restrictive immigration policy, family reunification often remains the only legal opportunity for South Med nationals to enter and reside in the EU. For instance, the number of family migrants from Egypt to the EU increased by about 25% (by 2300 individuals) between 2015 and 2017, likely as a response to the economic problems in this origin country, coupled with a

decrease in possibilities for work migration to the EU.² Furthermore, family and friends abroad remain the major source of information for potential migrants (see for example MEDAM 2018).

Education represents another important legal entry channel to the EU. Its share has steadily increased, from 7.5% in 2008 to 19% in 2017. Starting in 2014, EU member states have issued more permits to the South Med nationals for education compared to those for work-related activities. This channel is particularly prevalent in Lebanon (about 30% of all permits) and Jordan (about 40% of all permits).

Residence permits issued to South Med nationals for work purposes represented less than one fifth of all delivered permits by the EU Member States between 2008-17. The main destination countries were the same as for other issued residence permits. However, in contrast to other types of residence permits, the number of work-related issued permits dropped from 85,000 in 2008 to less than 19,000 in 2016. This drop was mainly due to the economic slow-down in Spain and Italy, which limited work opportunities for immigrants. In addition, the demand for workers from the South Med dropped as it became easier to hire workers from the new EU member states – Romania and Bulgaria.³ In 2017, the number of issued work permits increased to 25,000. This increase, however, was driven by three destinations: Spain issued about 2700 more seasonal work permits in 2017 compared to 2016), France issued about 2000 more unclassified work permits and Germany increased the overall number of work permits, from 344 in 2015 to 1075 in 2017; with 53% of all issued permits in 2017 being Blue Cards.

Amongst all work permits issued between 2008-17, about 18% concerned seasonal workers and only 3.6% were issued to researchers and highly skilled migrants, including holders of the EU Blue Card. The remaining work permits were not classified (by Eurostat) and, therefore, could have concerned workers of different skills entering the countries under national schemes. Whilst the number of permits for seasonal work and other work reasons declined, EU Blue Cards and permits issued to highly skilled individuals and researchers steadily increased from only 813 in 2008 (less than 1% of all work permits) to 2854 in 2017 (11.4% of all work permits). This increase partly relates to the newly

² The number of work permits to Egyptian nationals constituted almost 17,000 in 2010 and less than 4000 in 2017 (see Annexe I). A higher number of family permits can also result from the previously high number of migrants who had come for work (2010-2013) and decided to stay in the EU for the long term.

³ The old EU member states started to lift labour market restrictions for Bulgarian and Romanian nationals after their accession in 2007. The restrictions were fully lifted by 2014.

implemented EU migration schemes for highly skilled individuals (the EU Student and Researchers Directive and the EU Blue Card, explained below). However, in absolute terms, the number of South Med migrants who benefitted from these new (and very selective) schemes has been low and far from being able to compensate the overall drop in legal migration flows due to the lower amount of available work permits. Moreover, as of 2017, two thirds of all permits for the highly skilled were issued by three EU Member States: France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Whilst labour migration between the South Med countries and the EU declined, the number of irregular border crossings from the region increased: it peaked for Tunisia in 2011 following the Arab Spring, and for other countries in 2015-17, as smuggler activity intensified along Eastern, Central and later Western Mediterranean Routes. As of 2017, for instance, the number of irregular border crossings by nationals of South Med countries was close to that of regular permits issued for work reasons. In 2016-17, the number of irregular border crossings was particularly high for nationals of Morocco and Tunisia.⁴ This increase coincided with the decline in the number of permits for work reasons issued to the nationals of South Med countries. Whilst substitution of legal migration by irregular means cannot be excluded, it is hard to establish causality between the two. During the same period (2011-16), smuggling networks acting across the Mediterranean have substantially expanded, making it easier (and cheaper) for South Med nationals to arrive irregularly in the EU. [Friebel et al. \(2018\)](#), for instance, show that activation of smugglers' routes, following the fall of the Gaddafi regime, raised keenness to migrate, in particular, among youths, the medium-skilled and individuals with networks abroad.

⁴ The Frontex figures do not necessarily show the complete picture: on the one hand, they could be upwards biased, because the same person can cross or be apprehended several times; on the other hand, they do not reflect the number of migrants who entered regularly, but then overstayed.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR MIGRATION BETWEEN THE SOUTH MED REGION AND THE EU

To what extent do legal and policy frameworks on migration shape the existing migration patterns between the South Med region and the EU? Below, we investigate the role of EU migration policies and, in particular, of the EU's legal migration acquis and the EU policy instruments.

The EU legal migration acquis

Whilst Article 79(5) TFEU reserves the right for Member States to determine the number of Third Country Nationals (TCNs) coming to their territory to work, this does not preclude the EU from adopting legislative acts on the 'conditions of entry and residence' and the 'definition of rights' of TCNs legally residing in a Member State.⁵ In other words, the EU cannot directly decide on how many labour migrants are admitted, but it has legislated on the conditions under which this happens. These Directives are not specific to the South Med countries, but they form the overall legal framework on legal migration to the EU. As of 2018, several Directives stipulate rules of entry and stay for specific groups of immigrants: seasonal workers, intra-corporate transferees (ICTs), highly skilled workers (EU Blue Card), students and researchers, and family migrants. In light of the profile of South Med labour migrants coming to the EU, the group of ICTs is not of huge relevance and, thus, this channel will be omitted. Below, we briefly describe the existing frameworks and link them to the observed migration flows between South Med countries and the EU.

⁵ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012), Art. 79(2.a & 2.b)

Table 2 - The EU legal migration Directives⁶

EU Directives	Transposition
Family Reunification Directive (2003/86/EC)	03.10.2005
EU Blue Card Directive (2009/05/EC), Commission proposal for recast in June 2016 (COM(2016) 378 final)	19.06.2011
Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU)	25.12.2013
Seasonal Workers Directive (2014/36/EU)	30.09.2016
Intra-Corporate Transferees Directive (2014/66/EU)	29.11.2016
Students and Researchers Directive ((EU)2016/801 – recast)	23.05.2018

Source: own compilation

The **EU Single Permit Directive** constitutes a horizontal legal instrument for labour immigration. This Directive aimed to simplify the application procedure for TCN labour migrants by merging residence and work permits and setting the time limit on processing applications. Another important element is guaranteeing equal treatment rights, e.g. on working conditions, education and vocational training, and recognition of diplomas.⁷ Exact admission criteria and conditions of stay for labour migrants are regulated by the Member States and, thus, vary across the EU. In most cases, a work permit is granted once the reason for labour migration is justified (this often entails a binding job offer and proof of qualifications) and the necessary safeguards to protect native workers are fulfilled (e.g. a labour market test; a priority rule; wage requirements). For certain groups of migrants, namely seasonal workers and highly skilled individuals, special EU-wide schemes apply. They harmonise conditions of entry and stay for these migrants across the EU Member States, albeit still leaving scope for country-specific regulations.

