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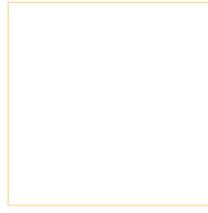


## *Migration Profile: Tunisia*

*Françoise De Bel-Air*

In April 2014, the population of Tunisia stood at 10,982,754, only 0.5 percent of whom were foreign immigrants according to the country's sixth census. First-generation, Tunisia-born migrants residing abroad stood at around 543,000, of whom 81 percent were to be found in Europe that year. As for "Tunisians Residing Abroad" (Tunisiens Résidant à l'Étranger), first-generation migrants and born-abroad second and third generation Tunisians, they numbered about 1.2 million according to the records of the Office for Tunisians Abroad (OTE).<sup>1</sup> Tunisia is, therefore, primarily an emigration country.

Starting after the end of the French Protectorate in 1956, Tunisian emigration responded to labour needs in Western Europe, and especially in France. Bilateral labour agreements were signed in 1963 between Tunisia and France, with Germany in 1965, as well as, latterly, with the Netherlands and other European states. After 1973-74, as limitations were put on legal labour migration to the West, the main pathway to traditional European destinations became family reunion. Irregular immigration developed in parallel. This also relied on kinship ties and on social and community-based networks. Tunisian migrants in Europe, mostly originating from urban coastal regions, quickly inserted themselves within tertiary sector activities, especially local trade facilities in town centers, ethnic food business, communications and related services.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, as oil exploitation was taking off in the late 1960s, Libya emerged as a major destination for Tunisian migrant workers. Legal, as well as irregular migration channels, sustained by cross-border tribal connections, brought increasing numbers of Tunisians to Libya (up to 85,000 in the mid-1980s), mostly from the border areas and from the poor, steppe regions in west-central Tunisia (Gafsa, Sidi Bouzid, Kasserine, Kairouan). Tunisians in Libya were overwhelmingly employed in construction, infrastructure development and agriculture.<sup>3</sup> Migration to Libya was, nevertheless, characterised by



a high turnover, due to unstable diplomatic relations between Libya and its neighbours: between 1969 and 2012, migrants in the country went through eight expulsions of foreign nationals (including Tunisians) and three “open-door” policy phases. Informality thus became an increasingly predominant feature of the Tunisian migration to Libya.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1980s, as labour migration to France plummeted, Italy became a new outlet for Tunisian workers, due to its geographical proximity to Tunisia and to new opportunities in the country’s informal economy. After Europe restricted its visa regime and strengthened border controls in the early 1990s, permanent settlement, irregular entry, and overstaying became structural features of Tunisian emigration to Europe.<sup>5</sup> Tunisian migration destinations further diversified towards the Gulf States, after bilateral agreements for technical cooperation were signed, between Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, and with Qatar and the UAE. Tunisians there are mostly skilled and highly-skilled, in secondment from Tunisia’s government sector: there are, for example, engineers and teachers.<sup>6</sup> More recently, new flows of students and tertiary-educated, highly-skilled young Tunisians found new outlets, in Germany and in North America.

Both under Habib Bourguiba and his successor Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, ousted in January 2011, Tunisia’s emigration policy had two principles: workers were encouraged to emigrate; and Tunisians living abroad were monitored. The Tunisian government indeed rapidly acknowledged the fact that the country’s economy was unable to absorb all the available labour force, and that remittances from abroad were an indispensable source of foreign currencies. As early as 1967, the Tunisian government set up the Office for Vocational Training and Employment (‘Office de la Formation Professionnelle et de l’Emploi’), with offices everywhere on Tunisian territory.<sup>7</sup> Created in 1972, the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT) is one of the instruments for the implementation of the national

policy of technical cooperation, mainly directed towards oil-producing countries, such as Libya and the Gulf States. It is currently placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Development Investment and International Cooperation.<sup>8</sup> The Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment was created in 1990. Its mission (to date) is to promote the external employment of Tunisians. In this ministry, the National Agency for Employment and Independent Labour (ANETI) (previously OFPE) identifies labour migration opportunities for workers at all skill levels, and enters into agreements with Tunisia’s main migration partners.<sup>9</sup>

As regards migrant monitoring, a network of *amicales* (friendship societies) was set up in France and in other Western European countries from the 1970s onwards, whose leaders were members of Tunisia’s ruling party.<sup>10</sup> Political institutions were exclusively concerned with managing the economic, cultural and subsequently also political relations with the growing Tunisian diaspora. These include the Office for Tunisians abroad (‘Office des Tunisiens à l’Étranger’, OTE), founded in 1988; and the Higher Council of Tunisians abroad (‘Haut Conseil des Tunisiens à l’Étranger’), founded in 1990.<sup>11</sup>

The 2000s was a period of socio-economic and political tensions. In Tunisia, as in the rest of the SEM region, younger Tunisians have benefitted from the generalization of higher education: in 2009–2010, UNESCO data indicated that as many as 40 per cent of 18–23 year olds were enrolled in higher education in Tunisia. Yet, at the same time, structural adjustment policies and other socio-economic reforms, underway in the country since the late 1980s,<sup>12</sup> were taking effect. Employment venues had drastically decreased (especially in the government sector, a traditional employer of university graduates) and were becoming less attractive for educated youth due to wage stagnation and to the predominantly low skilled, low value-added activities on offer. In Tunisia in 2010, 23 per cent of graduates were unemployed, as compared to

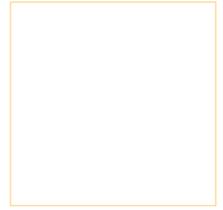
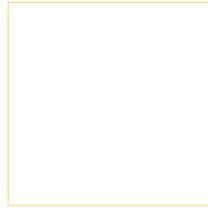


13 per cent for the whole population; as of 2012-2013, ILO estimated that around 32 percent of Tunisia's youth aged 15-29 were "neither in employment nor in education or training" (NEET), double the EU-28 average rate.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, political reforms were stalling.<sup>14</sup> Given this situation, access to a congested labour market becomes all the more difficult, so much so that personal connections or *wasta* (intermediation) are often needed to supplement qualifications and talent. Lastly, the 2008 financial crisis, which lowered incomes from tourism and subcontracting activities, further reduced both job prospects at home and legal migration opportunities for youth in Europe. Contraction of migration avenues, in a context of economic downturn and heightened political tensions, probably stands within the array of reasons explaining the outburst of the uprisings in Tunisia.

The start of the Arab uprisings, in December 2010, spurred an immediate, yet comparatively moderate<sup>15</sup> surge in emigration from Tunisia through irregular channels, as police forces were disorganised and coastal controls proved inexistent. Between January and September 2011, 42,807 persons were recorded as entering Italy illegally by sea, compared with fewer than 5,000 in 2010 and fewer than 10,000 in 2009. Of these, about 20,000 were Tunisians.<sup>16</sup> Tunisian migrants who arrived in Italy between 1 January and 5 April 2011 were granted temporary protection status as per article 20 of the country's Consolidated Immigration Act providing for 'Extraordinary reception measures for exceptional events'. Conversely, Tunisians arriving in Italy after 5 April 2011 were returned to Tunisia. Temporary protection permits were valid for six months (then renewed for other six months) and granted the holder the possibility of working and travelling in the Schengen area. Tunisian immigrants largely used these temporary visas to move on towards France.<sup>17</sup> An accelerated repatriation agreement signed between Italy and Tunisia at the time curbed Tunisian emigration to the European Union (EU) by 92 percent in 2012.<sup>18</sup>

Of the 42,807 persons recorded as entering Italy illegally by sea between January and September 2011, 47 percent were non-Tunisians (18,451 persons), including more than 17,000 Sub-Saharan Africans (17,342).<sup>19</sup> Some were nationals from Sub-Saharan African states, staying irregularly in Tunisia on their way to the EU: these are usually estimated at around 10,000.<sup>20</sup> Others were part of the large wave of refugees induced by the beginning of the war in Libya, which primarily affected Tunisia. Tunisia is a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Yet, pressed by EU concerns for the externalisation of the protection of its borders, Tunisian policymakers had been addressing immigration from sub-Saharan Africa as a security issue, within the realm of the 2004 law largely criminalizing irregular migration,<sup>21</sup> and failed to develop an asylum law. Therefore, in order to process refugees from Libya, and with migrants turned away from Europe back to Tunisia, UNHCR signed a cooperation agreement with Tunisian authorities in July 2011.<sup>22</sup> UNHCR also carried out registration and refugee status determination including for people rescued at sea, with the help of some local partners. Refugees had access to basic services such as health and primary education in Tunisia, with UNHCR covering the cost for the most vulnerable.<sup>23</sup> Some refugee camps were also opened, among which the UNHCR-run Choucha camp on the border with Libya, closed mid-2013. Article 26 of the new constitution of 2014 formally acknowledges the right to political asylum and prohibits the extradition of political refugees, but UNHCR has been involved in the drafting of a national asylum law since 2011.<sup>24</sup> In June 2016, the finalized draft law, developed with the Ministry of Justice, was being examined ahead of its discussion in Parliament.<sup>25</sup>

