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THE DYNAMICS AND STRUCTURE OF MIGRATION FROM NORTH AFRICA TO THE EUROPEAN UNION: AN ISSUE THAT IS YET TO ARISE

DINAMIKA I STRUKTURA MIGRACIJE IZ SJEVERNE AFRIKE U EUROPSKU UNIJU: PROBLEM KOJI TO TEK POSTAJE

ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to analyse existing and projected trends in the dynamics of African-European migration. Despite the belief that African migrations are extraordinary compared to those in the rest of the world, the reviewed modern theoretical framework offers different depiction regarding the motivations of the African population to migrate and the identification of relevant push and pull factors. The paper also includes review of the attitudes towards immigrants in EU countries, capturing cultural, economic and general dimension. The existing secondary data show that European public does not feel comfortable with the growing number of foreign immigrants, especially in Hungary, Czech Republic, Italy and Slovakia, which puts long-term pressure on policymakers and EU institutions in creating a robust system that can cope with both current and future pressures on the EU's external borders.

KEY WORDS: migration, North Africa, European Union

SAŽETAK: Cilj ovog rada jest analizirati postojeće i projicirane trendove u dinamici afričko-europske migracije. Unatoč uvjerenju da su afričke migracije značajne u usporedbi s onima u ostatku svijeta, suvremeni teorijski okvir nudi drugačiji prikaz motivacije afričkog stanovništva za migraciju i prepoznavanja relevantnih čimbenika potiskivanja i privlačenja. Rad također uključuje i pregled stavova prema imigrantima u zemljama EU-a, koji obuhvaća kulturnu, ekonomsku i opću dimenziju. Postojeći podaci pokazuju da se europska javnost ne osjeća ugodno sa sve većim brojem stranih imigranata, posebno u

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Mađarskoj, Češkoj, Italiji i Slovačkoj, što dugoročno vrši pritisak na kreatore politike i institucije EU-a u stvaranju robusnog sustava koji se može nositi s trenutnim i budućim pritiscima na vanjske granice EU-a.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: migracije, sjeverna Afrika, Europska unija

INTRODUCTION

Growth of migration from the Middle East and North Africa region to European Union (EU), the refugee's issues and border controls have become one of the most complex and long-lasting issues faced by EU policymakers. These issues are even more pronounced, especially in the circumstances of global COVID-19 pandemic when significant public resources must be directed towards dealing with this crisis and its consequences on all aspects of life. In this paper, we study migrations with focus on those permanent and external (cross-border), which can further be divided into spontaneous and organized with the help of criminal smuggling routes or asylum programs offered by EU member states. The main goal of the paper is to analyse African-European migration, with special emphasis on hotspots of African external migrations. The rationale for such approach lies in the fact that while the movement of migrants from the Middle East to Europe seems to have levelled off in very recent times, the migration of people from Africa appears to be at its starting point (Malka, 2018). Also, as Baldwin-Edwards (2006: 11) point out, "the complex interconnectedness of migrations and socio-economic development in Africa is lost in Eurocentric approaches".

A commonly accepted theoretical view of specifically African-European migration, and of south-north migration in general, is the one that describes these migration trends as a consequence of the developmental failure of southern countries (Bakewell, 2008). Based on the idea that poverty and the income gap between poor and rich countries are at the root of migratory forces, and faced with the ineffectiveness of increased border controls, the frequently proposed solution is to stimulate development in emigration countries through aid programs, increased trade or remittances (De Haas, 2007). However, the idea that most African migration is driven by poverty or conflicts ignores the evidence that demographic and economic transition and development in poor countries are generally associated with an increase, and less with a decrease in mobility and migration, as well as that the link between development and migration is fundamentally non-linear (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016).

The paper is structured as follows. After the introduction, the second section offers theoretical and empirical overview of global migration trends. Section 3 deals in more detail with North-African migration to European Union, which is recognized as an issue that is yet to arise, whereas the North African countries that will be analysed are Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. In this section we analyse trends in North-African migration and its determinants, as well as EU population sentiment towards migration. In Section 4 conclusion and some policy implications are offered.

GLOBAL MIGRATION: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

Globalization plays a crucial role in migration trends. The events of the last decade have significantly highlighted the issue of human migration and presented new challenges to European institutions and decision-makers that they will have to address in the near and distant future. Such a situation is easily predictable due to the slow growth and development of the countries of the African continent combined with their high birth rates. High poverty rates, as well as political and economic instability combined with the development of infrastructure (primarily Internet) have enabled the development of human migrant flows to Europe in bigger volume and complexity than has been recorded in recent European history. With the global population growing from 3.7 billion in 1970 to 7.2 billion people in 2017, globalization, economic inequality and demographic change have contributed to the magnitude of migratory flows, mostly from south to north. However, while migration is at the central stage in relations between EU and Africa, divergence between the attitudes and priorities on both sides stands as a challenge for designing a shared partnership agenda (Lahlou, 2021). Today especially, Europe faces significant challenges in conflict zones that are widespread in the Middle East and North Africa, and with several volatile states due to population growth, growing urbanism, and large economic inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Dakos, 2017). In addition, socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis are expected to impact migrants living in these areas much more than in Western economies.

There are many obstacles that prevent a quality response to present migration issues, and one of such obstacles lies in the availability of credible and complete data. In a report published in 2018, McKinsey & Company listed some of their most significant findings on data sources of global migrant trends and the general migrant situation (McKinsey & Company, 2018). It is stated that, although refugees are often in the media focus, 90% of the world's migrants, or about 247 million of them, have voluntarily migrated across borders, usually due to the economic (push and pull) reasons. This type of migration flows is of a calmer, gradual nature, which puts less stress on the logistics and social judgement in immigration countries. In addition, most voluntary migrants are working age adults, contributing to the growth of the economically active population in destination countries (McKinsey & Company, 2018).

Figure 1 and 2 offer a general picture of global migration data. According to IOM data (2018), shown in Figure 1, in 2017 the total number of people living outside the country of birth was estimated at 258 million, compared to 173 million in 2000 and 102 million in 1980, respectively. Despite the noticeably large estimated absolute growth in the number of international migrants, in relative terms the percentage in the total world population remained at approximately the same level, and it is estimated at 3.4% in 2017, compared to 2.8% in 2000 and 2.3% in 1980.