The **EU Seasonal Workers Directive** is a ‘paradigmatic temporary worker system’.⁸ It does not replace bilateral agreements between Member States and third countries, but it ‘determines the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers and defines the rights of seasonal workers’.⁹ This labour migration channel strongly depends on economic conditions in the EU: the relevance of seasonal migrant work declined after 2010 with

⁶ The table does not include the Long-Term Residence Directive, which defines a number of rights, related to security of residence, employment, equal treatment and free movement in the EU. The basic condition for obtaining long-term resident status is that the TCN has resided legally in the territory of a Member State for at least five years.

⁷ See e.g. Elspeth Guild (2017), on the Pathways towards Legal Migration into the EU

⁸ European Parliament and Council (2014), Directive 2014/36/EU

⁹ European Parliament and Council (2011), Directive 2011/98/EU

the economic downturn in Italy and Spain and only started to revive in 2017. Moreover, the current application of this scheme is limited: over 90% of all the 6955 seasonal work permits in 2017 were issued to the nationals of Morocco. Amongst the EU Member States in 2017, Spain issued 70% of all seasonal work permits to South Med countries, France (20%) and Italy (10%). This partly reflects limited demand for seasonal work across the EU and partly the role of previously established migration links (i.e. Morocco-Spain bilateral schemes for seasonal migration).

The **EU Blue Card Directive** stipulates the rules of entry and stay for highly skilled individuals. Compared to other groups of immigrants, Blue Card holders and their family members enjoy a wider set of rights and fewer bureaucratic formalities. Whilst in theory such a scheme appears to be attractive for both highly skilled South Med nationals and firms in EU Member States, the scope of the Blue Card Scheme has so far been limited. Between 2011-17, 2505 Blue Cards were issued to South Med nationals, with Germany accounting for 75% and France for 12% of all Blue Cards. This is partly due to the presence of alternative national schemes for highly skilled individuals (e.g. in the Netherlands or Ireland), but also reflects difficulties in cross-Mediterranean job and candidate search.

The **EU Directive on Students and Researchers**¹⁰ was only adopted in 2016, with its transposition deadline falling in May 2018. The new Directive replaced the existing Directives specific to and separate for students¹¹ and researchers¹² and stipulated harmonised rules for them, as well as for trainees, pupils, au pairs and volunteers (subject to specific conditions and Member States preferences). The Students and Researchers Directive is potentially important, as the number of students from the South Med region in the EU continues to increase. With the new provision of the possibility to stay and look for a job following their studies, the number of South Med students staying in the EU as workers is likely to grow further. Regarding migration of South Med researchers to the EU, established connections matter: between 2008-17, almost 80% of permits for South Med researchers were issued by France, reflecting strong academic ties between the latter and its former colonies.

¹⁰ European Parliament and Council (2016), Directive (EU) 2016/801

¹¹ European Council (2004), Directive 2004/114/EC

¹² European Council (2005), Directive 2005/71/EC

Family Reunification

Family reunification (governed by the EU Family Reunification Directive and Citizens Directive)¹³ applies to spouses and to minor children of the sponsor and the spouse, although Member States can also include other categories, such as first-degree relatives or adult dependent children. These Directives do not establish a direct channel for labour migration. Yet, they stipulate the rules for access to education and self-employment of the reunited family migrants (with possible restrictions in the first years after arrival).¹⁴ Moreover, they regulate the largest migration channel from South Med countries to the EU. Family reunification accounts for the largest number of incoming migrants in the EU from all South Med countries. Amongst all family migrants, about 48% are between 20 and 50 years old – in prime working age. Whilst the family channel is expected to be largely biased towards female migrants, for South Med countries 41% of migrants are still men aged between 20 and 50.¹⁵

Mobility partnerships

To accommodate cooperation on fostering legal migration and curbing irregular flows, the EU has also developed policy instruments. We see a trend in EU policy moving external migration relations towards the increasing use of non-binding policy frameworks. The Mobility Partnership (MP) itself is one such non-binding political ‘declaration’ between the EU, interested Member States and a third country.¹⁶ It covers the four areas set out by the EU’s Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), namely irregular migration (incl. re-admission and border control), legal/labour migration, international protection, and migration and development.¹⁷ It also includes the political commitment to negotiate an EU Re-admission Agreement and an EU Visa Facilitation Agreement. So far, the EU has concluded the MP with Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan.

Through projects implemented under the MPs, some specific mobility opportunities may arise. These projects are included in the MP ‘Annexe’ or ‘Scoreboard’ and can be financed by the EU itself or by

¹³ The EU Family Reunification Directive concerns reunification initiated by TCNs, whilst the Citizens Directive governs family reunification initiated by EU citizens.

¹⁴ European Council (2003), Directive 2003/86/EC

¹⁵ Eurostat, migr_resfas, data for 2016 (disaggregated data for 2017 was missing for some countries).

¹⁶ See e.g. European Council (2013) Joint Declaration Establishing a Mobility Partnership between the Kingdom of Morocco and the European Union and Its Member States

¹⁷ European Commission (2011), COM.743

Member States.¹⁸ Some current projects implemented under the Mobility Partnerships are summarised in the Annexe. For example, in the case of Morocco, the German federal government implements a project on apprenticeship in the German hotel and restaurant sector for Moroccan youths.¹⁹ However, most MP projects only cover a small amount of TCNs, in this case around 100 Moroccan nationals. Even though the MP Annexes do include several projects focused on legal migration pathways, the majority deal mainly with capacity building of national authorities involved in employment and migration policies, distributing information, or establishing networks with diaspora, but not with actual commitments to legal migration channels.²⁰

OBSTACLES TO EXPANDING LEGAL MIGRATION BETWEEN SOUTH MED COUNTRIES AND THE EU

Despite a number of adopted EU legal frameworks (such as the Seasonal Directive in 2014) and established Mobility Partnerships (with Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan), in absolute terms the number of labour migrants coming from the South Med to the EU has significantly decreased over recent years. This has been mainly driven by the drop in demand from Italy and Spain, which used to be the largest destinations for low-skilled migration, including seasonal work. The situation only started to reverse in 2017 with the growth of labour demand in Spain and France. The number of highly skilled migrants and students from South Med countries has increased every year since 2008, in particular, following the adoption of the EU Blue Card scheme and the Students and Researchers Directive. Yet, in absolute terms the schemes for highly skilled migrants and students have benefitted only a small share of the region's population and have only been implemented by a few EU Member States. Presently, family sponsorships (personal networks) remain the main entry channel for South Med migrants to the EU.

