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# IRREGULAR MIGRATION OF EGYPTIANS

*Howaida Roman*

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**CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2008/68**

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**Irregular Migration Series**

*Socio-Political Module*

Cooperation project on the social integration of immigrants, migration, and the movement of persons (CARIM)

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**CARIM**  
**Euro-Mediterranean Consortium**  
**for Applied Research on International Migration**

**Analytic and Synthetic Notes – Irregular Migration Series**  
**Socio-Political Module**

**CARIM-AS 2008/68**

**Irregular Migration of Egyptians**

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This publication is part of a series of papers on the theme of Irregular Migration written in the framework of the CARIM project and presented at a meeting organised by CARIM in Florence: "Irregular Migration into and through Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries" (6 - 8 July 2008).

These papers will also be discussed in another meeting between Policy Makers and Experts on the same topic (25 - 27 January 2009). The results of these discussions will be published separately. The entire set of papers on Irregular Migration are available at the following address: <http://www.carim.org/ql/IrregularMigration>.

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## **CARIM**

The Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) was created in February 2004 and has been financed by the European Commission. Until January 2007, it referred to part C - “*cooperation related to the social integration of immigrants issue, migration and free circulation of persons*” of the MEDA programme, i.e. the main financial instrument of the European Union to establish the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Since February 2007, CARIM has been funded as part of the AENEAS programme for technical and financial assistance to third countries in the areas of migration and asylum. The latter programme establishes a link between the external objectives of the European Union’s migration policy and its development policy. AENEAS aims at providing third countries with the assistance necessary to achieve, at different levels, a better management of migrant flows.

Within this framework, CARIM aims, in an academic perspective, to observe, analyse, and predict migration in the North African and the Eastern Mediterranean Region (hereafter Region).

CARIM is composed of a coordinating unit established at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) of the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), and a network of scientific correspondents based in the 12 countries observed by CARIM: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and, since February 2007, also Libya and Mauritania. All are studied as origin, transit and immigration countries. External experts from the European Union and countries of the Region also contribute to CARIM activities.

The CARIM carries out the following activities:

- Mediterranean migration database;
- Research and publications;
- Meetings of academics;
- Meetings between experts and policy makers;
- Early warning system.

The activities of CARIM cover three aspects of international migration in the Region: economic and demographic, legal, and socio-political.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: [www.carim.org](http://www.carim.org)

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## **Abstract**

After defining irregular migration and tackling its different dimensions, the analytical note proposes to analyse the causes and dynamics of irregular migration in Egypt. It highlights furthermore the determinants of EU Policies in the realm of irregular migration, and Egypt's policy-making approach towards irregular migrants. The conclusion emphasizes the necessity of forging coherent and effective policies on irregular migration in the context of a partnership between origin countries and destination countries, and between government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

## **Résumé**

Après avoir abordé la définition et les dimensions différentes de la migration irrégulière, la présente note analytique met en exergue les causes et dynamiques de la migration irrégulière en Egypte. Dans un deuxième temps, elle analyse les axes fondamentaux de la politique de l'Union européenne dans ce domaine ainsi que la politique de l'Egypte vis-à-vis des migrants irréguliers. La conclusion insiste sur le fait que des politiques cohérentes dans le domaine de la migration irrégulière doivent être mises en place dans un contexte de partenariat entre les pays d'origine et les pays d'accueil, entre les agences gouvernementales et les organisations non gouvernementales.

## Irregular migration: definition and dimensions

The term “irregular migration” is commonly used to describe a variety of different phenomena involving people who enter or remain in a country of which they are not a citizen in breach of national laws. These include migrants who enter or remain in a country without authorization and those who are smuggled or trafficked across an international border. These different forms of irregular migration are often clustered together under the alternative headings of unauthorized, undocumented or illegal migration.<sup>1</sup> In a nutshell, irregular migration is migration that occurs outside the rules and procedures guiding the orderly international movement of people.<sup>2</sup> Stressful economic conditions, especially the absence of sustainable livelihood opportunities, poverty and unemployment, coupled with widening disparities in incomes and living standards between the North and South, are fuelling the emigration of young persons in a desperate venture to enter the European Union illegally.<sup>3</sup> So, irregular migration becomes a major economic, social, humanitarian, political and security concern for origin countries and destination countries as well.