Before the 2011 revolts, migration had largely been absent from the media and public debates in Tunisia.<sup>26</sup> Yet, migration now stands high in national priorities, under the pressure of civil society organisations which emerged in the aftermath of

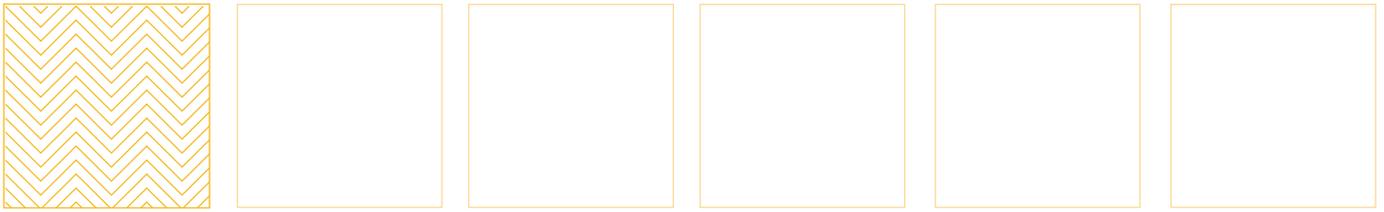


the revolts.<sup>27</sup> An important legacy of the Tunisian uprising was the inclusion of representatives of migrants in the Constituent Assembly that also acted as Parliament, elected in October 2011. Article 55 of the new Tunisian Constitution provides that the Election Law shall guarantee representation in the Chamber of the People's Deputies for Tunisians living abroad.<sup>28</sup> New institutions were created, among which the short-lived State Secretariat for Migration and Tunisians Abroad (SEMTE) within the Ministry of Social Affairs,<sup>29</sup> and the National Observatory of Migration, established in March 2014. The Office of Tunisians Abroad (OTE) also underwent a drastic reform aimed at improving its efficiency.<sup>30</sup> Civil society generated new organisations too, for instance, the Higher Council for Tunisians Abroad, in order to sustain links with Tunisian expatriates and to ensure that the new government takes into consideration the demands and aspirations of its citizens abroad.<sup>31</sup> Grassroots organisations, moreover, started advocating on new issues. Among these was the fate of refugees in Tunisia,<sup>32</sup> as well as that of the young migrants lost at sea.<sup>33</sup>

Resuming legal emigration schemes was a burning need as unemployment rates soared in the aftermath of the revolts: they reached 19 percent in the total population and above 30 percent among graduates in 2011; 32.6 percent in 2013. During the first quarter of 2016, the total unemployment rate was 15.4 percent (12.5 percent for men and 23 percent for females); it was still at 31.2 percent among university graduates (20.3 for men and 40 percent for women).<sup>34</sup> Attempts at formulating a comprehensive national migration strategy have been made since 2011: including the circulation of a draft National Migration Strategy, which was never formally adopted. Public institutions which deal with different aspects of migration management include: the Ministry of Social Affairs and its Office for Tunisians Abroad (OTE, with a network of 44 labour attachés); the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment with its Bureau of Foreign

Labour and its public employment service (ANETI, with more than 90 regional offices), including an International Employment Department; and the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ACTC) under the Ministry of Development and International Cooperation. In addition, the country has a series of bilateral labour agreements signed with main destination countries (e.g. France, Italy and Switzerland), mainly with the aim of facilitating labour migration.<sup>35</sup> The appointment of Tunisian labour attaches in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates through ATCT was also underway.<sup>36</sup>

Tunisia has been a priority for the EU, since the collapse of Ben Ali's and Gadhafi's regimes, both efficient allies of the EU in the defence of its external borders from irregular migrants; the need for a special relationship with Tunisia became particularly evident after the brief upsurge of migration from Tunisia to Europe in early 2011. To that effect, Tunisia concluded a number of readmission agreements with the main destination countries for irregular migrants, namely Italy, France and Switzerland. In addition to cooperation on border management, i.e. preventing unwanted migration to Europe, these agreements provided for the readmission to Tunisia of Tunisian migrants, as well as, in some cases, Third Country Nationals (TCNs). In November 2012, the European Union and Tunisia also signed an Action Plan for 2013-17 in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. This Action Plan granted Tunisia 'Privileged Partnership' status and aimed at strengthening financial support, trade openings and improved mobility.<sup>37</sup> As one of the forecast steps of this Partnership, the two parties were also prepared to start discussing the implementation of a Mobility Partnership for cooperation on the movement of people, the management of legal migration, migration and development, the protection of the rights of migrants, the fight against irregular migration and readmission.<sup>38</sup> In this context, the country's new regime tried to lay down priorities for negotiating these new patterns of



migration cooperation with the EU. These included labour migration, fundamental rights protection for migrants, visa facilitation and development.<sup>39</sup> This was, in sum, an attempt to break with the proactive securitization of migration performed under President Ben Ali. Yet, though it claimed to “take account of the interests and objectives of all parties concerned: the Union, its Member States, Tunisia and the migrants themselves”, the Mobility Partnership eventually signed between Tunisia and ten Member States<sup>40</sup> on 3 March 2014<sup>41</sup> did not satisfy Tunisian civil society. According to a petition signed by a number of Tunisian and Human Rights organizations, “[...], the provisions included in this ‘Mobility Partnership’ do not provide Tunisian citizens with real opportunities to enter and live in the European Union. It limits itself to facilitating the issuance of visas to the most privileged and/or qualified persons, while the employment possibilities evoked are remote and are void of any concrete prospects. These commitments are insufficient when compared to the obligations imposed on Tunisia within the framework of the partnership, including tighter border controls, cooperation with Frontex, and the signature of a readmission agreement”.<sup>42</sup> As a matter of fact, following the conditionality policy contained in all EU-supported agreements, the EU and Tunisia started negotiations on visa facilitation in October 2016; moreover, these negotiations on “an agreement to facilitate the process of issuing short-stay visas” were run in parallel with other negotiations on procedures for the readmission of irregular migrants to Tunisia.<sup>43</sup>



## OUTWARD MIGRATION

### Stock

In 2014, an estimated 543,000 Tunisian migrants (i.e., first-generation, born in Tunisia) were residing abroad: 4.7 percent of the total population of the country. The vast majority were in Europe (81 percent), with France alone hosting 48 percent and Italy 19 percent of these migrants.

Estimates of Tunisian migrants' stocks by region and selected countries of residence (c. 2014)				
	Source	Def.	Number	% of all emigrants
<b>Europe 28+Switzerland+Norway</b>			<b>442,000</b>	<b>81%</b>
France	(1)	(A)	258,812	48%
Italy	(2)		101,717	19%
Germany	(1)		28,423	5%
Belgium	(2)		13,879	3%
Switzerland			11,160	2%
Sweden			4,834	1%
Netherlands			4,492	1%
UK	(1)		4,000	1%
<b>Arab countries</b>				<b>43,000</b>
<b>Gulf countries</b>			<b>35,000</b>	<b>6%</b>
Of which Qatar	(3)	(B)	15,000	3%
Saudi Arabia			12,000	2%
<b>Other Arab countries</b>	(4)	(B)	<b>6,600</b>	<b>1%</b>
Of which Libya	(4)	(B)	3,084	1%
<b>North America</b>			<b>25,797</b>	<b>5%</b>
USA	(5)	(A)	14,032	3%
Canada			11,765	2%
<b>Other countries</b>			<b>32,000</b>	<b>6%</b>
Of which Israel	(2)	(A)	28,570	5%
<b>Total emigrants (est.)</b>			<b>543,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Sources:</b>				
(1) receiving countries' statistics, 2013-2015; (2) OECD-International migration database, year 2014 (31/12); (3) receiving countries' statistics and embassies' estimates: <a href="http://gulfmigration.eu/">http://gulfmigration.eu/</a> . Estimates for UAE: 2009; Kuwait: Dec. 2012; Saudi Arabia: 2013; Qatar; Bahrain: 2014; (4) UN/DESA, rev. 2015; (5) OECD-DIOC database, 2011 revision.				
<b>Definition of migrant:</b> (A) country of birth; (B) country of nationality.				
"Others" refers to non-Arab African and Asian countries, Oceania, South America, other European countries.				

As for the 1,223,213 holders of Tunisian citizenship recorded by Tunisian consular services<sup>44</sup> (first-generation migrants and born-abroad second and third generations together), about 186,000 were naturalized in their European host countries between 2000 and 2014. Of these, 72 percent (133,419) were naturalised in France, 11 percent (20,707) in Italy and 8.3 percent in Germany.<sup>45</sup>

## INWARD MIGRATION

### Stock

The number of non-nationals living in Tunisia in April 2014 stood at 53,490, 0.5 percent of the 10,982,754 total resident population counted during the country's sixth and most recent census. In 2004, 35,192 foreign nationals had been recorded during the previous census.