Several specific obstacles were repeatedly mentioned during semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in the EU and South-Med countries, who have been involved in projects to foster legal migration pathways.

¹⁸ See on the EU-Morocco MP e.g. Leonhard den Hertog (2016) *European Journal of Migration and Law*

¹⁹ World Bank (2014), *MENA Transition Fund*

²⁰ See e.g. Leonhard den Hertog and Fanny Tittel-Mosser (2017), on the *Pathways towards Legal Migration into the EU*

First, expanding legal migration pathways between South Med countries and the EU is complicated by high labour matching friction across the Mediterranean. Many companies in the EU, in particular small and medium enterprises, do not have sufficient financial and human resources to hire abroad, e.g. for screening candidates based on their professional and cultural traits, covering the costs of administrative procedures etc. Employers are not always aware of the existing legal pathways and may overestimate the bureaucratic load and costs related to hiring abroad. Further, due to uncertainty about the qualifications of foreign candidates, firms are reluctant to make long-term commitments (e.g. a one-year work contract) as is required by most existing legal migration schemes. On the other side of the Mediterranean, would-be migrants, as well as the national institutions responsible for supporting job seekers, are not always aware of the existing opportunities in the EU - both in terms of legal access and the up-to-date situation with EU labour markets. As a result, individuals possess distorted information about returns to legal versus irregular migration and there are few guidelines on how to allocate investment in human capital.

Second, supply of skills in the South Med does not always match labour demand in the EU. The interviewed stakeholders mentioned that often, employers in the EU express concerns regarding the quality of education, equivalence of degrees and they point out the lack of necessary practical skills. Furthermore, most employers require candidates to possess at least intermediate (B1) level of the destination country's language. Hence, projects for activating migration flows often entail intensive pre-departure language training and support with qualification recognition.

Projects that try to provide job seekers with necessary skills and reduce the matching frictions, as a rule, involve multiple stages: recruiting potential candidates, offering an intensive language course up to B1 and cultural training prior to departure, assisting with visa requirements and recognition, matching with and assisting employers. From past experiences, it costs about 5500 EUR to place a nurse in Germany ([‘Triple win’ project](#), GIZ information); about 14000 EUR to place a young Moroccan in a vocational training in Germany (approximated, given the total [programme](#) cost of 1.75 million USD for placing 110 Moroccan candidates).

Whilst on a small scale, such support measures appear effective, given their high costs, it will not be an easy task to extend such measures to benefit many more candidates. As a comparison, the experience of the German MobiPro Initiative, which aimed at placing about 10,000 EU nationals in Germany, is instructive. As illustrated in Box 1, costs were also high, the administrative structure to ensure success quite burdensome and the impact smaller than expected. Thus, relative to overall

migration flows, the number of individuals directly benefitting from the projects offering intensive support for international labour migration is likely to remain small.

Box 1: Lessons learnt from the German-Spanish MobiPro initiative

This box further illustrates cross-border difficulties in hiring and job search, using the example of the German-Spanish MobiPro Initiative. Following the financial and sovereign debt crisis in the euro area, large economic differences emerged within the EU: whilst Germany experienced an historically low unemployment rate of 5%, with several sectors reporting labour shortages, unemployment rates in Spain or Greece were over 25%.

In 2013, the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) initiated a cross-border recruitment programme to combat the rising shortages (see <http://www.thejobofmylife.de/en/home.html>). In 2013-14, the programme ran under the ‘individual-support’ scheme, providing financial support for interested individuals who wanted to start a career in Germany – often as apprentices but also in regular jobs for ‘shortage professions’. The programme covered fees for language courses, travel expenses and apprenticeship/wage subsidies. By the end of 2015, around 10,500 individuals had participated in the programme, of which 5400 were from Spain. 32% of participants were in the hotel and gastronomy sector, 10% in the machinery/metal and equipment sector and 9% in the health care sector. 2,000 were workers in shortage professions and the remaining 8500 were apprentices.

Table 3. Funds made available for the programme, in million Euro

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Target annual spending	41.0	96.1	92.0	103.0	112.0	83.0	37.0	564.1

Finanzbericht 2017 (p. 125).

In the first two years of its implementation, the programme ran into operational difficulty in accompanying individuals and providing the required individual support to the (mostly young) foreign recruits. Consequently, the drop-out rate from the programme was substantial: of 8500 apprentices, only 3800 had remained in their apprenticeships as of the end of 2015, meaning a drop-out rate of 55%. The programme has since been overhauled in the form of a ‘project support scheme’. Namely, from 2016 onwards, it required a “Project Administrator” to apply for funds. The project application required a more structured approach and catered to the needs of foreign recruits (social and occupational pedagogic guidance). In addition, each newcomer was designated with a locally-based person, either working in the same company or living in the same area, to facilitate integration.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In essence, fostering legal labour migration across the Mediterranean calls for active labour market policies that would remove labour market frictions and, when necessary, enhance skills. Establishing such policies in the international context, with higher information asymmetries and communication barriers between stakeholders is costly and, first of all, requires well-functioning institutions at the national level.

Can then typical small-scale projects that try to foster migration between South Med countries and the EU have tangible impacts? We argue, yes, if used strategically. Whilst direct benefits will be limited to a small number of migrants, such projects could generate externalities with a longer-term positive impact. For this to happen, two conditions should be met. First, projects should target capacity building of intermediaries, in particular, that of labour market institutions in the origin countries: experience, knowledge and social connections obtained during the project implementation phase ideally could be further applied to improve services for job seekers in the South Med.

Second, projects should aim at enhancing the information about economic and/or education opportunities abroad: even if an individual does not directly benefit from the project, having access to accurate information about legal migration options and knowing about real-life examples (role-models) would allow him or her to make better decisions concerning migration and the necessary human capital investments.

Experience with current and recent projects aiming at fostering legal pathways, suggests that their limited size will not be able to combat irregular migration on a large scale, i.e. as a direct substitute for irregular migration options. Moreover, and besides the size of the projects, if smuggling routes remain accessible to those unable to migrate legally and, if irregular entry still comes with an expectation of a long-term stay in the EU, irregular migration will persist. Hence, expanding legal pathways should consider other measures to curb irregular migration - from information campaigns to effective re-admission agreements, where cooperation with origin countries is critical. Systematic policies for legal labour migration can help to engage origin countries on migration issues, amongst others, by raising awareness of the benefits of legal vs. irregular migration.