The analysis of irregular migration is further hampered by a serious lack of accurate data, making it difficult to identify trends or to compare the scale of the phenomenon in different parts of the world. There is, however, a broad consensus that the number of international migrants, both regular and irregular, has increased. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimated that between 10 and 15 percent of Europe’s 56 million migrants are irregular, and that each year around half a million undocumented migrants arrive in the EU.<sup>4</sup>

This paper seeks to explore how the Egyptian government deals with the irregular migration of Egyptian youth to Europe.

## Causes of Irregular Migration

International migration is usually a response to differentials and disparities. When people decide to migrate, it is normally because they want to move away from the constraints and insecurity they faced in their country of origin, and because they consider that better conditions and opportunities exist elsewhere. In the contemporary world, the principal forces that are driving international migration are due to the “3Ds”: differences in development, demography and democracy.<sup>5</sup>

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the gap between living standards in richer and poorer parts of the globe is continuing to grow. In 1975, the *per capita* gross domestic product (GDP) in high-income countries was 41 times greater than that in low-income countries and eight times greater than that in middle-income countries. Today, high-income countries have *per capita* GDPs that are 66 times those of low-income countries and 14 times those of middle-income countries. These statistics help explain why so many people in low and middle-income countries wish to migrate to more prosperous states.<sup>6</sup>

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1 Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), “Migration in an Interconnected World, New Directions for Action”, GCIM Report, October 2005, p. 32.

2 International Organization for Migration, “Types of Irregular Migration”, <http://www.iom.int/>

3 Adepoju, A., “Recent Trends in International Migration in and from Africa”, [www.sidint.org/migration/BC1\\_Adepoju.pdf](http://www.sidint.org/migration/BC1_Adepoju.pdf), p. 1.

4 Global Commission on International Migration, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Widespread poverty and human deprivation, and the deterioration of the well-being of the vast majority of the population fuelled clandestine migrations. In recent years, macroeconomic adjustment measures and huge increases in the number of entrants into the urban labour market have created a sustained pressure for labour emigration. Added to this development, the retrenchment of public-sector workers in response to structural adjustment measures, as well as sharp increases in the number of annual entrants into the labour market have all fuelled the job crisis, creating a sustained pressure for labour emigration.<sup>7</sup>

The limited capacity of the labour market to absorb the annual cohorts of job seekers productively turns them into potential emigrants. Poverty is the push factor, while the enhanced living conditions in the countries of the North is a pull factor.

The number of irregular migrants has not declined, despite increased spending on enforcement measures in major destination countries. This is because push factors in countries of origin – including poverty, unemployment and crises – and pull factors in countries of destination – including higher wages, job opportunities and safety – have not changed. Furthermore, there are insufficient frameworks and mechanisms to allow regular migration to address the labour shortages of expanding economies.<sup>8</sup>

### **Egypt: the General Features and Causes**

The irregular migration of Egyptians is a relatively new phenomenon in comparison with the same phenomenon in the Maghreb. In the recent years, many Egyptians have lost their lives while attempting to cross the Mediterranean in small and unseaworthy boats. Migrants themselves are frequently placed in great danger by this form of transport, especially when they use the services of unscrupulous smugglers.

The main problem that faces any study of irregular migration is the lack of information and data or, when that data exists, its inaccuracy. Therefore, in the absence of reliable data on irregular migration, media reports offer some information with which we can sketch an approximate picture of the phenomenon.