Foreign population residing in Tunisia by country of nationality (2004; 2014)				
Country of nationality	2004		2014	
	Number	% total	Number	% total
<b>Arab countries</b>	<b>21,200</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>28,480</b>	<b>53</b>
Of which Algeria	9,612	27	9,996	19
Libya	1,738	5	8,772	16
Morocco	6,363	18	5,565	10
Egypt	672	2	1,093	2
Syria	416	1	1,024	2
Iraq	0	0	550	1
<b>European countries</b>	<b>9,667</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15,007</b>	<b>28</b>
Of which France	4,612	13	8,284	15
Italy	1,560	4	2,118	4
Germany	1,000	3	1,393	3
<b>Non-Arab African countries</b>	<b>3,017</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7,524</b>	<b>14</b>
Of which Mali	222	1	958	2
Cameroon	0	0	689	1
Ivory Coast	609	2	607	1
Senegal	360	1	394	1
Niger	129	0	522	1
<b>Other countries</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2,479</b>	<b>5</b>
Of which USA	261	1	584	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,192</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53,490</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Source: Tunisian population censuses (2004; 2014)</b>				

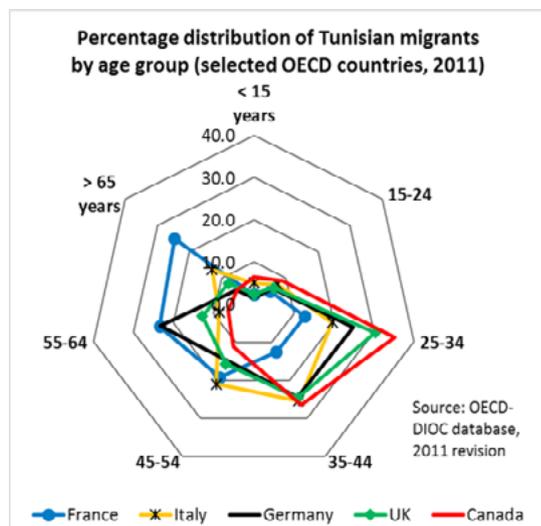
Europeans numbered 15,007 in 2014 and kept their large share within the foreign resident population in Tunisia. Of these, French nationals made up 15 percent of all foreign residents, after nearly doubling their numbers since 2004. Nationals from African countries also increased in numbers, from 3,000 in 2004 to 7,500 in 2014. Some are students,<sup>73</sup> and a few are registered as refugees (Table 3). The transfer of the African Development Bank (ADB) from Abidjan in Ivory Coast to Tunis from 2003 to 2014 also brought many employees to Tunisia from African Member States. However, the figures of Sub-Saharan Africans in Tunisia are probably underestimated. It was said, for



Since Libya ceased to be the major outlet for Tunisian migrants in the Arab region,<sup>46</sup> the Gulf States now host the bulk of the 43,000 Tunisian expatriates there. An estimated 30-35,000 Tunisians resided in the Gulf as of 2012-2014, mostly in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These countries attract Tunisians through bilateral technical cooperation schemes.<sup>47</sup> Of the 3,379 Tunisians recruited in 2014 by the Tunisia Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT), for instance, 78 percent were in the Gulf region; more than a quarter (27 percent) in Saudi Arabia alone where most (45 percent) were recruited in education and higher education. Qatar mostly recruited health specialists and military personnel that year, while positions offered in the UAE were mainly in sales and commerce.<sup>48</sup>

Around 26,000 Tunisian migrants were settled in North America. As for the 28,000 first-generation Tunisian migrants recorded in Israel, they are members of the Tunisian Jewish community (estimated around 105,000 persons in 1951). These made *aliyah* in the post-independence period, 1956-1968.<sup>49</sup>

Most migrants from Tunisia are males (57 percent of all migrants in OECD countries); 77 percent are in working age groups (15 to 65 years and 32 percent in the 25 to 44 age category). However, these aggregated figures cover Tunisian migrants' diverse demographic and socio-economic profiles by country of destination (Figure 1). France stands out as an exception, as it hosts older age groups: almost half (48 percent) of the Tunisian-born there are 55 and above, and 25 percent in the age group 65 and above. France has also the most balanced sex ratio: 54 percent of men on average.

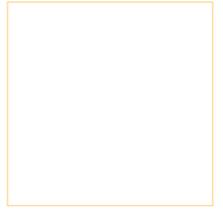


instance, that some of the Bank's employees (domestic workers) decided to stay on to continue working in Tunisia, irregularly.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, Tunisia grants three-month visas on arrival to some African nationalities.<sup>75</sup> This increased the numbers of those stranded in Tunisia on their way to the EU, who became irregular sojourners after the expiration of these visas. As Tunisia is no longer a significant departure point for Europe, some of these migrants have sought to reach Libya to embark for Europe. Those rescued at sea, as well as those expelled by Italy or intercepted by coast guards are readmitted by Tunisia and swell the country's pool of irregular African migrants in a very precarious situation in the country.<sup>76</sup> Estimates of (long-term) transit Sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia rarely exceed 10,000.<sup>77</sup>

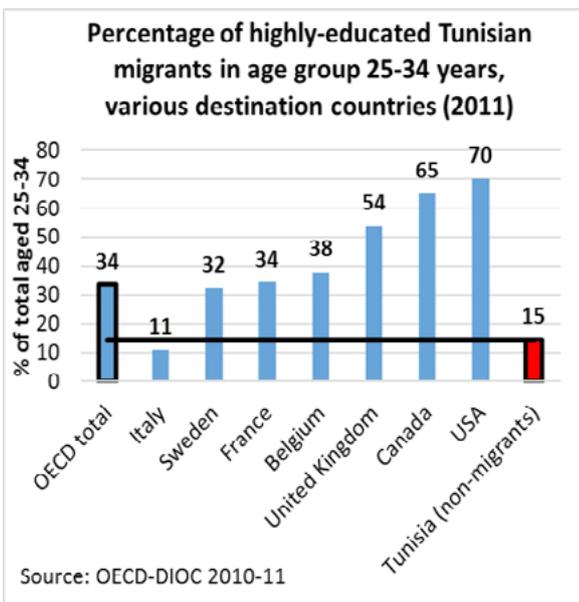
Arab countries' nationals, and especially Algerians and Moroccans who together made up 30 percent of all non-nationals in the 2014 census, are the most numerous within the officially-recorded foreign population. However, Iraqis and Syrians increased their numbers, as well as Libyans who grew some five times between the two dates and made up 16 percent of all foreign residents in 2014.

As emphasized in table 3, Syrians make up three-quarters of the modest numbers of refugees registered by UNHCR mid-2016 in the country.

<b>Refugees and asylum seekers registered by UNHCR in Tunisia, by nationality (June 2016)</b>	
<b>Country</b>	<b>Persons of concern</b>
Syria	541
Sudan	36
Palestine	32
Iraq	19
Ivory Coast	15
Somalia	15
Others (24 nationalities)	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>729</b>
<b>Source: UNHCR. Tunisia Factsheet, January-June 2016.</b>	



Child migrants (aged below 15) are rare everywhere. This indicates that Tunisian family migration is uncommon, except, to a certain extent, in Canada where 6 percent of all migrants are children. There, however, as well as in the UK, the 25-44 years age group predominates and sex ratios are particularly skewed: 65 and 70 males for 100 females, respectively in Canada and in the UK. This suggests that Tunisian expatriates may be families, as well as students and young male professionals who moved alone. In the UK, indeed, 20 percent of recent migrants (first permit holders) were residing for education-related purposes in 2015, while 80 percent of all migrants (recent, first permit holders and older settlers) were residing for employment purposes.<sup>50</sup> Elsewhere in Europe (in Germany, Belgium, Sweden and Italy), migrants' age distribution was also skewed towards active age groups and males outnumbered females: 61 percent males in Italy, 66 percent in Sweden. However, family reunion was the prime pathway to residency in these countries: 66 to 78 percent of all first permit holders; 58 to 79 percent of all permit holders. This indicates that migrants have come as young adults to these countries, most of them for marriage with an EU citizen,<sup>51</sup> prior to family formation and the birth of children in Europe.<sup>52</sup> Besides the many migrants in family reunion schemes, Germany also hosted some Tunisians for humanitarian reasons, while 40 percent of those in Italy (all permit holders) were labourers.