Lastly, whilst most existing projects to foster labour migration currently focus on labour or student migrants, migration through the family channel – presently, the most important one for South Med nationals arriving in the EU - should not be neglected. One way to contain cross-border matching costs, but also to improve labour market outcomes of family migrants, is to leverage the existing



social networks. For instance, information campaigns about legal migration opportunities targeting the diaspora, could contribute to the provision of better information for would-be migrants in the origin countries and encourage diaspora members themselves to create legal economic opportunities in destination Member States. Furthermore, pre-departure training and the labour market orientation of future family migrants in the origin country could improve their economic outcomes in their chosen destinations. Whilst family migrants can benefit from their networks' support upon arrival, they often lack the formal tools for skill acquisition and job matching to ensure successful economic integration.

ANNEX I: MIGRATION COUNTRY PROFILES

Algeria

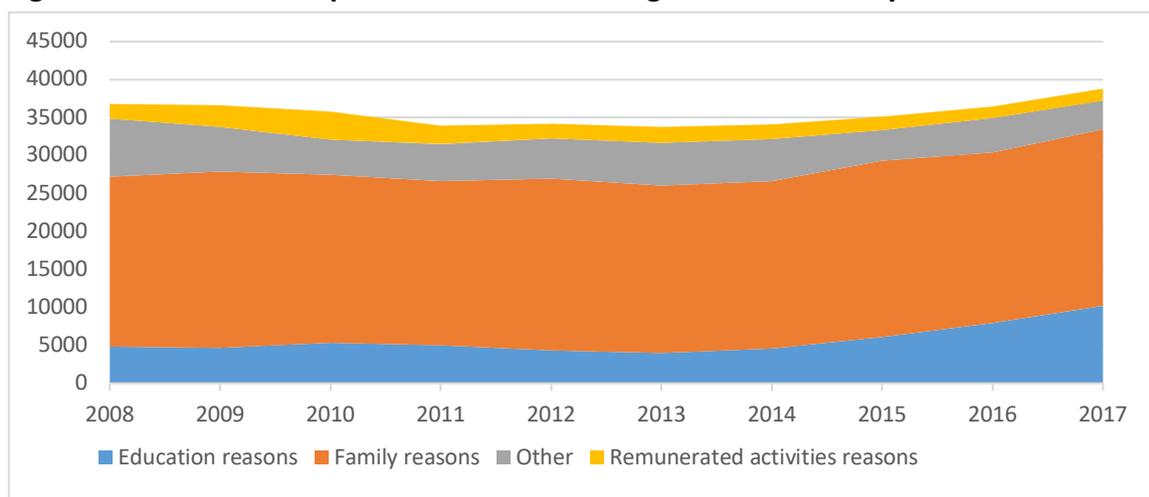
Amongst the Southern Mediterranean countries in our study, Algeria has the second largest migrant population in the EU after Morocco: as of 2017, 1.6 million Algerian migrants resided in the EU.²¹

Between 2008 and 2017, EU member states issued over 350,000 residence permits to Algerian nationals. The main destination countries were France, Spain, the UK, Italy and Belgium.

Most of the residence permits between 2008-17 were issued for the purpose of family reunification (63%). Permits for education reasons accounted for 6%, with a particular increase in 2015-17 whilst 14.6% of permits were issued for other reasons. **Permits for work-related reasons represented only 6% of all issued residence permits.** This group included only 48 permits issued under the EU Blue Card scheme, 497 for highly skilled workers, 2436 for researchers, 61 for seasonal workers. This indicates that EU-wide schemes (such as the EU Blue Card and the Seasonal Worker Directives) in practice did not attract many migrants from Algeria.

Bilateral agreements with France play a more important role. Thus, in 2015-17, the number of permits issued by France to researchers & students from Algeria almost doubled relative to 2013-14.

Figure 1. First residence permits issued to the Algerian nationals by EU Member States



Source: Eurostat

²¹ United Nations (2017) United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017

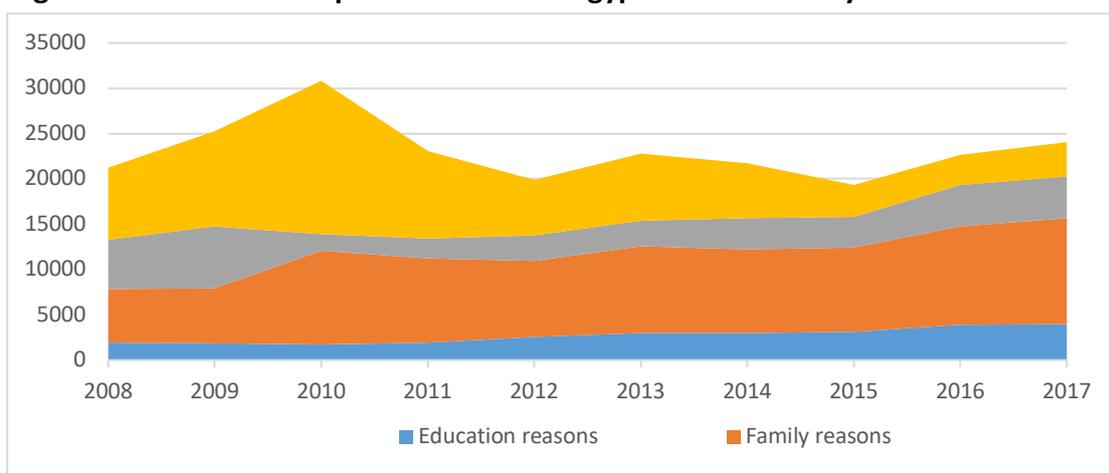
Egypt

The number of Egyptian migrants residing in the EU, as of 2017, amounted to around 290,000.²² EU Member States issued a total of 230,723 first resident permits to Egyptian nationals between 2008 and 2017. The main destinations for Egyptians in the EU were Italy, the UK, Germany, France, Cyprus and Greece. The major reasons for migration from Egypt to the EU were family reunification and remuneration activities. Over the same period, family reunification permits accounted for 39%, remunerated activities (32.5%), other reasons (16.4%), with about 12% of first residence permits delivered for education purposes.

Two major reasons for migration from Egypt to the EU were family reunification and work. Between 2008-17, family reunification permits accounted for 39% of residence permits delivered to Egyptians by EU Member States. **Residence permits for work-related reasons represented 32%.**

The number of work-related residence permits was particularly high between 2008 and 2011, peaking in 2010 – due to many work permits issued by Italy. Permits to seasonal workers from Egypt represented about 8% of all issued work permits. Their number, however, dropped substantially from 1481 in 2010 to only 155 in 2017. On the contrary, the number of permits issued to researchers and highly skilled workers increased from 140 in 2008 (1.8% of all work permits) to 943 in 2017 (23% of all work permits). This highly skilled migration includes EU Blue Card holders: since the introduction of the EU Blue Card programme in 2012, by 2017, 1094 permits of this type have been granted to Egyptian nationals – the largest amount amongst all other ENI SPCs.