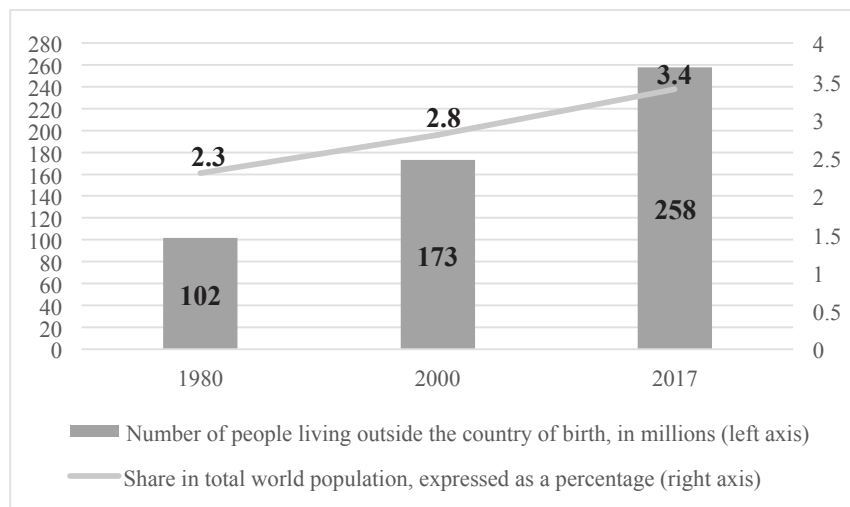


Figure 1: Total number of people living outside the country of birth (absolute and relative numbers)

Source: Authors based on IOM data (2018)

Based on an estimate of the absolute number of international migrants, IOM researchers estimate that somewhere between 35 and 40 million people migrate globally every 5 years. According to the same aggregate data, and in terms of age and gender composition, two-thirds of international migrants live in Europe or Asia. The median age of international migrants is 39 years, 48% of them are female, and 14% of international migrants are younger than 20 years (IOM, 2018).

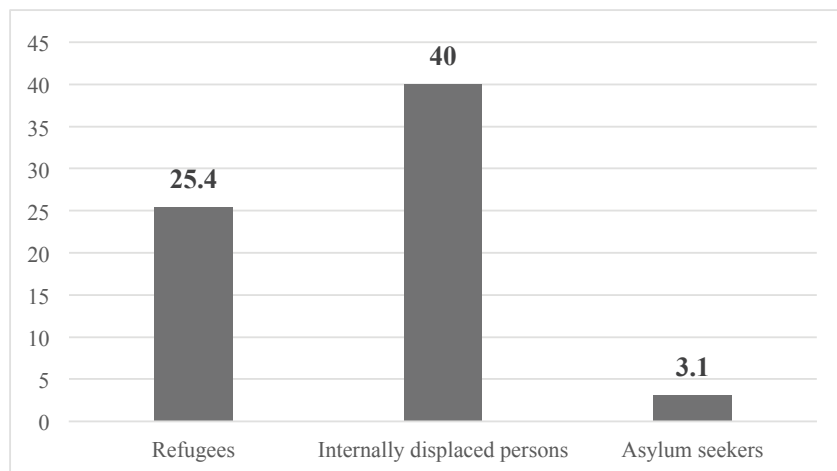


Figure 2: Structure of population displaced by force in 2017 globally (in millions)

Source: Authors based on IOM data (2018)

Also, on Figure 2 we can see that the largest number of people that is displaced by force is found in the category of Internally displaced persons (data for 2017).

All types of migration are affected by both push and pull factors, which can be broken down into three broad categories. The first category includes socio-political factors, the second category includes economic factors, and the third includes environmental factors, which have become plentiful in recent years due to the consequences of global warming. First, under the umbrella of *socio-political* push factors which include ethnic, religious, racial, political, and cultural factors, the politicization of religious and ethnic identities can potentially cause significant conflicts within or between states in the event of spill-over of tensions and violent conflicts (Piesse, 2014). For example, Shimeles (2010) showed that political and economic governance quality influences the rate of skilled emigration from Africa. Empirical evidence suggests that the countries undergoing a political transition from authoritarian rule to democracy are at greater risk of instability and internal conflict, as well as that in socially heterogeneous states the potential for conflict may be greater than in homogeneous or more inclusive societies (Piesse, 2014). Political instability in regions such as the Maghreb, the Sahel, and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa greatly affects refugee and migrant trends toward Europe. Although according to the *International Institute for Strategic Studies* (IISS) data, the number of interstate and civil conflicts decreased from about 70 in 2001 to 40 in 2016, due to the fact that some of the conflicts on the African continent have persisted for many years, the emergence of new crisis hotspots has resulted in higher demand for humanitarian aid and an increasing number of dislocated populations (Dakos, 2017). As a result, individuals who migrate due to social or political conditions are more likely to do so as humanitarian migrants (Piesse, 2014). Using big data, Melachrinou, Carammia and Wilkin (2020) constructed the push index which combines 240 various factors (political, social, conflict, economic and governance) showing that countries with higher push index are Nigeria, the Sudan, Egypt, Libya and South Africa, implying that these are the most faced with conflict events, social uncertainties and economic problems that may push their citizens to migrate.

Another group of factors are *economic factors* that primarily refer to labour market, where people migrate in pursuit of higher wages, better employment opportunities and better living standards in general. Despite the fact that globally the middle class is significantly growing, economic inequalities and inequalities in access to resources such as energy, food or fresh water, play crucial role in migration trends. Furthermore, there are concerns about the fragility and instability of many low-income countries, as well as the impact of mega-cities on economic development and migration trends (Dakos, 2017). Although the south-north migration has historically been a major form of economic migration, over the past decade south-south migrations (migrations between low- or middle-income countries, i.e., migrations between countries of the same or lower income level) have become more frequent, with south-south migrations accounting for 36% of all international migrations, while south-north migrations accounted for 35% (data for 2013, United Nations (2013)). The growing prevalence of south-south economic migration is likely to continue as barriers to migration are lower than those for south-north migration, and as such they may be less disruptive to migrants and communities, or better accepted in immigration countries. In general, economic forces motivate individuals to move to countries where job prospects are better and then return to their country of origin, which is known under the term of

circular migration (Hugo, 2013). Also, economic migrants have more choice in choosing a destination country than humanitarian migrants. Many asylum seekers escape to the nearest safe country, while economic migrants move to countries that have a higher demand for their skills or provide better living and working conditions than the country of origin. Therefore, the pull factors of the destination country are more likely to influence the decision-making process of economic migrants (Piesse, 2014). Flahaux & De Haas (2016) highlight that African countries that are more developed have the highest concentration of extra-continental migration, while the countries with lower levels of development also have lower levels of overall emigration dominated by migration to neighboring countries. The authors stress that an increase in income, level of education and increased access to information increase people's ability and willingness to migrate, which is contrary to theoretical assumptions of African migrations being basically driven by poverty, political instability and underdevelopment, i.e. economic factors could outweigh the political ones. Although the outlook for a better life in economic terms surely is one of the most significant factors based on which people decide to migrate, it is not sufficient (Shimeles, 2010).