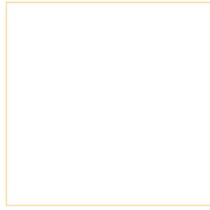


Figures of Syrian refugees in Tunisia as of mid-2015 (last available data) quoted by Tunisian officials and social workers are usually much higher than the ones quoted by UNHCR (registered refugees) and in the census results. Estimates of Syrians in Tunisia range from between 4,000<sup>78</sup> and as many as 9 to 12,000.<sup>79</sup> This cannot be convincingly assessed; yet, IOM estimated that some 10,000 Syrians had entered Tunisia from the Algerian border up to December 2014,<sup>80</sup> on their way to Libya.<sup>81</sup>

Libyans might also be grossly underestimated in official figures. Their numbers are difficult to come by since they do not register as refugees, as indicated in Table 3. Some are urbanites who moved to the Tunis region and other coastal towns; the less well-off or those with tribal connections in Tunisia stayed in the south in the border area. Libyan children are barred from enrolling in Tunisian public schools, but they can attend private educational institutes, as well as some schools opened by the Libyan government in Tunis. Tunisian hospitals, in the town of Sfax, especially, also accommodated vast numbers of Libyans wounded in the conflict.<sup>82</sup> As of September 2014, the Tunisian Minister of Commerce stated that the country was hosting over one million Libyan refugees,<sup>83</sup> while the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs estimated that these numbered between 800,000 and 1.5 million.<sup>84</sup> If accurate, these figures would mean that about 10 percent of Tunisia's total population is composed of Libyans.

Borders between the two countries have been temporarily closed, but mostly remained open to Libyans, who are able to enter Tunisia for a ninety-day period without requiring a visa in advance.<sup>85</sup> However, it is unlikely that the stock of the Libyan migrants in Tunisia has remained stable since 2011. No data are available as to how many refugees have been commuting between the two countries, and how many of the most affluent refugees only transited to Tunisia before seeking asylum or residency elsewhere.<sup>86</sup>

Informality, therefore, blurs our knowledge of immigrants in Tunisia, and employment figures are equally elusive. Immigrants in an irregular situation, from Sub-Saharan African countries and from other countries in the Maghreb, survive in clandestine, low-skilled and low-pay economic activities.<sup>87</sup> As for those in regular employment, foreign management-level and technical cooperation personnel who are



In Tunisia, as elsewhere, migration is a selective process: migrants are twice as educated as non-migrants (Figure 2). The UK's and Canada's points-based immigration system mostly channel highly-educated, post-graduate students and young highly-skilled professionals to these countries. In the rest of Europe, the immigration policies and socio-economic setup channeled less educated Tunisians. Tunisian migrants in Italy are even less educated than non-migrants in Tunisia; the development of labour-intensive activities (in construction, agriculture and services), in the 1990s, attracted these low-skilled labourers to Italy.

As it happens, 76 percent of employed Tunisian migrants in Italy were in the three lowest categories of occupations;<sup>53</sup> with almost half (46 percent) in “elementary occupations” alone. Only 7 percent were in managerial or highly-skilled positions in this country (15 percent in Sweden). By contrast, most Tunisians in Canada were to be found in highly-skilled professions: the three top categories of professions (the “managers”, “professionals” and “technicians and associate professionals”) employ 60 percent (38 percent in Britain). In France, Tunisian migrants can be found in all categories of professions: 39 percent are in the top three as well as in the three lowest-skilled categories. Those in Belgium displayed a relatively similar, diverse profile.<sup>54</sup> Tunisians also often worked in “services and trade”-related professions. The numbers ranged from between 12 (France) and 32 percent (Sweden) of employed Tunisian migrants.

### Flows

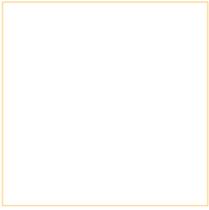
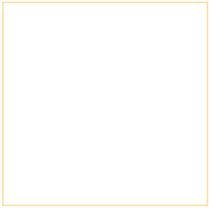
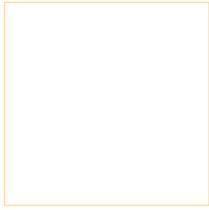
The propensity to migrate is high in Tunisia: 44 percent of the country's youth aged 15 to 29 expressed their desire to emigrate in 2010.<sup>55</sup> During the 2000s, for example, net outward migration showed a growing negative net balance over the period. Annual net migration flows from Tunisia were estimated at -20,676 for the period 2009-2014.<sup>56</sup> Yet, stocks of Tunisian migrants in Europe only expanded from 414,898, to 539,049 during the 2000s. This is due to their slow rates of growth in France where they are most numerous: 1.2 percent a year on average during the decade. Everywhere else, however, the numbers of Tunisian migrants have risen: this is especially true of Italy where the numbers rose from 56,636 in 2001 to 101,717 in 2011, a growth rate of 6 percent a year. In North America, the numbers of Tunisians more than

not subject to a labour permit in Tunisia, made up 54 percent of labour contracts in 2013.<sup>88</sup> This means that Tunisia is not a major foreign employment market and mostly provides opportunities to non-nationals in the framework of Foreign Direct Investments schemes<sup>89</sup> (secondments for instance). In 2014, labour permits granted to foreign labourers by the Ministry of Training and Employment (MFPE) went mainly to Europeans (58 percent of all permits), among whom the French (21 percent) and Italians (16.4 percent). The Moroccans came next with 12 percent of the permits issued that year.<sup>90</sup> Most legal foreign labourers were employed in the manufacturing sector (28 percent), followed by the real estate sector (19 percent) in 2013 (last available data).<sup>91</sup> This high figure may be a result of the inflows of Libyan refugees since 2011.

### Flows

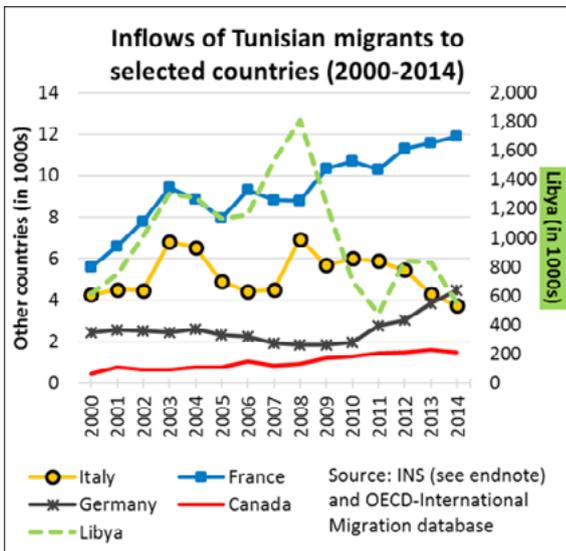
Tunisia experienced an upsurge in immigration since the start of the Libyan crisis in February 2011. The first three months of the crisis witnessed massive cross-border movements, reaching a peak at 7,000 daily arrivals 7 March 2011. Estimates of those having reached Tunisia over the course of 2011-2012 stood at around 1 million persons. These broke down into 97,000 Tunisian returnees, 660,000 Libyans and 220,000 persons of thirty different nationalities, mostly Eritreans, Somalis and Sudanese, who had been residing in Libya.<sup>92</sup> Migrants fleeing or returning from Libya were first taken care of by the Tunisian army, the local population and NGOs providing them with basic needs.<sup>93</sup>

In order to deal with the growing numbers of refugees, several camps were installed between February and May 2011, to accommodate up to 20,000 third-country nationals. As flows were decreasing rapidly by mid-2011, the Choucha camp run by UNHCR remained the only and biggest camp with over 3,700 refugees and asylum seekers. As of 31 January 2012, the vast majority of third-country nationals who came from Libya had either returned to their country of origin or had been resettled in third countries as refugees.<sup>94</sup> As of October 2012, 1,990 refugees and asylum seekers, as well as 281 people outside UNHCR mandate remained in the camp.<sup>95</sup> Yet, since the closure of the camp by UNHCR in June 2013, around 1,000 migrants, especially sub-Saharan Africans, have been left without support and survive by begging.<sup>96</sup>



doubled during the period, from 6,540 to 14,032 in the US and from 5,230 to 11,765 in Canada. Yet, the fastest growing destination over the decade was Libya, where the Tunisian authorities reported about 95,000 Tunisian expatriates on the eve of the 2011 revolution. The figure may be an underestimate, as informality was most common among Tunisians in Libya.<sup>57</sup>

However, the inflows did not rise steadily everywhere.<sup>58</sup> Figures for the period 2000-2014 (Figure 3) emphasize a slowdown in entries to Germany at the end of the 2000s, for instance, prior to a hike in inflows after 2010. Movements of Tunisians into Italy are harder to decipher, as the effect of 2008 financial crisis is not visible in the figures. Rather, the hikes in entries observed in 2003-2004 and in 2008-2010 illustrate the results of the two campaigns of regularisation conducted in 2002-2004 and 2009 in that country. Yet, the sharp fall of numbers after 2012 suggests that Italy is now a less favoured destination for new Tunisian migrants, unlike France where entries went up slowly but steadily through the period.