Figure 2. First residence permits issued to Egyptian nationals by EU Member States



Source: Eurostat

Jordan

The number of migrants from Jordan in the EU, as of 2017, was estimated to be about 41,000.²² Between 2008-17, EU Member States issued 39,000 residence permits to Jordanian nationals. The main destinations for migrants from Jordan were the UK, Germany, Sweden, Italy and Spain. Between 2008 and 2017, 40% of residence permits were issued for education reasons, whilst family reunification accounted for 34% and 17% was for other purposes.

Work-related permits represented only 9% of all issued residence permits between 2008 and 2016.

Only 11 permits were issued for seasonal workers from Jordan. The number of residence permits for researchers and highly skilled individuals, including the EU Blue Card, was high in relative terms and represented about 27% of all issued work permits between 2008-17. A total of 192 Blue Cards were issued between 2012-2017, averaging 32 permits per year.

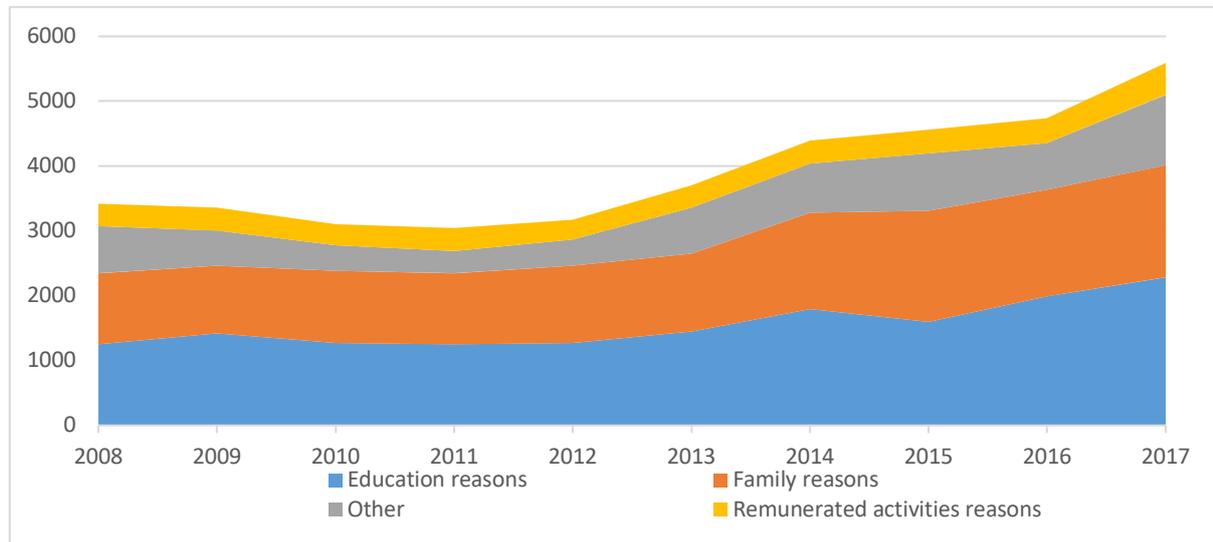
The Mobility Partnership between Jordan and the EU was concluded in October 2014. Whilst the Partnership framework foresees the intensification of migration links with the EU (amongst others, by the recognition of qualifications and by providing better information about employment and training opportunities to qualified Jordanians), the numbers in Figure 3 show that there have been no major developments since 2014. The annual number of work-related permits issued to Jordanian citizens by EU Member States remained below 400 until 2016. However, we can see a sharp increase of 112 permits in 2017, which could be the result of the EU and Jordan holding discussions on Visa Facilitation and Re-admission of persons residing without authorisation, under the Mobility Partnership framework and a mandate given by the EU Council in 2016.

At the same time, Jordan has been the largest recipient country amongst ENI SPCs. As of 2016, the country hosted over 3 million foreign-born citizens and 318,830 registered foreign workers.²² Egyptians accounted for about 53% of workers with the rest coming from unstable countries: Palestine, Iraq, and Syria.²² The country is also an important destination for regional labour migration: as of 2015, about 200,000 Egyptian workers (mostly in the Agricultural sector) were registered with the Jordanian Ministry of Labour. Labour migrants from South-East Asia (Bangladesh, Philippines and Sri Lanka) are mainly employed in Manufacturing and Personal services.²³ Therefore, the EU-Jordan Mobility Partnership has also concerned measures for improving Jordan's immigration policy and integration opportunities for hosted refugees.

²² See ILO (2010), on working conditions in Jordan

²³ European Training Foundation (2017), MISMEM Jordan

Figure 3. First residence permits issued to Jordanian nationals Jordan by EU Member States



Source: Eurostat

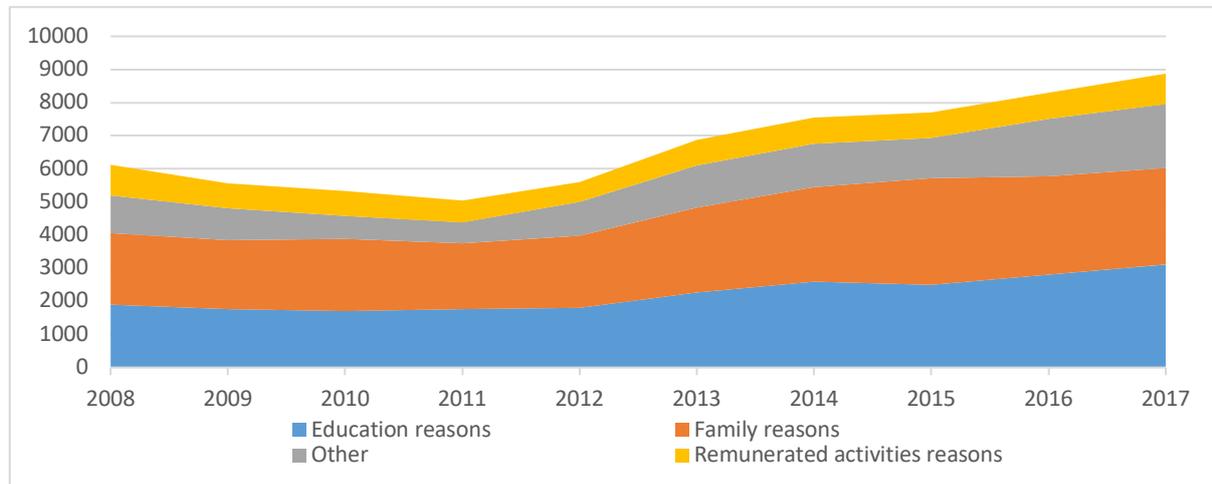
Lebanon

The number of Lebanese migrants in the EU, as of 2017, amounted to above 210,000. Between 2008-17, EU Member States issued over 66,000 residence permits to Lebanese nationals. The main destination countries were France, Germany, the UK, Italy, Sweden and Belgium. The composition of migration flows from Lebanon is similar to the Jordan case. Most residence permits between 2008-17 were issued for family reunification (38%) and education (33%) reasons.