One should not neglect the *environmental factors* that encourage individuals to migrate, within which climate change is probably the most serious one. Those who choose to emigrate due to more frequent or more destructive natural disasters may present themselves as climate refugees and seek asylum in other countries less affected by weather extremes or climate change (Piesse, 2014). More precisely, climate refugees can be defined as: "... people who have to leave their habitat immediately or in the near future due to sudden or gradual changes in their natural environment associated with at least one of the three impacts of climate change: sea level rise, extreme weather events and drought and scarcity" (Forum on Climate Refugees, 2012). The both North and West Africa are under a significant influence of climate change (such as extreme heat, and food and water shortage), which puts additional pressure on migration trends but also on the incidence of new conflicts and poverty aggravation (Sultan, 2020). Even if individuals affected by climate change migrate only short distances, this can affect changes in social, political, and economic dynamics (Piesse, 2014). The combination of increasing population density and permanent loss of territory as a result of climate change is expected to lead to a significant increase in climate refugees, where estimates vary between 50 and 200 million climate refugees by 2050 (Dakos, 2017).

Finally, we can summarize 4 main reasons behind an expected rising trend of migration of people from Africa to EU which is at the centre of debate in this paper, and which are a combination of all of the above mentioned factors (see Malka, 2018; Idemudia & Boehnke, 2020): (1) the African population is experiencing a dramatic expansion with a projected population of doubling by 2050; (2) growing burden on economic resources for provision of employment, infrastructure and basic amenities in terms of electricity, health care, education and housing, most prominently in urban areas; (3) the low median age of Africans predisposes increased mobility, adaptability to new technologies and aspirations towards international opportunities; (4) the problems such as poverty, corruption, inadequate basic amenities for survival, political conflict, degradation of the environment and unemployment will persistently drive Africans to search for a better life abroad. Taking all of this into consideration, in the next section the focus is on the analysis of existing trends from North Africa to EU, as well as to the attitudes towards immigrants in EU countries.

NORTH-AFRICAN MIGRATION TO EUROPEAN UNION: EXISTING TRENDS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE IMMIGRANTS IN EU COUNTRIES

The remarkable growth of population in North African countries, resulted in an increased migration to Western Europe (Huntington, 2010: 25). And although human mobility has been a rather constant in the shared European–North African history (Lahlou, 2021), during the years, the Western countries developed the view that Africa is a continent where migration crisis and spontaneous displacements caused by poverty, violent conflict, and natural disasters are constant (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). Yet such perceptions are based on stereotypes rather than theoretically grounded empirical research. Moreover, African migration is both forced and voluntary, internal and transcontinental (Idemudia & Boehnke, 2020). Thus, the relationship between migration and economic, political and social development is rather complex and multidimensional.

Generally, there are two theoretical models that should be mentioned in the light of our discussions on the issue of North-African migration to EU. These are the systems approach to a theory of rural-urban migration and migration transitions theory. Within the first theory, i.e. the systems framework, along with the migrants' attention is put on the numerous institutions and the social and economic *flows* (Mabogunje, 1970). On the other side, within the migration transition concept migration is an integral part of the demographic, economic and urban transitions (Skeldon, 2012). De Haas (2007) links this to the idea of the *migration hump* according to which short-term increase in migration is a part of the economic development process due to the fact that there is a specific threshold of wealth needed in order to enable people to take up on the costs and risks related to migrating. De Haas (2007) in the same paper describes in details the evolution of North-African migration systems and divides it in the following periods: colonial and post-colonial migration; the so called guest-worker boom from 1963 to 1972; the 1973 Oil Crisis; the 1991 Gulf War and migrations to southern Europe since 1990. This list should be broadened by the prevailing trends shaped by the wide-ranging effects of COVID-19 pandemic. Precisely, with the global influence of the health crisis, movement restrictions and border closures, irregular movement from North Africa initially dramatically dropped in 2020, but started to increase again (e.g. data show a 155% increase in irregular crossings via the Central Mediterranean Route in 11 months of 2020 compared to the same period in the previous year) (Lahlou, 2021).

Drawing on the DEMIG¹ migration and visa databases as well as the Global Bilateral Migration Database (GBMD), Flahaux & De Haas (2016) explored the evolution and drivers of post-colonial migration within and from Africa and showed that although internal displacement and intra-regional mixed migration flows are still the most common form of African migration, since the late 1980s there has been a speeding up and spatial diversification of emigration (i.e. emigration to countries other than former colonies). The authors also offer a conflicting view on the reasons for the increase in African migration

¹ The DEMIG project, among other things, follows more than 6,500 changes in migration policy introduced by 45 countries around the world, mostly in the period 1945-2013. The database enables quantitative and qualitative research on the long-term development and effectiveness of migration policies.

stating that African migration is determined by economic and social transformation, and not by entirely by violence and poverty.