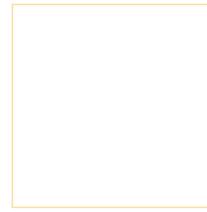
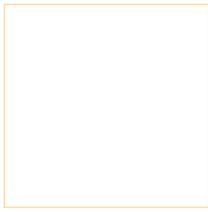


As regards Libya,<sup>59</sup> in 2007 the Ras Jedir border crossing point was registering 17,000 movements (entries and exits) between the two countries daily.<sup>60</sup> During that year, 1.8 million Tunisians crossed the border to Libya.<sup>61</sup> The brutal fall in the numbers of exits after that date probably reflects the imposition of visas to all residents, including Arabs, decided in 2007 by the Libyan government. This was followed by announcements of deportation of irregulars.<sup>62</sup> This may have deterred some Tunisians who intended to

Waves of refugees from Libya experienced ebbs and flows. As indicated above in the “stocks” section, the size and patterns of the flows of Libyan refugees who progressively came to settle in Tunisia after February 2011 are not known. Yet, various upsurges in fighting or battles sporadically forced new refugees to cross the border; increasing numbers of families with children were also said to have arrived in Tunisia, while the father kept commuting between the two countries. IOM Tunisia reports that over July and August of 2014, up to 6,000 people per day were moving over the border from Libya to Tunisia. Among these were Sub-Saharan Africans, escaping the conflict in Libya or transiting through Tunisia on their way home. Yet, the Tunisian government proved hesitant in welcoming these flows and the border was, at times, closed. Non-Libyan migrants needed to present valid travel documents and proof of an onward journey and were only permitted to stay in Tunisia for 72 hours.<sup>97</sup> In 2016, border crossings with Libya were closed after clashes took place in the border town of Ben Gardane. Tunisia also built a 200-kilometre barrier stretching about half the length of its border with Libya in an attempt to prevent Daesh militants from infiltrating.<sup>98</sup>

These events had a great effect on Tunisia’s economy. The return of Tunisian expatriates from Libya was said to cost Tunisia about 0.6 percent of its GDP previously drawn from the workers’ remittances.<sup>99</sup> Libyan tourism also fell, though some Libyan refugees continue using tourist facilities in Tunisia. Tunisians also affirm that the inflows of affluent Libyans led to price hikes, especially in real estate and housing sectors in urban areas. Besides, the closing of borders between the two countries affected cross-border trade and smuggling which used to support poor, rural communities in the governorates of Medenine and Tataouine, in the south of the country.<sup>100</sup>

The post-uprising context also affected the nature of flows of (legal) foreign workers to the country. The number of work permits delivered to foreign labourers had peaked in 2007-2009 at around 7,800 permits. After a low in 2010-2011, perhaps the effect of the financial crisis and that of the uprisings, it picked up again to reach 6,617 in 2014.<sup>101</sup> The distribution of the legal workforce by nationality has not changed drastically since the early 2000s. Europeans have kept their prominent place on the work market since 2002:

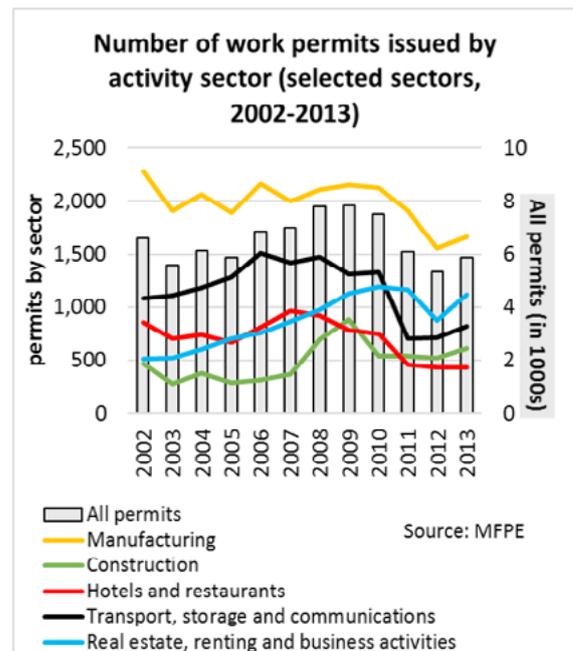


migrate legally. However, informality prevailed among Tunisian migrants in Libya who often originated from rural and tribal communities close to Libya's borders. Tunisians may thus have continued migrating to Libya in smaller numbers.

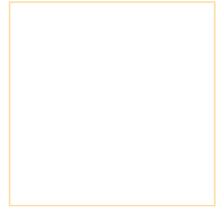
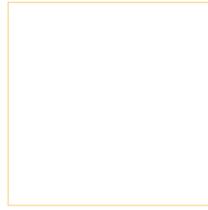
Irregularity is indeed a major feature of Tunisian migration to neighbouring countries, and to Europe. Increasing social instability spurred emigration waves: records of Tunisians attempting to enter the EU illegally shot up in 2008 after the repression of social uprisings that took place in the Gafsa region, for instance.<sup>63</sup> The Italian Ministry of Interior recorded 7,633 arrests of Tunisians arriving irregularly by sea in 2008, up from 1,417 arrests in 2007. Similarly, as a consequence of the 2011 revolts, 28,047 migrants (among whom there were many Tunisians) arriving from Tunisia by sea were arrested by Italian coast guards: in 2010 the numbers had been just 650.

More generally, in 2011-12, the annual number of migrants almost doubled with respect to 2005-2010 outflows, from 26,085 (average value for 2005-2010) to 50,391 (2011-12).<sup>64</sup> However, since 2008, the net migration rates of Tunisians Residing Abroad (TRE) had become positive (i.e., more TRE entering Tunisia than exiting), as compared to net migration rates of -59,000 and -52,000 respectively in 2005 and 2006.<sup>65</sup> This probably indicates that two opposite dynamics have been at play since the 2000s. First, the deteriorating socio-economic situation in Tunisia during the 2000s, which acted as a spur for emigration, especially from rural areas. Second, the 2008 financial crisis in Europe, the changes in visa policies in Libya, as well as the blunt policies targeting the nationals from Arab Spring countries in the Gulf States since 2011,<sup>66</sup> limited legal emigration from Tunisia. It may also have compelled some migrants to return. Therefore, irregular emigration was seen as the only option, all the more so as many who had embarked on unsuccessful irregular migration journeys originated from the central, and poorest regions of Tunisia.<sup>67</sup> These young Tunisians had limited access to international labour markets, which required assets and capabilities they did not possess.<sup>68</sup> Political instability in Tunisia, as well as the economic slowdown, following the 2008 financial crisis (that greatly affected Italy), and the change of regime in Tunisia, thus increased the irregular migration pressure from Tunisia. As for legal emigration, the resumption of TRE's negative net migration rates

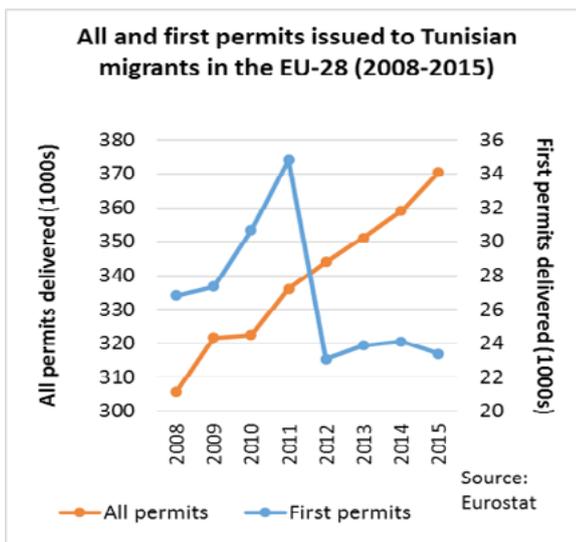
21 percent of permits were granted to French nationals over the period; 15-16 percent to Italians. Among Arab labourers, the share of the Algerians fell from 6 percent in 2002-2006 to 1 percent in 2014. Libyans and other Arab nationalities increased their participation, from 1 percent in the first half of the 2000s to 5 percent in 2014 and from 5 to 11 percent of all permits. These Arab nationals may be Syrians, who are the only Arab nationals who have gained in numbers since the crisis began. Yet, the numbers of these workers remain very low in regard to the estimated size of their national group in Tunisia: Libyan legal labourers, for instance, number only 331 in 2014. This confirms that most Libyans in Tunisia, either commute between the two countries, or live, in the case of the wealthier, off their savings.