Work-related permits constituted 11.5% of all the residence permits issued from 2008 to 2017.

During this period, less than 1% of permits were issued to seasonal workers, whilst permits for highly skilled immigrants and researchers represented 27% of all work-permits.

Figure 4. First residence permits issued to Lebanese nationals by EU Member States



Source: Eurostat

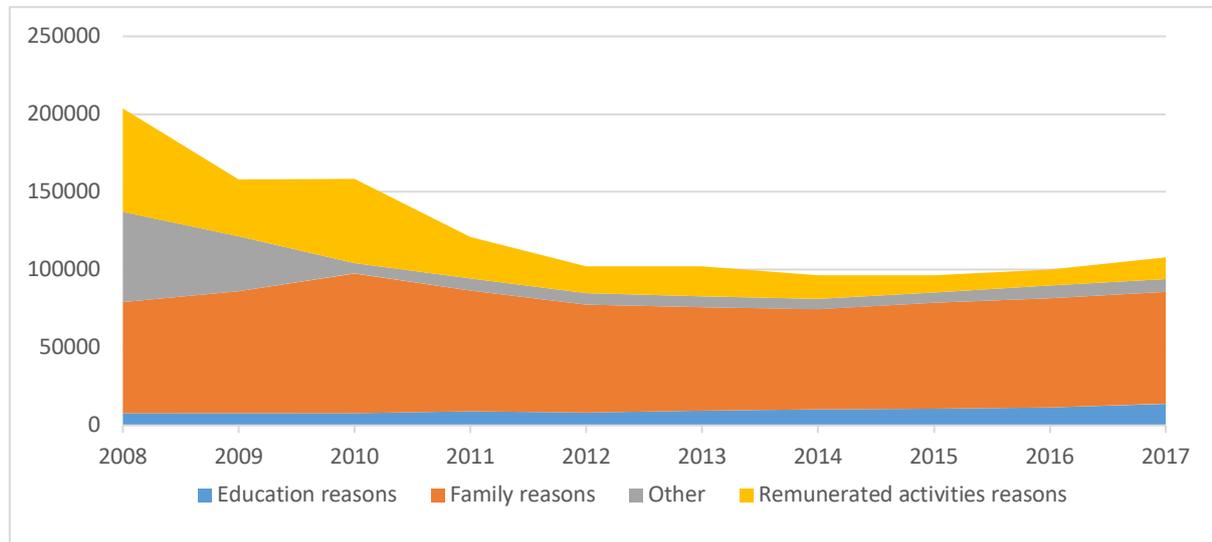
Morocco

Amongst the seven ENI SPCs in the Study, Morocco has the largest diaspora in the EU, with more than 2.5 million first-generation migrants, as of 2017.²² From 2008-17, EU Member States issued about 1.2 million residence permits to Moroccan nationals. The main destination countries were Spain, Italy, France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. Between 2008 and 2017, most residence permits (58%) were issued for family reunification reasons. Education-related permits constituted less than 8% of all residence permits.

Permits related to work accounted for 22% of all residence permits granted to Moroccans.

Morocco was also one of the first countries in the Mediterranean region to conclude the Mobility Partnership with the EU (June, 2013). However, the migration flows from Morocco were strongly affected by the economic slowdown in Italy and Spain: the number of issued work permits decreased by 75% between 2008 and 2012, falling from 66,438 to 16,914. Seasonal work used to be an important migration channel between Morocco and the EU (mainly Spain), accounting for 25% of all issued work permits from 2008-16. The absolute number of permits for seasonal work, however, dropped every year since 2010. The number of residence permits issued to highly skilled workers and researchers remained stable from 2008-16, representing less than 1% of all work permits issued to Moroccan nationals.

Figure 5. First residence permits issued to Moroccan nationals by EU Member States



Source: Eurostat

Palestine

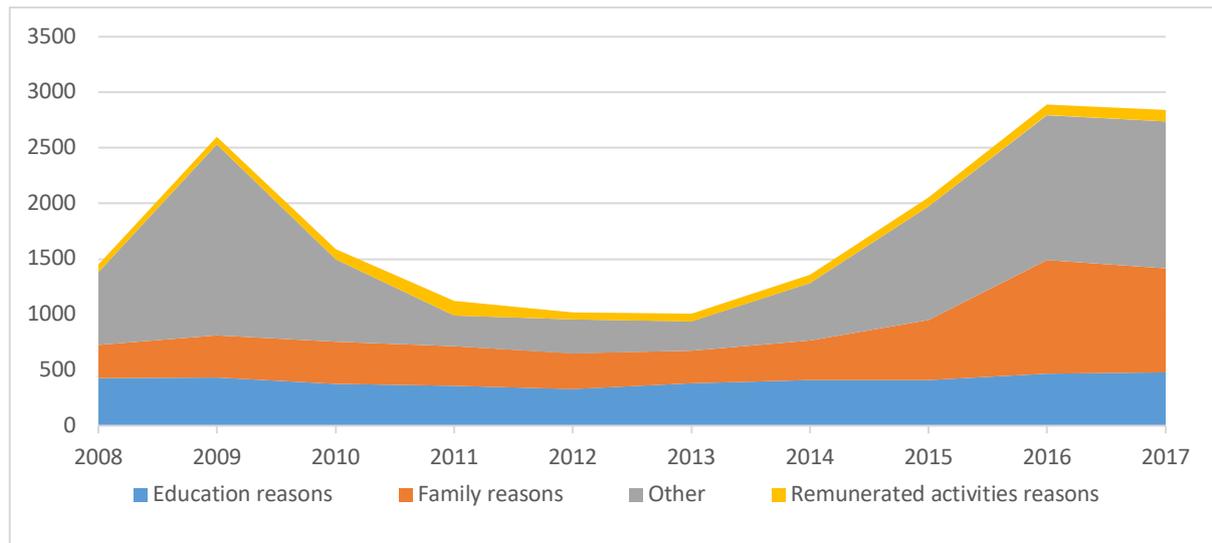
From 2008-2017, EU Member States issued about 18,000 residence permits to Palestinian nationals. The main destinations for Palestinians in the EU were the UK, Cyprus, Sweden, Italy, Belgium and France. Unlike other ENI SPCs, Palestinians mainly migrate to the EU and other countries for humanitarian reasons (about 45% between 2008-2017). Family permits represented 26% of residence permits delivered to Palestinians between 2008 and 2017. Education-related permits accounted for a comparable share – 23%.

