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NOTE

From:	Commission Services
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Operationalization of the Pact – Action plans for strengthening comprehensive migration partnerships with priority countries of origin and transit Draft Action Plan: Tunisia

DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (06.12.2021)

Delegations will find attached a draft action plan for Tunisia prepared by the Commission Services.

The Commission would very much appreciate that the text of the draft action plan be handled with discretion.

Action Plan: Tunisia

Overall EU Objectives – Lines to Take	
<div>DELETED</div>	
Goals for managing migration and addressing forced displacement – Lines to Take	
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Measures

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Timelines for action
A. Next Steps for engagement by EU and by Member States
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B. Next steps for funding measures
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ANNEX I

Existing EU cooperation and areas of engagement under the New Pact

I. Asylum / international protection

- The EU has supported Tunisia in drafting a national strategy on migration and asylum with funding from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa under MFF 2014-2020. The EU Trust Fund also provided funding to protect those in need (€9.2 million), with two ongoing regional programmes covering Tunisia. One is implemented by UNHCR and focuses on enhancing self-reliance and access to rights for refugees and asylum seekers in North Africa (€ 2.9 million), while the other is implemented by NGOs (€ 2 million). A bilateral programme with a consortium of NGOs will be signed soon (€4.3 million).
- Under MFF 2014-2020, the Commission provided support for the integration of migrants and protection via a Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP), with a total EU contribution for 2015-2020 of €57 million for the whole of North Africa. Implementation was led by the Italian Ministry of Interior.
- EASO provided support for development of legislation on asylum and the establishment of a national protection framework.
- Going forward, the EU's objective is to ensure that the migration strategy and asylum law are finalised and approved and provide a robust protection framework. EASO has invited Tunisia to participate in regional peer-to-peer, technical exchanges on asylum-related matters.

II. Addressing root causes

- Ongoing bilateral cooperation under the MFF 2014-2020 includes a series of programmes, which address the root causes of migration by supporting, among others, the political and socio-economic participation of vulnerable Tunisian youth (EU4YOUth, €60 million), the sustainable and inclusive economic development of Tunisia through the diversification of the touristic offer (Tounes Wjhetouna, €45 million) and a better social inclusion to reduce poverty, socio-economic and regional disparities (Programme d'appui à l'inclusion sociale, €100 million).

III. Migration governance and management

- Under MFF 2014-2020, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa supports Tunisia in the implementation of the priorities of its National Strategy on Migration with several programmes (for a total of €18.5 million). This includes support for the development of a broad database in order to have a reliable and representative figures on migration dynamics in Tunisia.
- The Tunisian component of the Border Management Programme (BMP) Maghreb, funded by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (€ 30 million), is implemented by ICMPD (2018-2022), and focuses on strengthening the Tunisian Garde Nationale Maritime (Coast Guard). The main pillars of intervention include: i) establishing an integrated border surveillance and coastal communication system, ii) providing operational equipment to the Coast Guard and iii) capacity building through training sessions. A € 10 million top-up is being finalised.
- The implementation of the Reform of the Security Sector in Tunisia, which aims at addressing irregular crossings, human trafficking and smuggling, is supported by €23 million from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.
- Frontex does not currently implement border related activities in Tunisia and Tunisian authorities are reluctant to cooperate with it.

Counter-Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings

- The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa finances the initiative 'Dismantling the cross-border criminal networks involved in human trafficking and smuggling of migrants in North Africa' (€ 3.2 million), which has a Tunisia component where Austria is in the lead. The initiative provides for equipment and training for officers of the Internal Security Forces and the DG for Customs.
- The 'Common Operational Partnerships along African migratory routes' programme, which includes supporting capacity building measures in relation to migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, is supported by € 7.5 million from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.

Awareness-raising

- Since 2016, 'Infomigrants', a news and information website for migrants to counter misinformation has been supported from the EU budget with €14.6 million. A specific awareness campaign in Tunisia, ARISE, was also supported by €900 000 from the EU budget under MFF 2014-2020.