To continue further analysis on this issue, in the following lines we present the discussion on available statistical data, with special attention being paid to both the absolute and relative indicators. In this way we can get a better depiction of the migration dynamics in countries and regions of the African continent, based on which we will be able to identify which countries are more affected by the prevailing trends. The analysed data are from the “World Migration Report 2020” (International Organization for Migration, 2019). The population size used in the calculations of the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the total population of the country according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), which includes residents born outside the country. Immigrants are registered as foreigners (residents of the country born outside the country in question), and emigrants are registered as people born in the country who currently live outside the country of birth. Looking at data on migration in absolute terms, it is evident that some countries are faced with greater challenges regarding the immigration forces than regarding the emigration forces (International Organization for Migration, 2019, p. 57). The African country with the largest number of immigrants is South Africa with over four million immigrants. Over two and a half million immigrants have arrived in Ivory Coast, and Uganda hosts over 1.7 million immigrants. Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Sudan have received over a million immigrants. Most of these countries border or are close to areas where conflicts and an unstable political situation prevail. Also, these countries are attractive to immigrants because of the better economic situation compared to emigration countries. On the other side, the largest emigration countries of the African continent are Egypt (a country that has lost three and a half million inhabitants), Morocco (with over three million emigrants), South Sudan (over two and a half million emigrants), Sudan and Somalia (with over two million emigrants), while Algeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mali, Ivory Coast and Mozambique have between one and two million emigrants. On the other hand, in relative terms, the most affected countries of African migration are South Sudan (23% of the population is in exile and at the same time hosted 12% of immigrants), Somalia (13% of the population is in exile), and Ivory Coast where every tenth resident is an immigrant (International Organization for Migration, 2019, p. 57). Further, it is interesting to see which countries have the largest problems with forced migration in which individuals, families, and sometimes entire ethnic groups emigrate as refugees and asylum seekers. The category “*Hosted*” refers to those refugees and asylum seekers currently residing in the host country (right side of the chart), whereas the category “*Abroad*” refers to those refugees and asylum seekers who originate from that country but currently reside outside its borders. It is seen that more than 2.2 million people have fled South Sudan, and between one and two million refugees or significantly fewer asylum seekers in host countries have left Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Eritrea. In doing so, Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia have all accepted about four million refugees, of whom 1.2 million are in Uganda (International Organization for Migration, 2019, p. 59).

Also, the most frequent African migrant corridor is the one between Algeria and France, followed by two within the African continent. It is obvious that migrations between

African countries are as frequent as those between the countries of the African continent and Asian and European countries. About three and a half million migrants have crossed the migrant corridors between Africa and Europe so far. Over 1.6 million migrants crossed the Algerian-French migrant corridor, and over one million Moroccan-French (International Organization for Migration, 2019, p.58). Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia are the main African countries of origin of migrant routes to Europe, more precisely to France, Spain, and Italy. Since all three European countries in the past had colonies in today's independent countries of North Africa and are highly developed countries that have a coast in the Mediterranean, this situation is not surprising. France has particularly strong ties with its former colonies of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and is most attractive to its inhabitants as a country of destination due to the lack of language barriers as part of the local population uses French either in everyday use or as the official language of bureaucracy, media, state institutions and like.

More than a million refugees and migrants arrived in Europe by crossing the Mediterranean in 2015, nearly half of them from Syria, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said (Press Trust of India, 2015). During 2015, 1,000,573 migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea and arrived in EU member states, of which as many as 84% of migrants emigrated from only ten countries. This figure also marks an almost fivefold increase over the number of migrants arriving in Europe in 2014, when the UN recorded 216,000 arrivals (Press Trust of India, 2015). When crossing these migrant corridors, 3,735 missing's and fatalities were recorded in 2015 as they tried to cross the Mediterranean in search of a better life in Europe, in an attempt to avoid prolonged violent conflicts and economic poverty at home. The ten nationalities that accounted for 84% of arrivals in Europe via the Mediterranean in 2015 are: Syria (49%), Afghanistan (21%), Iraq (8%), Eritrea (4%), Pakistan, Nigeria, and Somalia (2 %), Sudan, Gambia, and Mali (1%). Of these, 58% are men, 25% children, and 17% women. Thus, it is possible to conclude that, in 2015, African-European migrant corridors were mostly used by migrants from the Middle East and Asia.

Given the relative proximity and relative safety of the Mediterranean Sea, these migrant corridors are expected to remain open in the future, either as official, legal and organized interstate corridors of regular or occasional population migration, or as illegal, especially between Libya and Italy due to the unstable and violent situation in Libya (civil war and organized smuggling groups). In addition, the social and economic effects of COVID-19 pandemic are expected to result in even more poverty and unemployment, which could lead to some increased migrations, both in the Maghreb and in Sub-Saharan Africa (Lahlou, 2021).

Figure 3 shows the shares of African immigrants in the EU by region of birth, between 2008 and 2018, in the total number of African immigrants during the stated time period.

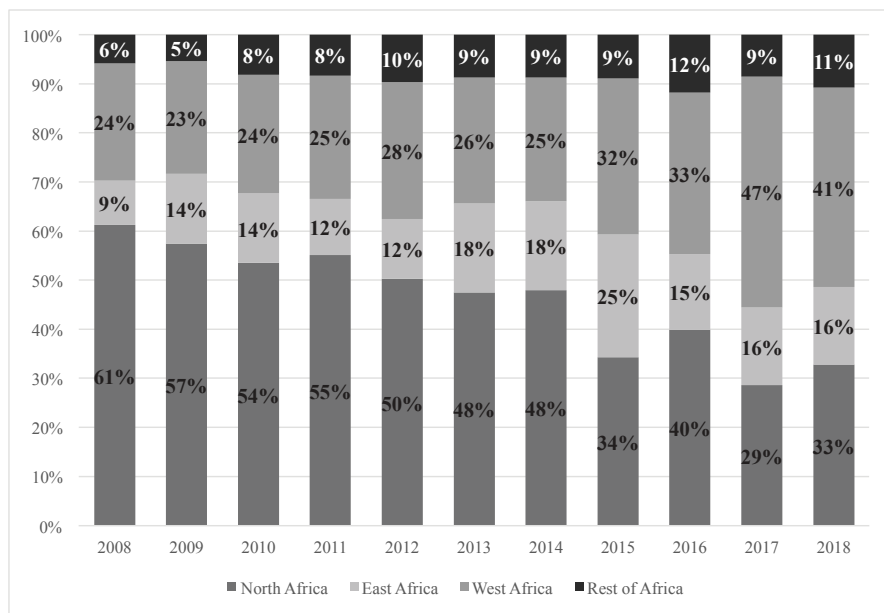


Figure 3: African immigrants' shares in the EU by region of birth

Source: Authors based on (Eurostat, 2020) data

Data point out to a noticeable change in the structure of immigrants, where the share of immigrants born in West Africa is increasing, while the share of immigrants born in North Africa is declining. The share of immigrants from North Africa in 2008 was 61.30%, and in 2018 32.80%, while the share of immigrants born in West Africa increased from 23.93% in 2008 to 40.65% in 2018. The share of immigrants from East Africa fluctuates between 8.39% in 2008 and 25.04% at its peak in 2016. The changes in the structure were derived from data taken from (Eurostat, 2020), the main limitation of which is that they are incomplete, and the data are missing for Germany, France, the UK, and some other EU-28 / EU-27 Member States². Although, the database contains detailed data for Italy and Spain and most other Member States. The OECD has similar problems with collecting reliable data, which in turn shows nationalities in its database, not the countries of birth of African immigrants. As a result, comparable data from the OECD and Eurostat often diverge. Nevertheless, having in mind all the stated limitations, in the following lines we single out the host countries with the highest influx of immigrants from North Africa.