Reports in the media indicate that Egypt is suffering from the irregular migration of natives:

“Libyan authorities have ordered the repatriation of 68 Egyptians who were trying to reach Italy’s coasts on a dinghy. The Egyptian consulate in Tripoli has also reportedly demanded their repatriation. The Egyptian Consul said over 600 Egyptians have been sent back home in the past two months for violating immigration laws. Out of the 20000 would be immigrants who have reportedly landed in Italy illegally of the year (2006), 8000 are believed to have departed from Libya.” (adnkronosinternational)

“Eight boats arrived on the Italian coasts coming from Libya, included 1020 Egyptians illegal migrants. Italian authorities decided to repatriate to Libya and Egypt.” (Egyptian Daily newspaper Alakbar 4-4- 2005)

“In the past three years, the corpses of perhaps a dozen of the village’s best and brightest young people have been fished out of the Mediterranean, which they were crossing illegally in search of better lives in Europe. Others are still missing, their families in the Dakhaleya village praying that their loved ones are perhaps “safe” in prison somewhere, not lying in watery graves.”(Azza Khattab, noborder.org.press review)

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7 Ibid, p. 3.

8 International Organization for Migration, “Types of Irregular Migration”, op.cit

The current stream of irregular Egyptian migration to Europe started in the very late twentieth century with a number of graduated and less-educated unemployed youth engaged in irregular migration to Europe, either across the Mediterranean via Libya or by over staying tourist Schengen visas.

The main reasons behind this new type of migration are high unemployment rates among Egyptians youth, the difficulty of finding employment opportunities in the Arab Gulf due to competition with cheap South East Asian labour, the geographical proximity of Egypt and Europe, and the ease of traveling to Libya where most of the boat journeys to Europe usually start.<sup>9</sup>

Because of the increasing numbers of Egyptians that have tried to migrate illegally in the last years, the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration carried out a field survey in collaboration with IOM and the Italian government to determine the push factors in Egypt as identified by potential migrants. The research, which was entitled “Attitudes of Egyptian Youth towards Migration to Europe” tries to define the socio-political and economic environment in which the decision to migrate matures. The survey also gathers information about potential migrants’ awareness levels concerning irregular migration and migrants smuggling from Egypt.<sup>10</sup>

### **The demographic profile of actual and potential migrants**

The study population was to include young males between 18 and 40 years old with a mean age of 27.4 years old. This segment of population forms the pool from which illegal as well as legal migrants (regular/irregular) are drawn. The percentage of singles is high (59.3 percent). Regarding educational attainment, there is a dominance of the technical secondary certificate and the university degree. In fact, respondents with technical secondary diploma comprised 42.3 percent of the total number of respondents. The work status of respondents indicates a high level of unemployment (38.2 percent).

The fieldwork took place in urban and rural areas in eight Egyptian governorates; the selection of the governorates within each region and the selection of fieldwork sites within each governorate were based on the existence of well-established migration streams (legal and illegal) between these sites and European countries.<sup>11</sup>

The results of the field survey indicate that the prime desired destination for Egyptian youth who wish to migrate is Italy; more than one-half of the study population (53.4 percent) stated that Italy was their preferred destination. France came second with almost a quarter of respondents. Then other countries included the UK, the Netherlands, Greece and Sweden.

Given this it will come as no surprise that the European country experiencing the highest inflow of Egyptian migration is Italy. According to Egyptian official data in 2000, 10.9% of permanent Egyptian migrants live in Italy, which means around 90.000 people. However, the OECD reports a stock of only 32.8 thousand residence permits held by Egyptians in Italy for the year 2000. This discrepancy between the Egyptian and the OECD figures on the number of permanent Egyptian migrants in Italy suggests the existence of a high number, around 60.000, undocumented Egyptian permanent migrants, though, of course there is no official data on this subject. This is clearly related to the very strict migratory policy enforced by the Italian government, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a residence permits or a work permit. In terms of trends, the number of residence permits held by

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9 Ayman Zohry, “Egyptian Irregular Migration to Europe”, Migration Letters, vol 4, no.1, April 2007.