Foreign employment was more affected by the economic slowdown, which hit the country after the uprisings and the change in regime. The loss of job opportunities was particularly pronounced in the 'hotels and restaurants'; 'transport'; 'manufacturing' and construction sectors, all dependent on foreign investments. However, the resumption of the hiring of foreign labourers after 2013 suggests that the Tunisian economy may be slowly recovering. The role potentially played by Libyan investments in this recovery, cannot, however, be measured due to an absence of data.



since 2014 suggests that legal, perhaps more educated Tunisians, had found new outlets, among which North America, Germany and France as suggested in Figure 3. Interestingly, figures of naturalization of Tunisians in the West have gone up in recent years. 7,018 Tunisians acquired French nationality in 2015, up from a low of 5,546 naturalisations in 2012. In Italy, 4,411 Tunisians were naturalized in 2014; naturalization rates have grown from 0.4 percent in 2006 to 4.5 percent that year. In Canada, citizenship acquisitions went up from 410 in 2013 to 1,520 in 2014. This perhaps indicates that Tunisian migrants are increasingly settling in their host country, or resort to “strategic transnationalism”<sup>69</sup>; securing a Western nationality to guarantee mobility in the context of the increasing “securitization” of migration.



The movement of residency permits issued to Tunisian migrants in the 28 EU member states confirms the hypothesis of an increasing settlement of ‘older’ migrants, while new ones encounter difficulties in entering Europe. Figure 4, indeed, indicates that permits renewals have increased since 2008, while the number of new permits issued to Tunisians fell from about 35,000 in 2011 to 23,000 in 2012 and has remained low ever since.

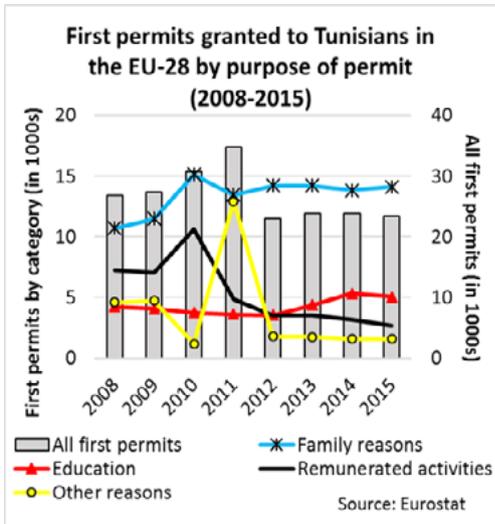
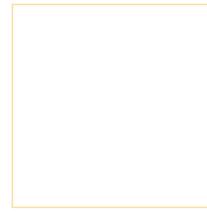
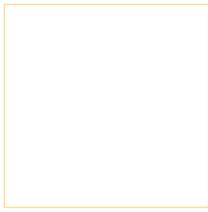
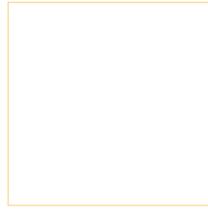


Figure 5 indicates that, prior to their fall in 2012, the upsurge in first permit issuances observed in 2011 concerned permits issued for “other reasons”. These are the six-month temporary protection status permits granted by Italy under the heading “Extraordinary reception measures for exceptional events”, to Tunisian migrants who arrived in Italy between 1 January and 5 April 2011 (see introduction).<sup>70</sup> Before this, Italy used to issue 45 to 47 percent of all first permits granted to Tunisians in the EU: 12,668 in 2008 and a high of 19,036 in 2011. As of 2015, Italy only issued 16 percent of these or 3,690. This is mainly due to the drastic limitations put on the entry of labourers and professionals (permits granted under the category of “remunerated activities”) in the EU since 2010.<sup>71</sup> This is partly a consequence of the 2008 financial crisis. Italy was granting more than 80 percent of permits in this category until 2010 (around 8,000 permits). However, the lower-skilled professions employing most Tunisian migrants in Italy (fishing, agriculture and construction for instance) suffered from the crisis and from the ensuing economic reforms. As of 2015, Italy only supplied 509 permits to Tunisian labourers. The numbers of permits delivered by France remained stable over the period and rose from 10,000 to 14,000 residencies; Germany channelled increasing numbers (from 856 to 2,246 permits granted). Figure 5 also illustrates the stragnation of family reunions in the EU since 2010, and the modest increase in the number of new Tunisian students in Europe. France, now the major receiver of new Tunisian migrants, issued 71 percent of all student permits in the EU in 2015, up from 60 percent in 2008. This is a sign of the growing French and EU preference for skilled and highly-skilled migrants from Tunisia,<sup>72</sup> which leaves no more legal outlets for the less skilled ones.

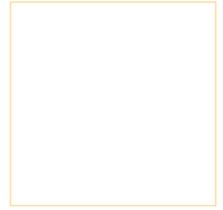
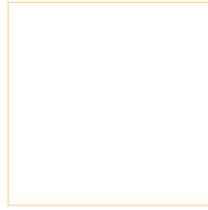


## Endnotes

- 1 <http://www.ote.nat.tn/index.php?id=133>. “OTE draws up an annual register of Tunisian professionals abroad. This data is collected from various agencies, including the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Training, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central Bank of Tunisia, as well as the French Office for Immigration and Integration for statistics on migration flows from Tunisia to France” (Awad, I. and Selim, H. “Labour Migration Governance in Transition. Continuity and Change in Egypt and Tunisia (2011-2015),” *FIERI Working Papers*, February 2015, <http://feri.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/LAB-MIG-GOV-Egypt-Tunisia-CMRS-AUC-27-February2015-References-b-1.pdf>).
- 2 Boubakri, H. and Simon, G. Article “Tunisie”, in: Simon, G. (ed.). *Dictionnaire géo-historique des migrations internationales*, Paris : Armand Colin, 2015, pp. 308-315, p. 313.
- 3 Boubakri and Simon, 2015: 313.
- 4 Kriaa, M. et alii. *Migrations des Tunisiens en Libye : Dynamiques, défis et perspectives*, Tunis : Banque Africaine de Développement (BAD) and IOM, 2012, p. 7.
- 5 Natter, K. “Revolution and Political Transition in Tunisia: A Migration Game Changer?”, *Migration Information Source*, Migration Policy Institute, 28May 2015.
- 6 Agreements signed in the 2000s also included women migrants: from 118 in 2000, they were 597 in 2008 (Boubakri, H. “Femmes et migrations en Tunisie”, *CARIM ASN 2011/17*, Florence: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, 2011, p. 9).
- 7 Renamed “Office des Travailleurs Tunisiens à l’Etranger, de l’Emploi et de la Formation Professionnelle” in 1973 (Boubakri and Simon, 2015: 312).
- 8 <http://www.tunisie-competences.nat.tn/default.aspx?id=208&Lg=2>
- 9 Awad and Selim, 2015: 6. See <http://www.emploi.nat.tn/fo/Fr/global.php>.
- 10 Natter, 2015.
- 11 Fargues, P. “Arab Migration to Europe: Trends and Policies”, *International Migration Review*, n°38(4), 2004, pp. 1348-1371, p. 1362.
- 12 Tunisia’s structural adjustment programme negotiated with the IMF and the World Bank came into effect in 1986. It aimed at integrating the Tunisian economy into the world economy. Tunisia’s accession to the WTO in 1995, the implementation of several free trade agreements (FTAs) and the passing of the Association Agreement with the European Union in 1998 further deregularised Tunisia’s economy, by, for instance, dismantling the trade barriers on industrial goods between the EU and Tunisia in 2008.
- 13 Elder, S. “What does NEETs mean and why is the concept so easily misinterpreted?”, *Technical Brief No.1, Work4Youth (W4Y) project*, ILO, January 2015, p. 5.
- 14 Policies of structural adjustment and economic liberalisation were originally seen as a pre-requisite for political reform and liberalization, under the assumption that liberal economic reforms would limit the redistributive capacities of patrimonial states and promote the emergence of an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie able to convene democratic claims. Yet they had in fact the opposite effect. Regimes took control of the process of economic liberalization, which hampered the expected dismantling of rentier systems, monopolies of power and accumulation processes (Catusse, M. “Ordonner, classer, penser la société : les pays arabes au prisme de l’économie politique”, in E. Picard, ed., *La politique dans le monde arabe*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2006, pp. 231-234). Moreover, international resources and rhetoric on reforms were used to justify increased political control. This process was particularly acute in Tunisia (for example: Cassarino, J. P. *Tunisian New Entrepreneurs and Their Past Experiences of Migration in Europe: Resource Mobilisation, Networks, and Hidden Disaffection*, London, Ashgate Publishing, 2000; Hibou, B. “Économie politique de la répression : le cas de la Tunisie”, *Raisons politiques*, No. 20, November 2005, pp. 9-36).