Figure 4 shows the number of newly arrived African immigrants to EU-18 countries³. Even though there could be a noticeable shift in the share if the data were complete, the evident downward trend in the number of African immigrants should remain relatively stable.

² The number of African immigrants arriving in Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, and United Kingdom has been omitted due to missing data.

³ Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, and United Kingdom from the standard EU-27/28 omitted due to missing data.

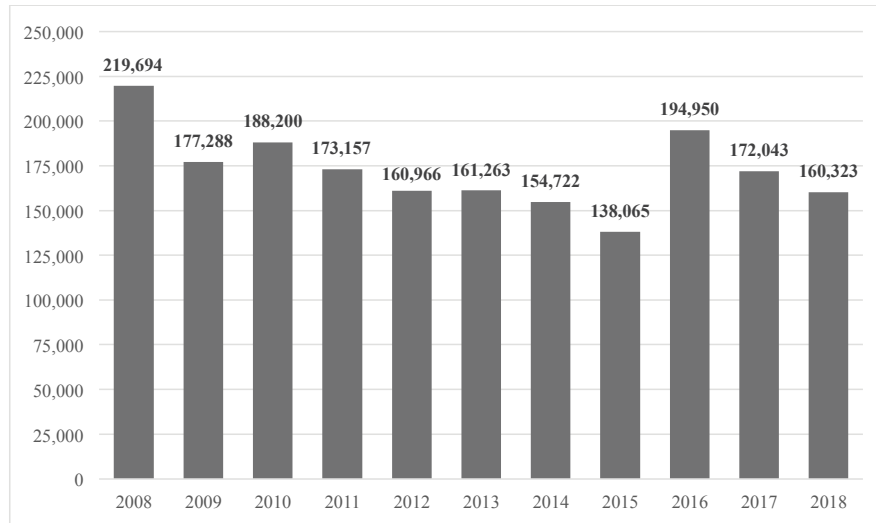


Figure 4: Number of newly arrived African immigrants in the EU-18

Source: Authors based on (Eurostat, 2020) data

Further, Figure 5 shows combined data on newly arrived Libyan, Tunisian, Algerian, and Moroccan immigrants in selected EU countries, where data is available.

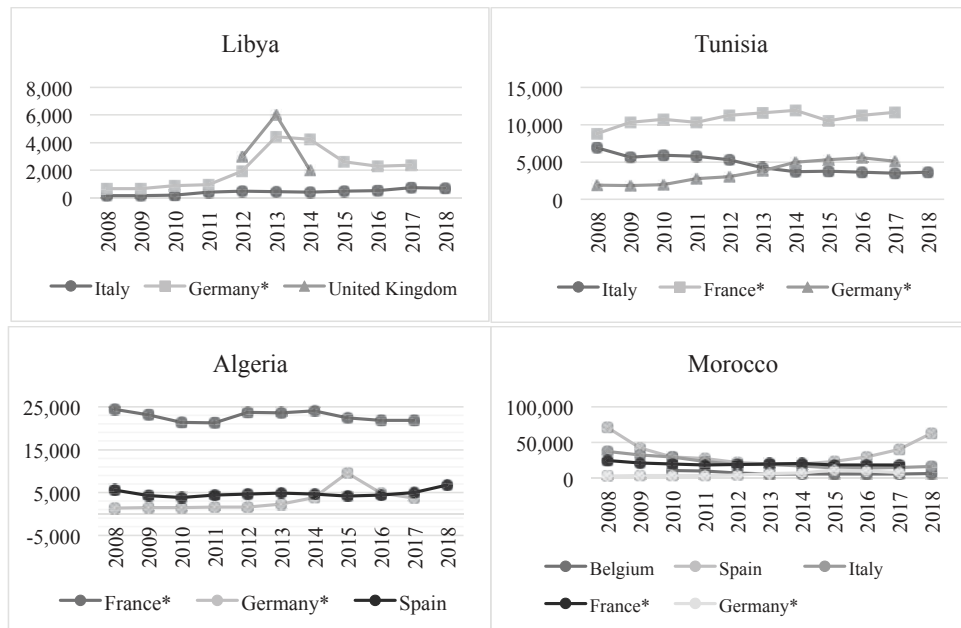


Figure 5: Number of newly arrived immigrants to selected EU countries

Source: Authors based on data from (Eurostat, 2020) (OECD, 2020)

Note: OECD data is marked with the (*) symbol

Regarding the data for Moroccan immigrants in Belgium, a noticeable drop in new immigrants from Morocco starts in 2012, when 7,507 new Moroccans arrived, and in 2018 this number was 6,686. In 2008, Spain recorded 71,148 immigrants born in Morocco, by far the most of all other countries in the survey due to geographical proximity and historical connectivity. However, the number of newly arrived Moroccans dropped sharply to 29,632 in 2010, and the decline continued until 2014, when only 19,921 newly arrived Moroccans were registered. The trend then reverses, so in 2018, the Spanish authorities state that 62,609 Moroccans arrived in the country. In 2008, Italy recorded 37,379 newly arrived immigrants born in Morocco, and the number dropped from year to year until 2017. In 2018, Italy recorded 16,870 newly arrived Moroccans. Data for Spain and Germany are based on OECD data indicating the nationality of the immigrant, not the country of birth, and the data are incomplete because there are no publicly released data for 2018. Nonetheless, they offer interesting insights. In 2008, France registered 24,866 newly arrived Moroccans, and Germany only 3,374. The number of Moroccan immigrants in the observed period, in France, is relatively stable and usually numbers around 20,000. In 2017, that number was 18,792. At the same time, Germany experienced a slow growth of Moroccan immigrants and at the end of the period recorded 8,436 newly arrived Moroccans (Eurostat, 2020) (OECD, 2020).