10 IOM. “Attitudes of Egyptian Youth Towards Migration to Europe”, Arab Republic of Egypt & Cooperazione, Information Dissemination on Migration (IDOM), , March 2006.

11 The governorates included in the sample were: Cairo – Alexandria – Gharbia –Sharqiya – Daqahliya –Menoufia – Fayoum – Luxor .



Egyptians in Italy has increased substantially in the last decade, from 7 thousand in 1985 to 32.8 thousand in the year 2000.<sup>12</sup>

Respondents who expressed their desire to migrate to a European country were asked about the reasons behind their intention to migrate. Reasons were classified under two categories; reasons related to origin (push factors) and reasons related to destination (pull factors). With respect to push factors, a significant number of respondents stated three main reasons, “Income in Egypt is lower than in Europe”, “bad living conditions in Egypt and no job opportunities available in Egypt”. It is clear that all the main push factors were economic; they were related to income disparities between Egypt and receiving countries.

Friends and relatives are the main source of information regarding the desired country; more than 80 percent of respondents rely on their relatives and friends to sketch a hypothetical picture of conditions prevailing in the country of destination. The role of the media is less than 10 percent, while the role of the internet, general readings, embassies and the Egyptian authorities is negligible. The vast majority of respondents (94.7) mentioned that they had never heard about deported illegal migrants. Almost three-quarters of the respondents were aware of the consequences of illegal migration, yet 78 percent of the respondents believe that legal migration to Europe is not easy.

The role of formal/governmental media as a source of information on migration is negligible. The main source of information about migration remains relatives and friends. The very limited role of governmental agencies, journalism, media outlets and embassies makes it easy for rumors and falsified information to spread. Due to the way information about migration is disseminated, it should come as no surprise to learn that migration streams to Europe originate in a network of a group of villages in the Nile Delta and Upper Egypt where family members and relatives help each other in sustaining migration flows and lubricating illegal and legal migration.

Recently, a new stream of migration to Europe has become recognisable; current migrants to Europe are less educated than Egyptian migrants to Europe in the 1960s and the 1970s. Current migration streams can be regarded as “the migration of the poor” or “the exodus of Egyptian youth”, since migrants are pushed by unemployment and economic hardship and their movements are sometimes irregular.

### **Routes of irregular migration**

For simple geographical reasons, the countries close to the Northern Mediterranean have been either source countries or, more recently countries of transit for illegal migration. These are Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya in North Africa, and Lebanon and Turkey in the near East. The main arrival areas are the Canary Islands, the Strait of Gibraltar and Sicily. Most irregular migrants, 80%, do not travel as stowaways, but depart from Libya. Recent changes in the management of migration in Morocco, Tunisia and Spain seem to have had deterrent effects on both individual illegal crossings and smuggling arrangements. The currently favored route through Libya carries some 80,000 migrants per year, landing in Sicily and its islands or Malta. ICMPD estimates that 100-120,000 irregular migrants cross the Mediterranean every year, of which 35,000 are of sub-Saharan origin, 30,000 are from other countries and 55,000 are from the South or East Mediterranean. Additionally, there is an estimate of lives lost in Mediterranean crossings.<sup>13</sup>

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12 Leila Talani & et al, “Why do Migrants Leave Their Countries? Motivations to Migrate at the Point of Departure: the Case of Egypt”, The British Academy, Nov 2003, p 14.

13 Martin Baldwin Edwards, “Migration in the Middle East and Mediterranean, a Regional Study” , Global Commission on International Migration, www.mmo.gr.