- 15 In the spring and summer 2011, an estimated 1,128,985 people fled war-torn Libya to Italy and Malta, but also to Tunisia, Egypt, Niger, Algeria, Chad and Sudan (Fargues, P. and Fandrich, C. “Migration After the Arab Spring”, *MPC Research Report 2012/09*, 2012, p. 4).
- 16 Fargues and Fandrich, 2012: 4.
- 17 Baldwin Edwards, M. and Zampagni, F. *Regularisations and employment in Italy-REGANE Assessment Report*, ICMPSD, February 2014, <http://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/59754/>, p. 19.
- 18 Frontex data, 2013 in: <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/africa/tunisia>.
- 19 Fargues and Fandrich, 2012: 4.
- 20 Natter, 2015.
- 21 Law 2004-6, 3 February 2004, which comprises seventeen articles detailing sanctions against migrants in irregular situation (Bel Haj Zekri, A. « La migration de transit en Tunisie : état des lieux et impacts et avancement de la recherche sur la question, » *CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes*, 2009/16, RSCAS, 2009, p. 6).
- 22 [http://www.diplomatie.gov.tn/index.php?id=42&L=2&tx\\_ttnews%5b%5d=1&tx\\_ttnews%5b%5d=42&tx\\_ttnews%5b%5d=13&tx\\_ttnews%5b%5d=2678399&tx\\_ttnews%5b%5d=1309471200&tx\\_ttnews%5b%5d=1&tx\\_ttnews%5b%5d=310&Hash=f3afa9fdb76c6bdafa4c8018f6158262](http://www.diplomatie.gov.tn/index.php?id=42&L=2&tx_ttnews%5b%5d=1&tx_ttnews%5b%5d=42&tx_ttnews%5b%5d=13&tx_ttnews%5b%5d=2678399&tx_ttnews%5b%5d=1309471200&tx_ttnews%5b%5d=1&tx_ttnews%5b%5d=310&Hash=f3afa9fdb76c6bdafa4c8018f6158262)
- 23 [http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2529#\\_ga=1.20460920.133653293.1460363829](http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2529#_ga=1.20460920.133653293.1460363829)
- 24 [http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2529#\\_ga=1.47020135.133653293.1460363829](http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2529#_ga=1.47020135.133653293.1460363829)
- 25 <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Tunisia%20Operational%20Update%20-%20January-June%202016.pdf>
- 26 Bel Haj Zekri, A. “La dimension politique de la migration circulaire en Tunisie,” *CARIM Notes d’analyse et de synthèse* 2008/17. Florence: RSCAS/ European University Institute, 2008, p. 12.
- 27 Bartels, I. “Reconfiguration of Tunisian Migration Politics after the ‘Arab Spring’ - The Role of Young Civil Society Movements”, in: Schäfer, I. (Ed.). *Youth, Revolt, Recognition – The Young Generation during and after the ‘Arab Spring’*. Berlin: Mediterranean Institute Berlin (MIB)/HU Berlin, 2015, pp. 62-79. <http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/miscellanies/arabspring-41600/58/PDF/58.pdf>
- 28 <http://carim-south.eu/database/legal-module/the-constitution-of-tunisia-2014/> Voting from abroad was first introduced in 1989 in Tunisia, for presidential elections.
- 29 The body was cancelled in January 2014 following the adoption of a new constitution and the nomination of a new government (Pouessel, S. “Report on Tunisian Legal Emigration to the EU: Modes of Integration, Policy, Institutional Frameworks and Engagement of Non-State Actors,” *INTERACT RR 2014/22*, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole: European University Institute, 2014, p. 8).
- 30 Awad and Selim, 2015: 7-8.
- 31 <http://www.atf-federation.org/article-le-haut-conseil-des-tunisiens-a-l-etranger-hcte-108679034.html>.
- 32 The Tunisian Forum on Economic and Social Rights (le Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Économiques et Sociaux, FTDES), the CeTuMa (“Tunis Centre for Migration and Asylum” or “Centre de Tunis pour la Migration et l’Asile”, a new NGO which aims to enhance public and scientific discussion about a new immigration policy in Tunisia), and the LTDH (Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l’Homme) have organized conferences and published press releases to raise awareness of the obligations of the Tunisian government, the UNHCR and the NATO member states involved in the war in Libya, as concerns the Choucha camp refugees for instance (Bartels, 2015: 75).
- 33 For example, the AFVIC (“Association des Familles Victimes de l’Immigration Clandestine”, or “Association of Families Victim of Clandestine Immigration”) set up by the families of about 350 missing migrants, or the FTDES.



They helped the families raise public attention and spurred governmental action over missing migrants in Europe; they also organised protests against the detention, deportation and expulsion of migrants by the French and Italian authorities (Bartels, 2015: 71-72).

34 Rapport sur l'Enquête Nationale sur la Population et l'Emploi, 1<sup>er</sup> trimestre 2016 (<http://www.ins.tn/fr/publication/note-sur-lenqu%C3%AAte-nationale-de-l%E2%80%99emploi-t1-2016>).

35 Garcia Andrade, P., Martin, I. and Mananashvili, S. *EU Cooperation with Third Countries in The Field of Migration*, Directorate General for Internal Policies, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels, 2015, p. 131. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/536469/IPOL\\_STU\(2015\)536469\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/536469/IPOL_STU(2015)536469_EN.pdf).

36 Awad and Selim, 2015: 13.

37 [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/10\\_tunisia\\_4pg.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/10_tunisia_4pg.pdf).

38 To that effect, the project “EU-Tunisia Migration Cooperation Agenda” (ETMA) was conducted by ICMPD in partnership with the Tunisian government (<https://www.icmpd.org/index.php?id=2373>) and led to the setting up of the Tunisia-Europe Platform on Migration (<https://www.eurotun-migr.net/en/>).

39 Memo presented by Ambassador Ridha Farhat in Brussels (March 2012). *Les Grands axes en matière d'immigration et d'intégration*, quoted in Fargues and Fandrich, 2012: 8.

40 Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

41 [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/international-affairs/general/docs/declaration\\_conjointe\\_tunisia\\_eu\\_mobility\\_fr.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/international-affairs/general/docs/declaration_conjointe_tunisia_eu_mobility_fr.pdf). Like other MPs, the EU-Tunisia Partnership addresses migration-related issues under four main pillars: exploiting the potential of immigration for development; mobility, legal migration and integration; irregular migration and border management; trafficking in human beings and asylum. EU funding stands at €5 million for its main bilateral component.

42 <http://www.migreurop.org/article2319.html>.

43 [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-3394\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3394_en.htm).

44 Office des Tunisiens à l'Étranger, 2012 data (<http://www.ote.nat.tn/index.php?id=133>).

45 OECD-International Migration Database data, 2000-2014.

46 The analysis of the profile of Tunisians having returned from Libya in 2011-2012 indicated that Tunisian migrants in Libya were males (94.4 percent), and that 71.2 percent were aged between 25 and 50 years. The vast majority (87.5 percent) had only primary and secondary education. Of the 16.6 percent holding a degree, 63.7 percent had vocational education certificates. Tunisians in Libya were mostly employed in low-skilled activities (Kriaa et al., 2012, p. 9; 44).

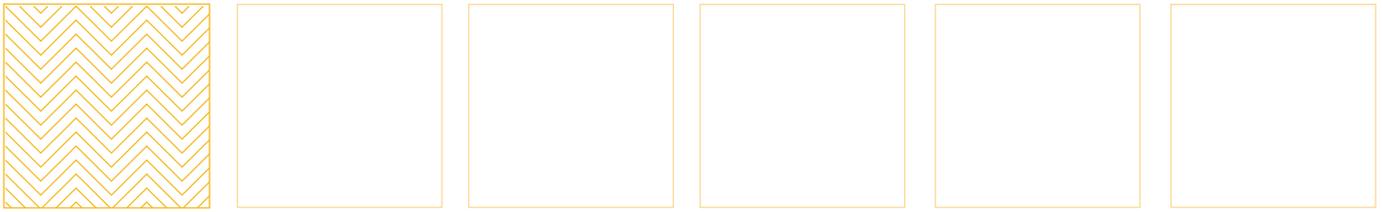
47 In 2014, 76 percent of all Tunisian in these schemes were recorded in Arab countries, and especially in the Gulf States (Statistical records of the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT) for 2014, in Kriaa, M. *Actualisation des données sur le marché du travail et les migrations en Tunisie*, unpublished, 2015).

48 Statistical records of the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT) for 2014, in Kriaa, 2015.

49 Boubakri and Simon, 2015: 312.

50 Eurostat, 2015 data, first permits delivered during the year and all permit (first and renewals) holders as of December 31.

51 Eurostat data, 2015, first permits delivered for family-related purposes, detailed results. Of the 14,122 family-related permits delivered that year in the EU-28, 7,111 concerned a “spouse/partner joining an EU citizen”. The share ranged from 26 (Italy) to 58 percent (France) of all permits granted for family related purposes. Only UK and Sweden had most migrants joining non-EU citizens. In Belgium, France and Sweden, 55 to 58 percent of family-reunion related permits are granted to males, while in Italy, females use such schemes more than males.



52 Hence it was invisible in statistics on migrants.

53 According to the ISCO 08 classification, in the categories of “craft and related trades workers”; “plant and machine operators and assemblers,” and “elementary occupations”.