Next, from the aspect of new Algerian immigrants by country of birth (for Spain) or nationality (for France and Germany), data show that France attracts the most Algerian immigrants, far more than any other EU member state. This can be explained by colonial history, cultural, and political ties. In the observed period 227,594 Algerian immigrants arrived in France, while 84,670 of them arrived in Germany and Spain combined. The dynamics of immigration is relatively stable, except in 2015, when 9,596 Algerian immigrants arrived in Germany, almost two and a half times more than in the year before (Eurostat, 2020) (OECD, 2020). Next, one can observe a noticeable decline in newly arrived Tunisian immigrants in Italy, and an increase in France and Germany. For Libyan immigration to Italy, Germany, and the UK, data point out that the height of immigration was in 2013 at the peak of the Libyan civil war. Despite this, the number of Libyan immigrants is markedly low compared to other North African countries.

In order to obtain broader picture, Figure 6 summarizes data on immigration to Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy (selected according to the principle of the largest influx of immigrants from North Africa) from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya.

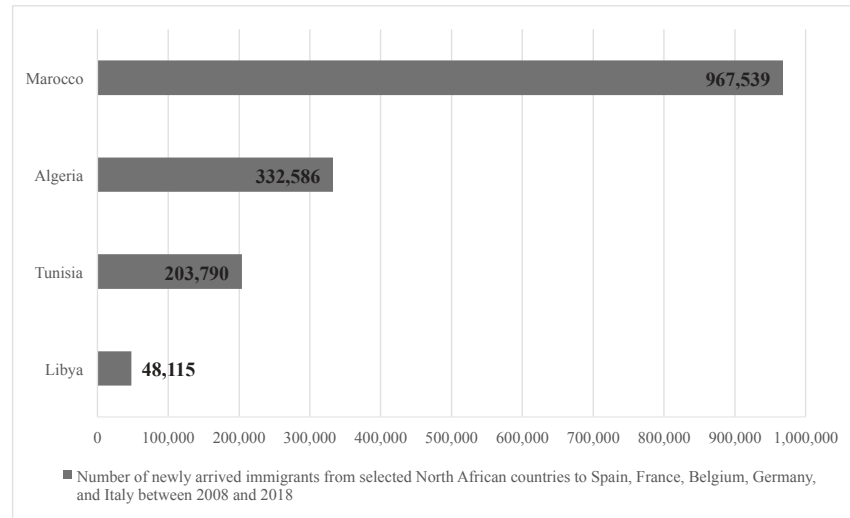


Figure 6: Number of newly arrived immigrants from selected North African countries to Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy between 2008 and 2018

Source: Authors based on data from (Eurostat, 2020) (OECD, 2020)

There is an obvious discrepancy in the structure of immigrants from North Africa. By far the most, 967,539 of them arrived from Morocco in the ten-year observation period from 2008 to 2018. They are followed by Algerian immigrants with 332,586 and Tunisian immigrants with 203,790. In the same period, only 48,115 Libyans emigrated to selected EU countries.

In order to grasp the causes of such differences, we analyse the relation between institutional quality in these countries on one side, and GDP per capita on the other side, with the total number of people from these countries immigrating to the EU (Figure 7 and Figure 8).

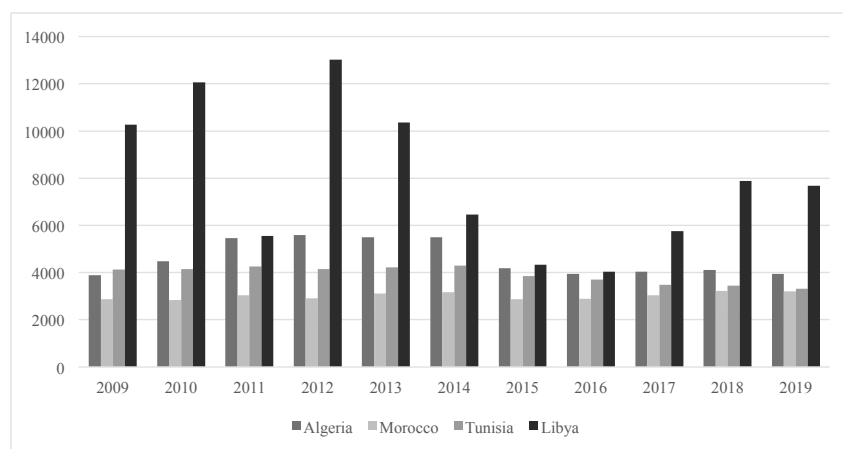


Figure 7: GDP per capita (current USD)

Source: Authors compilation based on World Development Indicators (World Bank, 2020).

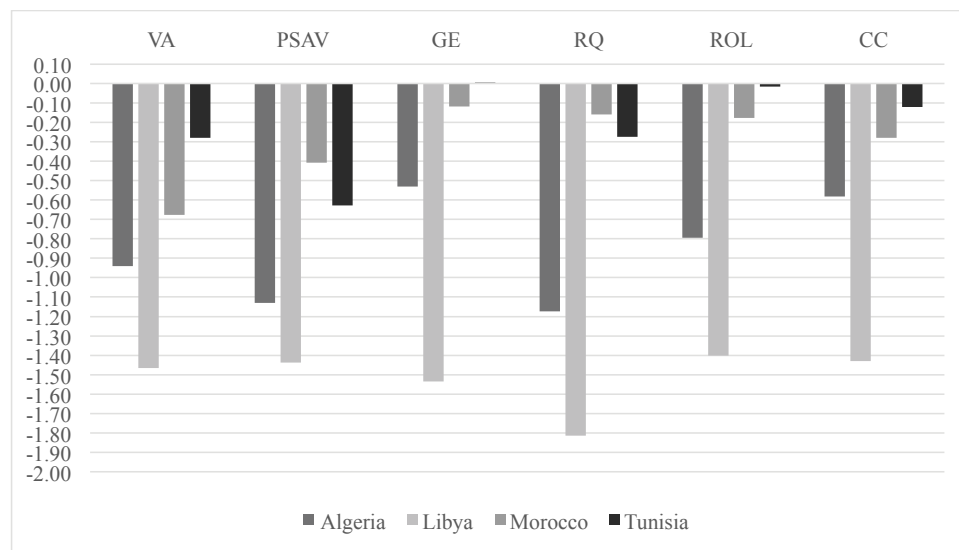


Figure 8: Worldwide Governance Indicators (2008-2019 average)

Source: Authors compilation based on World Development Indicators (World Bank, 2020).