ICMPD has identified three main illegal migration routes into Southern Europe: the West African route, the North African and the East African route. For the North and East African route, the main points of arrival are the Italian islands. The main point of departure is, respectively, Libya and Egypt.<sup>14</sup>

The nationalities of the migrants are not so well documented (and are frequently concealed to avoid deportation), but ICMPD estimated, for 2003, that about 25% were sub-Saharan, another 25% from other countries, mainly Asian and about 50% were from the South or East Mediterranean. Data for Italy in 2004 shows an increasing proportion of Egyptians (60%), whilst for Malta the principal nationality in 2004 was Somali (40%) and Egyptian (15%).<sup>15</sup>

The results of focus-group discussions of return migrants, a part of the survey, indicate two groups of migrants: the first group follows the Egypt-Libya-Italy route with migration brokers who facilitate their migration in boats through the Mediterranean, and the second group migrates by air on a tourist Schengen visa with the intention of overstaying that visa. The cost of the sea route is cheap, it amounts to an average of 15.000 Egyptian pounds (about 2.000 euros) while the air route costs an average of 50.000 Egyptian pounds (about 9,500 euros). It is clear then that, the cost of migration increases as the probability of success increases and as hazards decrease. The sea route is the choice of the poor, those who cannot afford a Schengen visa.<sup>16</sup>

The focus group discussions indicated that the Libyan route of migration is the cheapest and most frequently used. Thanks to the open borders between Egypt and Libya, Egyptians can enter Libya using an identity card: they have no need of a passport or visa.

### **Irregular migration: the risks**

Many irregular migrants are accused of engaging in illegal activities, including money laundering, smuggling and drug-related activities. Most immigrants in this category apparently entered the country without proper documentation, and others overstayed their residency, thereby becoming illegal migrants. Recent incidents of trafficking in migrants and attempts by individuals to enter Europe stowed away beneath ships' decks show the desperation to emigrate from poor countries to the rich North.

In the Mediterranean region, it seems that smuggling and trafficking by air routes is relatively expensive and difficult, and is little used: land travel and sea routes are the most common mechanisms. Although past research in the Mediterranean region suggested that illegal migration occurred through the overstaying of visas rather than the illegal crossing of frontiers, this pattern has now changed.<sup>17</sup>

Smuggling people has become a large and lucrative business for cartels in Libya, which specialize in transporting Egyptians across the Mediterranean. The dangers are two: the sea and the authorities.<sup>18</sup>

Irregular migration endangers the lives of the migrants concerned. A large but unknown number of people die each year trying to cross sea borders without being detected by the authorities. Smugglers may extract a high price from migrants, sometimes charging thousands of dollars to transport them from one place to another. Smugglers do not always inform migrants in advance where they will be taken. The means of transport used by migrant smugglers are often unsafe, and the migrants who are

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14 Baldwin, "Between a Rock and a Hard place: North Africa as a Region of Emigration, Immigration and Transit Migration", AEI, pp 9-10.

15 Ibid., p 10.

16 Zohry, op.cit

17 Baldwin, "Migration in the Middle East and Mediterranean", p. 17.

18 Ibid.

traveling in this way may find themselves abandoned by their smuggler and unable to complete the journey that they have paid for.

Libya has emerged, along with other countries in the Maghreb, as a major transit country towards Europe for illegal immigrants, thus increasing pressure on EU external borders in the Mediterranean. This is due in part to the length of Libya's borders with neighboring countries.<sup>19</sup>

### **EU Policies to combat irregular migration: Determinants of policy**

Countries in the North of the Mediterranean, despite their demographic decline and labour-market shortages, have shown a highly ambivalent attitude to receiving labour migrants from the South, with policy fluctuations and a lack of clear objectives in migration and labour-market management. As new Mediterranean members enter the club, they are forced to align their immigration policies to the exclusionary vision of Schengen and the EU.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout the recent history of the EU, there has been a remarkably one-sided emphasis on the security aspects of immigration control (borders, asylum, expulsion of illegal migrants) and an almost complete absence of co-ordination of policy on immigration for employment, issues of legislation for illegal immigrants, and until recently the rights of long-term immigrants.<sup>21</sup> In October 2004, Italy returned 1000 people to Libya, without allowing them to claim asylum, which in turn deported them to Egypt and Nigeria.

