

La Dimensione Esterna della Politica di Migrazione Italiana (DEPMI)

Working Report 2022

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La Dimensione Esterna della Politica di Migrazione Italiana (DEPMI)



Workin Report 2022

The Siracusa International Institute for
Criminal Justice and Human Rights

Via Giuseppe Logoteta 27
Siracusa

**Autori: Iole Fontana
Matilde Rosina
Sahizer Samuk Carignani**

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La Dimensione Esterna della Politica di Migrazione Italiana nel Mediterraneo allargato: obiettivi di ricerca di uno sforzo di mappatura

Iole Fontana¹

Nel corso degli ultimi vent'anni, l'Italia ha acquisito un ruolo centrale nella geografia migratoria del Mediterraneo allargato e dell'Unione Europea (UE). Per la sua posizione geografica al centro del Mediterraneo e in qualità di frontiera esterna dell'Unione Europea, l'Italia è diventata uno snodo dei flussi migratori globali. Il divario tra il *Global North* e il *Global South* del mondo, sempre più accentuato dai primi anni 2000, le primavere arabe del 2011 e la guerra in Libia, la crisi in Siria del 2015, la pandemia del 2020, la crisi politica e umanitaria in Afghanistan del 2021, la crisi Ucraina del 2022, e i recenti cambiamenti climatici in Africa e in Asia hanno contribuito a generare una molteplicità di ondate migratorie ai confini dell'Italia e dell'Europa.

In tale contesto, l'intensificazione e diversificazione delle modalità di cooperazione internazionale con gli Stati di origine e transito ha assunto un'importanza strategica per la governance del fenomeno migratorio nelle sue molteplici dimensioni logistiche, economiche, politiche, di sicurezza, di sviluppo e umanitarie. La migrazione è pertanto emersa non solo come un'importante *issue* di politica domestica, ma anche come una sfida in termini di politica estera, di relazioni con i paesi terzi e di proiezione internazionale del paese in Europa e nel Mediterraneo. Già dalla fine degli anni Novanta, l'Italia è diventata un attore chiave in grado di combinare dialogo politico, diplomazia e cooperazione allo sviluppo in un insieme di azioni rivolte ai paesi di provenienza e transito dei flussi migratori. Tale variegato insieme di azioni orientate alla gestione del fenomeno migratorio ma rivolte *verso l'esterno*, costituisce la cosiddetta Dimensione Esterna delle Politiche Migratorie Italiane (DEPMI).

Nonostante la rilevanza di questa dimensione, poca attenzione è stata rivolta all'analisi di tale aspetto nel caso italiano. La maggior parte della letteratura e dei *policy reports* esistenti si focalizza, difatti, sulla dimensione esterna delle politiche migratorie dell'Unione Europea, trascurando l'analisi di tale

¹ Coordinatore Scientifico DEPMI, Ricercatore presso il Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali dell'Università degli Studi di Catania.

dimensione rispetto ai singoli stati membri, Italia compresa. Pertanto, non esiste un vero e proprio *taking stock effort*, uno sforzo, cioè, comprensivo di mappatura, identificazione e analisi degli strumenti principali della politica esterna di migrazione dell'Italia, nonché del ruolo dei paesi terzi.

Il progetto di ricerca 'DEPMI', svolto dal team di ricerca del Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, su finanziamento del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, si propone di analizzare in maniera scientifica e sistematica la dimensione esterna delle politiche di migrazione italiane, attraverso una mappatura, identificazione, classificazione e analisi dei vari accordi e strumenti di cooperazione adottati dall'Italia con i paesi di origine e transito dei flussi migratori nel Mediterraneo allargato. Nello specifico, il progetto mira a rispondere alle seguenti domande di ricerca:

- quali tipologie di strumenti diplomatici e di accordi politici e operativi, costituiscono la dimensione esterna delle politiche migratorie italiane?
- Quali caratteristiche hanno e come possono essere classificati?
- Quale ruolo viene svolto dalla cooperazione funzionale e degli aiuti allo sviluppo?
- Che tipi di programmi e progetti contribuiscono alla dimensione esterna delle politiche migratorie italiane?

Il progetto si pone dunque i seguenti obiettivi:

- costruire un database che permetta di raccogliere, individuare e classificare gli strumenti, accordi e programmi di cooperazione funzionale che costituiscono il *policy toolbox* della politica di migrazione esterna dell'Italia;
- implementare una mappa grafica che fornisca uno 'snapshot' immediato e permetta di 'navigare' attraverso la dimensione esterna della politica migratoria italiana, fornendo informazioni accurate, semplici ed immediate su 'cosa fa l'Italia e dove' quando si tratta di cooperazione politica con i paesi terzi nell'ambito della migrazione.