Notes: VA, PSAV, GE, RQ, ROL, CC correspond to the six dimensions of governance: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption

Institutional quality is measured by the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) which captures six key dimensions of governance: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Lack of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption). These dimensions take value from -2.5 to 2.5^4 , with higher values indicating better governance, i.e. institutional quality. The data from figures above could reveal interesting insights. Libya, which records the worst scores in all six dimensions of governance but the highest GDP per capita, recorded the smallest number of immigrants to EU. However, Libya has a rather specific history of migration policy, mainly due to the development of its oil and a high per capita GDP. As a result, it was more of a destination country for labour migrants (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006: 313). Taking into consideration data for Algeria, we could intuitively conclude that economic factors, low GDP per capita, are the main reason for migration. Algeria was more ambiguous about emigration as a safety-valve for the labour market, preferring to denounce migration as a post-colonial form of dependency and instead relying upon development of its oil and gas reserves (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006: 313). This is definitely seen as an avenue for future analysis through the means of more sophisticated econometric analysis since the correlation between migration and economic and institutional development is not simple and includes a lot of endogeneity issues.

⁴ See <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Documents#wgiAggMethodology> for details on Methodology.

EU population sentiment towards migration

The sentiment of the EU population towards immigration is largely shaped by the media in some EU Member States. Eberl et al. (2018) state that media attitudes towards this topic vary depending on whether the EU member state has a colonial history or not. Former colonial powers such as the United Kingdom and France, which have had a tradition of immigration from their former colonies for some time, have different media views than the media in Italy, Spain, and Greece where there is no tradition of immigration from former colonies (Fengler, et al., 2019). Overall, existing analyses show that migrants participating in intra-EU migration are more often described as a ‘threat to the economy and social system’, while migrants arriving outside the EU are described as a ‘cultural threat in host countries’ (Eber et al. 2018, p. 6). As a rule, European media highlight negative aspects of migration and migrants and focus on domestic issues such as security, impact on the economy and cultural change. Moreover, there is a one-sided emphasis on the security aspects of immigration control such as borders, asylum and exclusion of illegal migrants (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006). However, after the refugee crisis in 2015, media reports attached more positive overview of migration, migrants, and refugees, although with a lack of context and a closer description of the complexity of the situation (Fengler, et al., 2019).

Nowadays immigration continues to be a hot topic in Europe. Despite the existence of balanced and calm discussions on this topic, political debates are sometimes dominated by anti-immigration sentiment. During 2017 and 2018, far-right political groups even encouraged fake news on migration which was mostly related to social networks and other online platforms and media, resulting in withdrawal of support for the migration agreement of some governments. In a study that was conducted in 10 EU member states by *The Pew Research Centre* (2016), more than half of respondents said they wanted fewer immigrants in their countries.

In the table below, we show the results of the *European Social Survey 2018* on the three dimensions of sentiment towards immigration – general, cultural and economic. The European Social Survey measures the perception and opinions of population in more than thirty nation-states, thus enabling the comparison of attitudes of population in EU member states towards the immigration issues in general. The original questions from the survey that are taken into consideration are the following:

Q1: Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?

Q2: ...would you say that [country]’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?

Q3: Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]’s economy that people come to live here from other countries?

We calculated the average of values from 0 (representing the answers worse place to live/cultural life is undermined/immigration bad for the economy) to 4 in order to express negative perception of respondents towards immigrants and the average of values from 6 to 10 (representing the answers better place to live/cultural life is enriched/immigration good for the economy)⁵ to express positive perception of respondents towards immigrants. The table was constructed via online analysis and it shows row percentages, i.e. percentage of all respondents who have negative perception on immigrants reflecting the average of value 0-4

⁵ Value 5 was not included since these respondents are neutral.

and percentage of all respondents who have a positive perception on immigrants reflecting the average of value 6-10 in each of the questions outlined above. According to recommendations from the European Social Survey (2014), when comparing data of two or more countries and with reference to the average (or combined total) of those countries, design or post-stratification weight in combination with population size weights should be applied, where population size weights make an adjustment to ensure that each country is represented in proportion to its population size and design weight corrects for the fact that in some countries respondents have different probabilities to be part of the sample due to the sampling design used (European Social Survey, 2014). Thus, these weights were selected and applied.

The numbers reveal that negative attitude towards immigrants prevails in the following EU members: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Hungary, Slovakia and Italy, from almost all the analysed aspects – cultural, general life quality and economy. On the other side, the countries where in average, the respondents have positive attitude towards immigrants are Finland, Ireland, Sweden and Belgium. The negative attitude in Italy can be explained by the fact that at the height of the migrant crisis, Italy was the main corridor for migration from the Middle East, which increased economic and political instability in the midst of the global financial crisis.

Table 1. Attitude towards immigrants in EU members (% of total)