The linkage between migration and security has become an issue of ever greater international concern. Recent incidents involving acts of violence committed by migrants and members of minority groups have led to a perception that there is a close connection between international migration and international terrorism. Irregular migration, which appears to be growing in scale in many parts of the world, is regarded by politicians and the public alike as a threat to the sovereignty and security of the state. In a number of destination countries, host societies have become increasingly fearful about the presence of migrants communities, especially ones with unfamiliar cultures that come from parts of the world associated with extremism.<sup>22</sup>

Seeking to defend their sovereignty and security, states have devoted their resources to stifle illegal migration, but with only limited success.<sup>23</sup>

In the absence of coherent policy initiatives from the EU, Spain and Italy have pursued their own national agendas, which have resulted in the increasing "militarization" of migration and crime control along the EU's Mediterranean borders". Italy has financed a detention camp in northern Libya and also finances repatriation flights from Libya to Egypt.<sup>24</sup>

More recently, several new trends in policy have emerged. First, there has been the recognition of the need for major labour market reform for the purpose of economic development, and migration is only a small part of that process. Reform has yet to begin in a substantive way, but looks inevitable. Second, there has been greater collaboration with northern Mediterranean countries, primarily in the

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19 Adepoju, op.cit., p9

20 Baldwin, "Migration in the Middle East and Mediterranean", p. 3.

21 Baldwin, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place", p. 14.

22 Global Commission on International migration (GCIM), "Migration in an Interconnected World, New Directions for Action", GCIM Report, October 2005, p. 8.

23 Ibid, p 33

24 Baldwin, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place", p. 16.

combating of illegal migration flows, but also in seasonal and other labour recruitment efforts. Third, there has been recognition of the need for immigration regulations: this started with Morocco in 2003 and is proceeding with Tunisia and Egypt.<sup>25</sup>

The current EU agenda recycles all the old baggage which serious analysts discredited years ago (such as the root causes of migration), whilst spouting sugared rhetoric about eradicating poverty, and achieving millennium development goals.

In reality, the latest policy document (EC 2005c) is concerned only with security measures (such as coastal patrols, more detection technology, better management of migration for North African countries, readmission agreements...) whilst paying lip service to the fundamental problems faced by African economies. Emphasis is placed on political dialogue, specifically focused on the following:

- Remittance (the EU will try to reduce bank transfer charges);
- Capacity building (legal and technical infrastructure to stop migration);
- Management of migration flows and skills (or raising awareness of legal channels for migration to the EU);
- Improving integration in destination countries (possibly this means trying to get EU states to obey the anti-discrimination directives and the directive on the rights of long-term immigrants).<sup>26</sup>

The most active country for such readmission agreements is Italy, which faces illegal immigration from the Mediterranean South. Italy has been the most active Mediterranean European country in developing strategies to deal with illegal migration. The 2002 immigration law, continuing a policy dating back to 1998, explicitly constructs a foreign policy priority to reward countries which actively help in the fight against undocumented migration to Italy. Effectively, this has meant offering second-generation preferential labour recruitment and other agreements with countries, which have already concluded functioning readmission agreements with Italy.<sup>27</sup>

Italy has thus been slowly developing policy to encourage economic development as a containment mechanism for emigration. During the Italian presidency of the EU (second half of 2003), Italy promoted a far-reaching migration policy, based on three points:

1. the integrated management of European land, sea and air borders through burden sharing, the fight against illegal migration as well as against criminal organizations that ruthlessly exploit this phenomenon;
2. the regulation of legal migration flows through adequate agreements between the countries involved;
3. aid to develop origin and transit countries.<sup>28</sup>

There is now a consensus that the burden of irregular migration needs to be equally shared among all EU countries and this is now reflected in the new Multi-annual Programme approved by the European Council in The Hague in November 2004.