IV. Returns, readmission, reintegration

- Negotiations on a readmission agreement are stalled since 2019, when Tunisia asked for a pause given that both presidential and legislative elections were taking place in October 2019.
- The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa supports socio-economic reintegration of returnees and has helped set up the Tunisian-led reintegration mechanism Tounesna (€2.5 million of support, with an additional €3.9 million to be contracted soon). The objective is to strengthen the capacities of the Tunisian authorities to carry out reintegration at central and local level and to reinforce coordination among EU Member States encouraging referral to the national reintegration mechanism.

V. Legal migration and mobility

- Tunisia is one of the beneficiary countries of the regional programme 'Towards a holistic approach to labour migration and mobility' (THAMM), financed by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (2019-2024, €12.5 million for Tunisia), which aims to support labour migration governance in the region as well as to set up or expand mobility schemes of workers to Europe. Pilot programmes have already taken place in Germany and Belgium and France might soon join. The project also includes technical assistance on drafting a National Strategy for International Employment and designing employment policies. The project could be built on as part of efforts to launch a Talent Partnership with Tunisia, as per Member States' interests.
- The EU budget also supports programmes on circular migration targeting Tunisians, such as HOMERe in the case of France (€1 million) and Mentor II in the case of Italy (€3.1 million).

ANNEX II

Member States’ bilateral engagement

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ANNEX III

Key figures and trends
Irregular migration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal border crossing of Tunisian nationals to the EU: 12 835 in 2021 as of 30 September, via the Central Mediterranean route. In the first three quarters of 2020, the number of Tunisians arriving to the EU stood at 9 959 (2 213 in 2019) • Irregular arrivals from Tunisia: In 2021 as of 30 September, 16 658 arrivals from Tunisia were registered to Italy (no arrivals to Malta), compared to 10 794 in the same period last year (3 136 in 2019) • Illegal stay of Tunisian nationals in the EU: 14 065 in 2020 (13 545 in 2019), of which 7 065 in France, 3 790 in Italy and 1 210 in Germany
Return <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tunisian nationals ordered to leave the EU: 12 820 in 2020 (11 980 in 2019) of which 6 935 in France, 3 790 in Italy, 535 in Spain • Return rate: 13% in 2020 (22% in 2019) • Highest return rate in 2020: 67% in Romania, 43% in Germany, 27% in Greece • Lowest return rate in 2020¹: 1.9% in Spain, 4.6% in Belgium, 6.2% in France
Asylum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First time asylum applications by Tunisian nationals: 2 690 in 2020 (3 640 in 2019) of which 1 000 in Italy, 415 in Germany and 270 in France • First Instance asylum decisions: 2 470 in 2020 (2 910 in 2019) • EU recognition rate excluding humanitarian protection: 4.7% in 2020 (3.8% in 2019) • EU recognition rate incl. humanitarian protection: 5% in 2020 (4.1% in 2019)
Legal migration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First time residence permits: 30 831 in 2019 of which 19 652 in France, 3 640 in Germany, 3 530 in Italy – No available data for 2020 • Total valid residence permits: 386 912 in 2019 of which 235 866 in France, 99 774 in Italy and 29 095 in Germany – No available data for 2020
Visas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short stay visa applications to the EU: 69 549 in 2020 (247 563 in 2019)² • Share of Multiple Entry Visas (MEVs): 39.3% in 2020 (39.6% in 2019). Top three Member States of Multiple Entry Visa issuance in 2020: France (35 122), Germany (4 744) and Italy (3 382)

¹ No decisions on return were issued in the following countries in EE, IE, LV, LT, MT and SI.

² The substantial decrease in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Visa refusal rate: 29% in 2020 (24.3% in 2019)

Asylum/International Protection in Tunisia and hosting forcibly displaced

- According to UNHCR, as of 30 June 2021, there were 8 465 refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia. Of these, 3 511 are from Cote d'Ivoire, 2 135 from Syria, 1 034 of unknown nationality, 468 from Guinea, 417 from Cameroon and 900 of other nationalities.³

³ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/tun>