Work-related permits represented less than 5% of the total number of residence permits. Amongst work permits, 20% were issued to highly skilled migrants, including one Blue Card holder, and researchers.

The big rise in residence permits delivered in 2009 was driven by the increase of permits under the category “other”, which almost tripled and by the big increase of permits delivered to Palestinians by Cyprus. They issued four times more permits in 2009 than in 2008, but in 2010 the number of permits they granted was comparable to the 2008 number. The second escalation in residence permits between 2014 and 2016 was driven by the increase of residence permits under “family reasons”, which almost tripled from 353 family permits in 2014 to 1022 permits in 2016, 938 permits in 2017 and “other reasons”, which more than doubled, going from 516 in 2014 to 1302 in 2016 and

increasing to 1319 in 2017. Such an increase can be explained by Sweden starting to grant residence permits for Palestinians in 2015 and becoming the fourth biggest destination country for Palestinians for the period 2008-17, despite only starting to grant residence permits in 2015.

Figure 6. First residence permits issued to Palestinian nationals by EU Member States



Source: Eurostat

Tunisia

Between 2008-2017, EU Member States issued about 566,000 residence permits to Tunisian nationals. The main destination countries were France, Italy, Germany, Belgium and the UK.

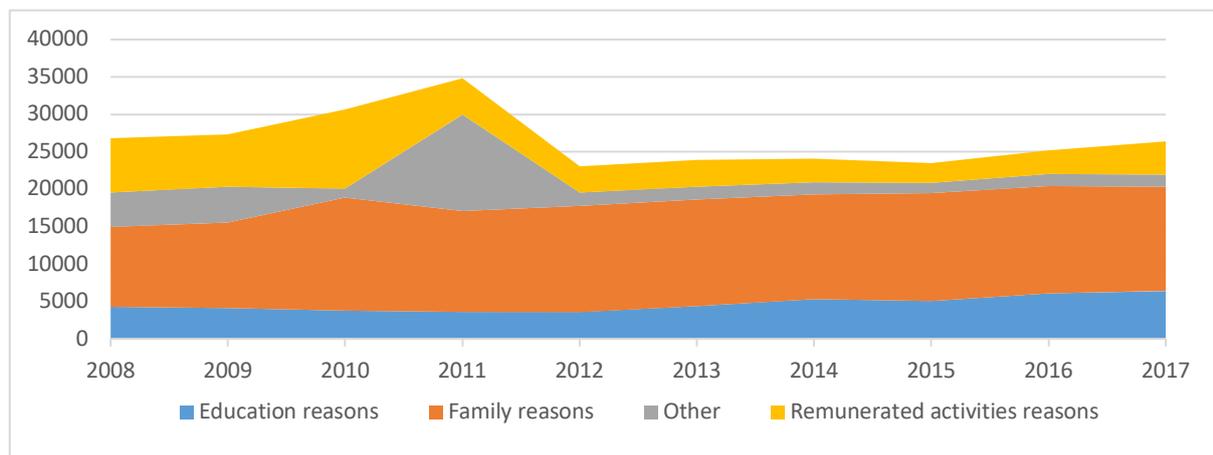
Similar to Morocco and Algeria, family reunification constituted the most common migration reason (51% of all issued permits between 2008 and 2017). Education-related permits accounted for 17% of all residence permits issued to Tunisians. This number slightly decreased by 16% between 2008 and 2012, and almost doubled in the aftermath of the Arab spring.

Work-related permits represented 19% of all residence permits. The number of this type of permits peaked in 2010, mainly driven by offers from Italy. Starting in 2011, however, the number of issued work permits has remained relatively small. Seasonal work used to be relatively important; between 2008 and 2017, about 10% of work permits were issued to seasonal workers. The highest numbers of seasonal work permits were registered in 2009 and 2010; whilst from 2011, the number of migrants

admitted to the EU for seasonal work has substantially declined. Highly skilled migration channels, including the EU Blue Card and permits for researchers, remained stable between 2008-2017, accounting for about 7% of all work permits issued to Tunisian nationals.

The Mobility Partnership with the EU was concluded in March 2014 and the cooperation foresees a number of projects aimed at fostering qualified migration to EU Member States (such as matching programmes by ANETI or the Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency, or a skill partnership in the Healthcare sector with TAPIG).

Figure 7. First residence permits for work-related reasons issued to Tunisian nationals by EU Member States



Source: Eurostat



ANNEX II:

Title of the Project	Beneficiaries	Duration	Implementer	Objective	Fund and Budget	Evaluation (if available)
Placement in Europe						
Pilot project to promote regular labour migration amongst highly qualified Tunisians	100 Engineers	July 2012 to December 2013	GIZ and commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	To promote legal mobility amongst highly qualified experts from Tunisia and to put young Tunisian engineers in touch with German companies.	The costs of the programme are not disclosed	65 of these participants received a fixed-term contract of employment at the end of their internship (a pilot for German Tunisian Mobility Pact). Taking part in the project has given these young engineers long-term career prospects in Germany. Those who returned home are now applying in Tunisia.
German Tunisian Mobility Pact	150 young unemployed STEM-Engineers	August 2014 to June 2016	GIZ with partnership of ANETI and commissioned by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany.	To create career prospects for young Tunisian Professionals in Germany: pre-departure training and internships in Germany, followed by the possibility of being employed as regular	The costs of the programme are not disclosed	Language training (B1 to 117 participants). Pre-selection based on skills and cultural characteristics. Direct support to candidates (where and how to apply). Support to employers (explain

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Legal migration pathways across the Mediterranean: Achievements, obstacles and the way forward

				workers.		administrative procedure, implicit referral to candidates). Training of ANETI employers with a paid visit to Germany, to establish personal contacts with BA and Chamber of Commerce. 100 participants started an internship in Germany; 75 eventually stayed in Germany under the Blue Card or a national scheme.
German-Moroccan partnership for training and skilled worker recruitment²⁴	110 young participants from amongst a large number of applicants	August 2016 to July 2018	Morocco's employment agency ANAPEC commissioned by GIZ	To recruit and train young (school graduates) from Morocco to do a vocational degree in Germany – hospitality and catering.	USD1.75 million by the World Bank, excluding vocational training in Germany (covered by employers)	A total of 97 trainees continue to participate in the project, which is a high number given that the dropout rate for hospitality trainees is high in Germany.
TAPIG	50 migrants	2012 to	Consultancy –	To provide a 6-month	€2.5 million,	The Tunisian authorities insisted on