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25 Baldwin, "Migration in the Middle East", p. 30.

26 Baldwin, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place", p. 17.

27 Baldwin, "Migration in the Middle East", p. 35.

28 Swich, Luigi & Aggiunto, Viceprefetto, "Migration Integration Employment, the Italian Experience in the European Context", Ministero Dell Interno, EF.DEL/52/05, 25 May 2005

## **Egyptian policy toward the irregular migration of Egyptians**

The Egyptian policy on irregular migration aims to achieve five targets:

1. Establishing an information campaign that would raise awareness amongst actual and potential migrants of the possible consequences of irregular migration;
2. Providing potential irregular migrants with accurate information about regular migration opportunities;
3. Improving information-sharing and other forms of help between country of origin and country of destination;
4. Implementing capacity-building projects in countries of origin and destination;
5. Establishing bilateral and multilateral agreement to facilitate the return and readmission of irregular migrants to their countries of origin.

Because irregular migration is a crucial issue for countries of origin and countries of destination as well, the cooperation between the Italian and the Egyptian government has proved imperative in working against irregular migration in recent years. There are cooperation agreements for the fight against irregular migration and against the smuggling of human beings between Italy and Middle Eastern countries, including Egypt. As regards the practical planning of migration flows, bilateral agreements are useful in assigning preferential migrants for countries that have signed agreements with Italy.<sup>29</sup>

Cooperation started through an information program on illegal immigration. Thus, the Information Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration Project (IDOM) aims at limiting irregular migration and curbing its risks. Through the provision of information, the intention is to positively influence the choices of Egyptian potential migrants and encourage them to achieve a better understanding of migration realities.. The program aims to promote the adoption of complex computer systems for the prevention and the reorientation of illegal immigrants, and includes a strong component of technical and managerial training targeting the personnel of the relevant authorities, in an aim to promote appropriate migration policies, enabling the control of migration flows.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has argued that irregular migration is driven by powerful and complex forces, including a lack of jobs and other livelihood opportunities in countries of origin and the demand for cheap and flexible labour in destination countries. Hence, the growth of irregular migration is linked to a lack of regular migration opportunities, and is facilitated by criminal networks that profit from migrant smuggling and from human trafficking.

The Egyptian government has sought to deal with irregular migration through several approaches and channels as mentioned above. But till now, these approaches and channels were not able to reduce irregular migration from Egypt. I think that there are some explanatory reasons for this: first, the Egyptian government has not adopted a coherent strategy, setting the issue in a broader context that includes poverty reduction and employment policies. Second, the Egyptian Government has failed to convince the concerned parties, particularly the destination countries, of the importance of international cooperation in promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development as a long term strategy to address irregular migration. Third, regular migration and irregular migration should not be considered in isolation from one another. In order to achieve the benefits of regular

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

migration and reduce the costs of irregular migration, the capacity of countries to manage migration should be enhanced, not through information sharing alone, but also through technical, financial and economic assistance.

Poverty reduction is now the most urgent task facing many developing countries. Unemployment is a key factor in poverty and the millions of young unemployed who are socially and economically dependent. Poverty reduction strategies have to be synonymous with economic growth and development strategies. It is for these reasons that development programmes have to be *pro-the poor and pro-jobs*, so as to provide livelihoods for the young. Governments must thus put poverty at the top of their political agendas, rather than treat them as residual social issues.

In sum, greater efforts should be made to create jobs and sustainable livelihoods in developing countries, so that the citizens of such states do not feel compelled to migrate. Developing countries and industrialized states should pursue economic policies and implement existing commitments that enable this objective to be achieved.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, coherent and effective policies on irregular migration have to be carried out in the context of a partnership between origin countries and destination countries, and between government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

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30 Global Commission on International migration (GCIM), "Migration in an Interconnected World, New Directions for Action", p. 20.

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