	<i>General (Q1)</i>		<i>Cultural life (Q2)</i>		<i>Economy (Q3)</i>	
	Worse place to live	Better place to live	Cultural life undermined	Cultural life enriched	Bad for the economy	Good for the economy
<i>Austria</i>	9,3	4,8	8,8	7,3	6,1	9,5
<i>Belgium</i>	5,4	8,0	4,1	12,5	5,5	9,3
<i>Bulgaria</i>	10,7	4,2	10,5	5,0	10,2	5,3
<i>Cyprus</i>	9,1	5,9	9,8	6,2	9,8	4,6
<i>Czech Republic</i>	12,1	3,8	12,3	4,0	9,5	6,7
<i>Germany</i>	5,5	8,2	4,8	11,8	3,9	12,1
<i>Denmark</i>	4,1	10,1	4,7	11,7	5,5	9,4
<i>Estonia</i>	8,3	4,9	6,6	8,4	7,4	7,4
<i>Spain</i>	4,8	9,4	3,6	13,0	4,4	11,0
<i>Finland</i>	4,7	10,0	2,2	15,7	5,1	11,3
<i>France</i>	5,9	7,0	5,9	10,5	6,8	8,3
<i>Croatia</i>	6,9	7,9	6,4	9,0	8,4	7,4
<i>Hungary</i>	11,0	3,6	11,1	4,5	12,1	3,6
<i>Ireland</i>	3,5	13,0	4,2	12,6	4,0	12,5
<i>Italy</i>	10,0	5,8	8,5	8,3	8,4	8,0
<i>Lithuania</i>	5,9	7,0	6,4	7,5	5,8	9,2
<i>Latvia</i>	5,4	7,9	6,3	8,7	5,3	10,3
<i>Netherlands</i>	3,8	9,9	3,3	13,7	4,6	10,5
<i>Poland</i>	4,4	9,1	4,9	10,1	4,7	10,3
<i>Portugal</i>	3,7	9,5	3,3	13,1	3,1	12,5
<i>Sweden</i>	3,3	12,5	2,7	14,8	5,0	11,3
<i>Slovenia</i>	8,7	4,9	8,3	6,8	9,4	6,6
<i>Slovakia</i>	10,8	3,6	11,8	4,8	11,9	4,4
<i>Avg</i>	6,2	8,1	5,8	10,7	5,7	9,9
<i>Total</i>	6,4	7,7	5,9	10,5	6,0	9,7

Source: Authors compilation based on European Social Survey Round 9 Data (2018)

Note: The data are missing for Luxembourg, Malta and Romania, while UK is omitted as not being a EU member.

Such attitude is shaped by the trends in illegal migration. Although a trend of irregular migration to Europe through the sea has declined with less than 200,000 crossings in 2018 as compared to more than 1.8 million crossings in 2015 (Frontex, 2019), illegal migration imposes challenges for both European Union institutions and individual countries on migrant routes or immigrant destination countries. At the end of 2018, most of the illegal migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea used the Western Mediterranean route from the shores of North Africa to Spain. This statistic points to changes in migrant routes, as the highest number of illegal migrants in 2016 and 2017 was crossing the Mediterranean Sea via the Central Mediterranean route, which starts in Libya and most often ends in Italy or via the East Mediterranean route connecting Greece with Turkey.

The negative attitude towards immigrants could also be evident in the discrimination on various levels, especially during the period of economic crisis. Precisely, after the onset of the global economic crisis in 2008, the increase in the impact of discrimination on different immigrant groups was seen through the exclusion on labour market. Although the decline in employment of low-skilled workers has not been as dramatic as a fall in demand for highly skilled labour, demand for low-skilled labour continued to grow significantly, even during the crisis (Fellini, 2018).

Precisely, regarding the integration of African immigrants, Fokkem and de Haas (2011) examined the pre- and post-migration determinants of the socio-cultural integration of the first generation of immigrant groups in southern Europe. Their results show that immigrants who were well educated and well-informed before migration and who migrate at a young age achieve a higher level of socio-cultural integration. However, one should carefully interpret such results since as Shimeles (2010) pointed out, the sex, age and educational composition of migrants vary depending on whether migration is within or to the neighboring country, or to the developed OECD countries. For example, migrants to the OECD countries are generally older, more educated and more than 70% of them are men.

The research on this issue show that immigrants in the host-country labour market are under the influence of various factors: the influence of immigration history, the nature of immigration policies in host countries and attitudes towards immigrants, which all together form a national system that puts immigrants at a disadvantage (Tsfai, 2018). So, the conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of existing literature is reflected in the need for an immigration policy that would ensure the promotion of both economic prosperity and social cohesion of migrants with the local population. But, as Lahlou (2021) points out, first a shift at the ideational level which would lead to changes of a political and institutional nature, mainly on the side of Europe, is needed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The reasons for emigration, be they directed towards the EU or those within the African continent, are related to various factors, be they political, economic, social and/or environmental (climate). Unresolved conflicts, social violence and peacebuilding setbacks have resulted in the displacement of millions of people in Africa. Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia are the main African countries of the starting point of migrant routes to Europe, namely France, Spain and Italy, where France has particularly strong ties with its former

colonies Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and it is most attractive to the inhabitants as a country of destination due to the absence of a language barriers. Given the relatively safe Mediterranean Sea, these migrant corridors are expected to remain open in the future, either as official, legal and organised interstate corridors of regular migration, or those of an illegal nature.

Since the early 1990s, each Member States' policy towards immigrants and asylum seekers has been increasingly influenced by the EU institutions. However, there are many obstacles faced by the EU institutions, as some Member States are no longer too keen on leading an open dialogue in order to provide solutions to the problems related to immigrants (Neisser, 2016). An additional problem in EU stems from the rise of populist political options which are organized around issues of race, immigration, citizenship, as well as cultural integration, which results in negative sentiment towards immigrants in these countries as it has been shown in the previous section.

At the moment, the EU institutions are putting strong emphasis on establishing trade agreements with countries on the African continent in order to slow down the dynamics of African migration towards Europe in the long term. These efforts are expected to continue, not only because of economic motivations, but also because of public pressure in EU member states. For the most part, the public does not feel comfortable with the growing number of foreign immigrants, which creates political pressures on policymakers in designing a robust system that will be able to cope with current and future pressures. These pressures are even more highlighted if we take into account prevailing demographic trends. According to the UN scenario, the EU-27 population in 2030 could be about 2% lower than in 2010. Another worrying information is that of the median age of EU residents. In 1980, the median age of EU citizens was 34 years, in 2030 this age will be 44.7 years. It is obvious that in the future, Europe will need to attract migrants to meet labour market demand while improving the age structure of population (Dakos, 2017). As migratory pressures are expected to become even more severe in the long run, the main question is how will the already weakened EU deal with this potentially existential threat. But, as we could all learn on the example of COVID-19 pandemic, the EU approach to dealing the immigration issues will have to be based on a better understanding of the broader socioeconomic and developmental issues underlying migration in and from Africa (Lahlou, 2021). Finally, the crisis linked to the pandemic as well as further political instability, will only emphasise the existing trends, so we see the migration effects of COVID-19 pandemic which already hampered movement in Northern Africa as potentially significant area for next step in the research.

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