²⁴ See GIZ (2018), on Moroccans receiving training in the German hotel and hospitality industry



Legal migration pathways across the Mediterranean: Achievements, obstacles and the way forward

(Transformation Partnership in the Healthcare Sector)²⁵	were envisaged to start an internship in Germany	August 2013	TAPIG project office	language and intercultural training for paramedical personnel for a 3-year apprenticeship in a Hamburg hospital.	Private Hospital Group Asklepios	selecting and placing already trained nurses instead of school leavers in the programme. This created a big gap between expectations about the job and its actual content and status. The programme ended due to the withdrawal by the employer.
Triple Win Nurses – Sustainable recruitment of nurses	2,200 Participants from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Philippines and Tunisia	2012 to October 2018 and Tunisia since 2017	GIZ and Employment agencies in the partner countries; Commissioned by employers in Germany	To recruit qualified foreign nurses in order to close the gap of nursing shortages in Germany and reduce unemployment of nurses in the countries of origin.	According to GIZ, it costs about €5500 to place a qualified nurse in Germany (recruitment and pre-departure training)	620 nurses have already started working in Germany (in clinics, geriatric care homes and out-patient services). 290 are still undergoing their preparations in their home countries. 284 Triple-Win positions have yet to be filled. The demand is still high, therefore further projects are envisaged.
Circular migration, training						
HOMERe (High	430 students	December 2014 to	Mediterranean Network of	To promote internship mobility between	€710 000 Main funds:	A pilot intra-Mediterranean internship mobility programme promoting brain

²⁵ European Training Foundation (2015), (MISMES): Tunisia



Legal migration pathways across the Mediterranean: Achievements, obstacles and the way forward

<p>Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment)</p>	<p>enrolled in postgraduate education in their final year of study (Master's, Bachelor of Engineering, etc.)</p> <p>Business and international companies</p>	<p>2017</p>	<p>Engineering and Management Schools (Réseau Méditerranéen des Ecoles d'Ingénieurs, RMEI)</p>	<p>Mediterranean countries for high-profile students in their last year of study before graduation.</p> <p>To ease their transition from the academic environment to qualified entry-level roles in their own country – in a region where youth unemployment often increases with the level of education.</p>	<p>hosting companies.</p> <p>RMEI: €60.000</p> <p>French Ministries of Education and of Higher Education: €30,000</p> <p>Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur: €44.000</p>	<p>circulation.</p> <p>A matchmaking platform for companies to source young talents from the Mediterranean region to become their interns.</p> <p>Strengthened linkages between business and universities.</p> <p>Development of national HOMERe Committees in each country of implementation.</p> <p>Potential employment opportunities for students in their country of origin after the internship ends.</p> <p>A regional network of internationally skilled interns.</p>
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<p>MENTOR (Mediterranean Network for Training Orientation to Regular migration)</p>	<p>20 young people from Morocco and Tunisia and 10 officials for study visit in Italy</p>	<p>15 October 2018 to 30 May 2018</p>	<p>In Italy: Municipality of Milan, Municipality of Turin, Piedmont Labour Agency In Morocco: Ministry of Moroccans living abroad and migration issues, Sections of Beni Mellal and Chaouia-Tadla of the ANAPEC In Tunisia: National Youth Observatory and the City of Tunis.</p>	<p>To strengthen cooperation between services for training, employment and youth in Italy (city of Milan and Turin), Morocco (city of Beni Mellal, Khouribga and Fquih Ben Salah) and Tunisia (city of Tunis).</p> <p>To Improve the skills of youth workers and the work of the territories involved to promote the circular and temporary migration of young people.</p> <p>To increase the information of Tunisian and Moroccan citizens on circular and temporary legal migration to Italy and the EU.</p> <p>To increase access to the</p>	<p>€543231,54 co-financed by the EU, ICMPD and MPF</p>	<p>Public services and organisations from Italy, Morocco and Tunisia working in the field of training, employment and young people are able to cooperate locally and internationally.</p> <p>Operators working in the field of training, employment and young people in the target territories are able to propose circular and temporary migration programmes, particularly in the form of training.</p> <p>Circular and temporary migration opportunities in Italy and in the EU are widely known.</p> <p>Young Tunisians and Moroccans are included in the local labour market.</p>
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				labour market of young Tunisians and Moroccans in their countries of origin because of training opportunities in Italy.		
Students						
Erasmus+ Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt)	Mobility scholarships for over 1000 students and researchers	July 2012 to the present	UNIVERSITE PIERRE ET MARIE CURIE and 19 other Partners	To support education, training, youth and sports in Europe for the citizens of Med countries.	€4, 422, 400 EU Grant	Results for this project are not yet available. They might become available after the project's end date.



Diaspora						
MedGenerati on Mobilising Diasporas for the economic development of The Mediterranean countries²⁶	More than 1,280 persons from three pilot territories in Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and France.	December 2013 to June 2016	France: ANIMA Lebanon: CCIA-BML Lebanon: Hariri Foundation Palestine: PIPA, PICTI, PIEFZA, Jordan: JIC, iPARK, RSS, YEA Young Entrepreneurs Association	To increase the contribution of the talents of the Mediterranean Diaspora for the economic development of their countries of origin. To accompany young Palestinian, Jordanian and Lebanese entrepreneurs and to promote their internationalisation.	€1.92 million,, funded 90% by the EU	Enabled the economic Diaspora representatives and the Jordanian, Lebanese and Palestinian governments to interact and share their views. Contributed to the local development and strengthened the entrepreneurial base in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine through support activities for investment projects, innovation transfer, training and coaching, and personalised support.

²⁶ See ANIMA (2016), on diaspora



Capacity building						
JEMPAS (Support for the Mobility partnership between the European Union and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan)²⁷	The government officials in the kingdom of Jordan. (Ministries of Social Development, Labour, Justice, and Interior)	January 2016 to 31 December 2018 + Six months extension	ICMPD with the cooperation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other actors in Jordan	To support the implementation of the Mobility Partnership between the EU and Jordan with a specific focus on strengthening the capacity of the government to develop and implement their national migration policy.	€2.5 million by the European Union	<p>Updated new national strategy on anti-trafficking plan.</p> <p>Supported with Implementation of national referral mechanism.</p> <p>Supported capacity building for law enforcement agencies.</p> <p>Facilitated study visits for European experts in Jordan and implemented peer-to-peer exchanges for Jordanian officials in EU Member States.</p>

²⁷ See ICMPD (2016), JEMPAS for support to mobility partnership

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