54 OECD-DIOC data, 2011 revision. Data on Tunisians in Germany were unavailable.

55 According to the Silatech Index, a representative yearly survey of young people in the League of Arab States. Silatech-Gallup. The Silatech Index: *Voices of Young People, 2010*, p. 18. Available at: <http://css.escwa.org.lb/sd/1382/SilatechMasterinteractive.pdf>. By comparison, during the same survey, 20 percent of young Egyptians and 37 percent of young Moroccans expressed their wish to migrate. Another recent survey by the Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux (FTDES) similarly emphasised young Tunisians’ propensity to migration, even by irregular means: <http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2016/12/03/45-des-jeunes-tunisiens-se-disent-prets-a-emigrer-meme-illegalement/>

56 INS data portal, international migration <http://dataportal.ins.tn/fr/DataAnalysis/>.

57 Kriaa, 2012: 9.

58 The figure takes into account the inflows only, and not the net flows. Exit data were unavailable for major immigration countries (France, Libya, Canada); moreover, recorded exits for Italy and Germany were few (badly recorded?) and did not affect the general trend of migration designed by inflows.

59 The data used here are the exits recorded at Tunisia’s borders, destined for Libya, which are collected by Tunisia’s Interior Ministry and published in the INS data portal. These are the only data available on flows to Libya. They include all cross-border movements, for labour migration as well as visits, trade, etc.

60 <http://tn-news.com/portal/v4/2445949> .

61 INS data portal, exits of Tunisians to Libya (Figure 3).

62 Fargues, Ph. “Irregularity as Normality among Immigrants South and East of the Mediterranean”, *CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Note 2009/2*, Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole, European University Institute, 2009, pp. 4-5. “The visas were imposed to please Europe, as Libya had become a major gateway for irregular migrants from Africa” (p. 4).

63 Boubakri, H. “Migrations internationales et revolution en Tunisie”, *MPC RR 2013/01*, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole, European University Institute, 2013, <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/MPC-RR-2013-01.pdf>.; Cassarino, J. P. “Channelled Policy Transfers: EU-Tunisia Interactions on Migration Matters”, *European Journal of Migration and Law*, No. 16, 2014, p. 97-123.

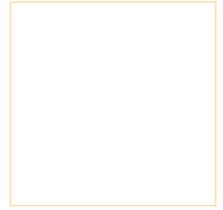
64 See Di Bartolomeo, A. et al. MPC Migration Profile: Tunisia, June 2013.

65 For 2013 and 2014: Tunisian Ministry of Interior, data on entries and exits of travellers through Tunisian borders, <http://opendata.interieur.gov.tn/fr/catalog/le-mouvement-d-entree-et-de-sortie-des-voyageurs-par-les-frontieres-tunisiennes-durant-les-annees-2012-2013-et-2014>. For 2002 to 2012: Kriaa, M. et al. *Migration de travail en Tunisie: une lecture de la décennie 2002-2012*, Tunis : IOM, March 2013, p. 12.

66 <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/firms-see-obstacles-in-hiring-from-arab-spring-nations>

67 According to the Statistics of the Tunisian Consular authorities in Tripoli (Libya), of all Tunisian migrants arrested by Libyan authorities or by Italian coast guards at the gates of Europe, most (67 percent) came from the governorates of the Centre-West (Kasserine, Sidi Bouzid and Kairouan) and the South (Medenine, Tataouine, Gafsa) of the country (Boubakri, 2013: 4)

68 During the 2000s, migration from these regions was mainly directed to coastal regions of Tunisia rather than to international labour markets (Bouchoucha, I. and Ouadah-Bedidi, Z. “Migration économique et développement régional en Tunisie”, communication présentée au XXVI<sup>e</sup> congrès international de la population de l’UIESP, Marrakech,



septembre 2009). This is because of development inequalities: the central region is deprived of industry and tourism and has low education, poor infrastructure and an absence of international ties. In Tunisia as a whole, graduate unemployment reached 23 percent in 2010, yet in the centre of the country, rates were twice as much: 46.5 percent in Gafsa and 38.5 percent in Kasserine and Tataouine. In Sidi Bouzid, the rate was 40 percent (INS, 2010).

69 Gardner, A. “Strategic Transnationalism: The Indian Diasporic Elite in Contemporary Bahrain”, *City & Society*, Vol. 20, Issue 1, pp. 54–78, 2008.

70 This came together with a hike in the numbers of Tunisian asylum seekers to Europe in 2011, mainly directed to Italy, Switzerland and to a much lesser extent, to Germany, France and Sweden. The asylum applicants from Tunisia in the EU-28 numbered 620 in 2008, 6,810 in 2011 and 2,255 in 2015 (Eurostat data, migr\_asyappctza).

71 From 10,597 in 2010 to 2,651 in 2015.

72 See: <http://www.ambassadefrance-tn.org/Office-francais-de-l-immigration-et-de-l-integration#flux-migratoires-economiques-entre-2>. However, the same source (the French OFII) also indicated that 55 percent of Tunisian labourers received in France in 2015 were seasonal workers, holding a three-year residency document.

73 Tunisia has established technical and educational cooperation links with francophone Sub-Saharan African countries since the 1960s (Boubakri and Simon, 2015: 311). The Association des étudiants et stagiaires africains en Tunisie (AESAT) (Association of African Students and Trainees in Tunisia) estimated that Sub-Saharan students in the country numbered around 10,000 (February 2016), originating from 24 countries (<http://jamaity.org/association/association-des-etudiants-et-stagiaires-africains-en-tunisie/>). If accurate, the figure would emphasize an underestimate of African nationals during the 2014 census.

74 Altaï Consulting and IOM-MENA Regional Office. *Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots*, June 2015, p. 71.

75 Nationals from Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana and Liberia are not required visas in advance.

76 Altaï Consulting, 2015: 69-71.

77 Natter, 2015.

78 <http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2015/09/15belgacem-sabri-le-nombre-des-refugies-syriens-atteint-4-mille/>.

79 <http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2015/08/14/enquete-sur-la-situation-des-refugies-syriens-et-libyens-en-tunisie/>.

80 Until December 2014, Algeria was not imposing entry visas on Syrians.

81 Altaï Consulting, 2015: 71.

82 Karasapan, O. The Impact of Libyan Middle-Class Refugees in Tunisia, *Future Development Brookings Blog*, March 17, 2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2015/03/17/the-impact-of-libyan-middle-class-refugees-in-tunisia/>; [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/10/world/africa/libya-refugees-tunisia-tripoli.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/10/world/africa/libya-refugees-tunisia-tripoli.html?_r=1)

83 <http://observers.france24.com/en/20141001-libyan-refugees-stigmatised-tunisia-reputation>

84 <http://libyabusiness.tv/video/no-visas-for-libyans-says-tunisian-government>

85 Libyans also benefit from a 1973 convention which allows them to work, establish businesses, and circulate in Tunisia with relative freedom (Karasapan, 2015).

86 As Libyan airports were closed, some Libyans departed from Tunisia to reach other destinations (Altaï Consulting, 2015: 71).



- 87 Kriaa et al.,2013: 33.
- 88 <http://carim-south.eu/database/demo-eco-module/labour-documents-granted-to-foreign-workers-by-type-of-document-exemption-or-labour-permit-and-year-2002-2014/>
- 89 Kriaa et al., 2013: 36.
- 90 <http://carim-south.eu/database/demo-eco-module/distribution-of-labour-permits-granted-by-country-of-citizenship-of-holder-2002-2014/>
- 91 <http://carim-south.eu/database/demo-eco-module/distribution-of-labour-documents-granted-by-activity-sector-and-year-2002-2013/>
- 92 UNGA-Human Rights Council. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, Mission to Tunisia, A/HRC/23/46/Add.1*, 3 May 2013, p. 5; Baba, W. “Investigation in first asylum country - Tunisia / Shousha Camp”, *KNOW RESET Research Report 2013/02*, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, 2013.
- 93 Bel Haj Zekri, A. « La dimension sociopolitique actuelle de la migration en Tunisie », *CARIM Analytical and Synthetic Note n°48*, San Domenico di Fiesole: European University Institute, 2011.
- 94 <https://www.iom.int/countries/tunisia#fm>
- 95 UNHCR data in Baba, 2013: 6.
- 96 <http://mediterraneanaffairs.com/tunisia-the-humanitarian-emergency-of-the-choucha-refugee-camp/>
- 97 Altaï Consulting, 2015: 86.
- 98 <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/strike-tunisia-town-over-halt-libya-border-trade-1410490164>.
- 99 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2014/09/httpwwwbusinessnewscomtnla-relance-economique-en-tun.html>
- 100 <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/strike-tunisia-town-over-halt-libya-border-trade-1410490164>
- 101 <http://carim-south.eu/database/demo-eco-module/distribution-of-labour-permits-granted-by-country-of-citizenship-of-holder-2002-2014/>

## Migration Policy Centre

*The Migration Policy Centre at the European University Institute, Florence, conducts advanced research on global migration to serve migration governance needs at European level, from developing, implementing and monitoring migration-related policies to assessing their impact on the wider economy and society. The Migration Policy Centre is co-financed by the European Union.*

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