Il report è organizzato nel modo seguente. La prima parte analizza le crisi migratorie nel Mediterraneo allargato e il ruolo dell'Italia come 'frontiera calda'. La seconda parte descrive il concetto di dimensione esterna delle politiche migratorie, la metodologia della ricerca e gli output prodotti. La

terza parte presenta 14 Country Profiles che analizzano la DEMPI e i rapporti bilaterali in ambito migratorio tra l'Italia e 14 paesi partner.

L'Italia e le crisi migratorie nel Mediterraneo allargato

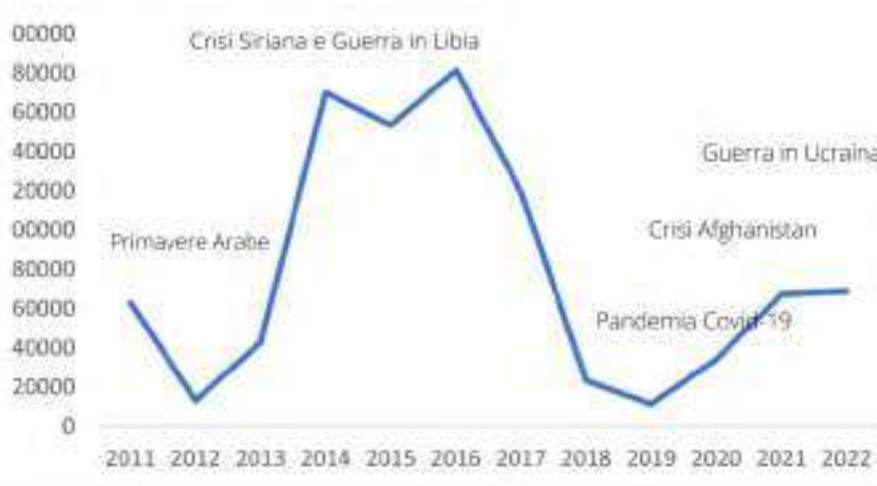
Per Mediterraneo allargato si intende quell'area geografica che dal bacino fisico del mar Mediterraneo si estende verso l'Africa sub-sahariana e l'estremo Medio-oriente. Il baricentro coincide con il bacino mediterraneo ma i suoi confini si ampliano ben oltre le tradizionali frontiere naturali spingendosi a sud, verso il Sahel, e ad est verso l'Asia, verso regioni, cioè, che ne costituiscono la turbolenta periferia in un continuum in cui i confini si assottigliano e si moltiplicano allo stesso tempo (Campelli e Gomel 2022; Di Cecco 2002). Negli ultimi anni, il Mediterraneo allargato è emerso come un'area cruciale e prioritaria per due ragioni. La prima è che il Mediterraneo allargato è a tutti gli effetti un microcosmo che replica le dinamiche principali della politica globale (Panebianco, 2022) in termini di interdipendenza, sfide politiche, energetiche, economiche, ambientali, infrastrutturali e sociali, rappresentando pertanto una regione strategica per la politica estera italiana.

La seconda è che si tratta di una macroregione che negli ultimi anni è diventata un crocevia fondamentale di flussi di persone. Una complessa combinazione di fattori strutturali e contingenti ha trasformato l'area in un teatro di diverse crisi migratorie. Le primavere arabe del 2011, le profonde trasformazioni politiche e le derive autoritarie che ne sono seguite; l'instabilità mai risolta in Libia e in Siria e la voragine della guerra civile; il ritorno dei talebani e la crisi umanitaria in Afghanistan in 2021; nonché la guerra in Ucraina a Febbraio 2022 e la crisi dei rifugiati che ne è derivata, sono alcuni degli eventi che hanno alimentato consistenti flussi migratori verso l'Italia e l'Europa. Tali eventi contingenti si sono intrecciati ad un complesso di altri fattori strutturali preesistenti: disuguaglianze economiche, povertà, disoccupazione giovanile, violenza, instabilità politica, violazioni dei diritti umani e cambiamenti climatici. Nel complesso, tra il 2011 e Settembre 2022, circa 950,000 persone² sono sbarcate in Italia attraverso le rotte del Mediterraneo.

² Secondo i dati forniti dall'UNHCR, questo numero è pari a 949,099 (2011-Settembre 2022). Secondo i dati di FRONTEX sugli arrivi irregolari lungo la rotta del Mediterraneo Centrale, nello stesso periodo sono state individuate 947,499 persone.

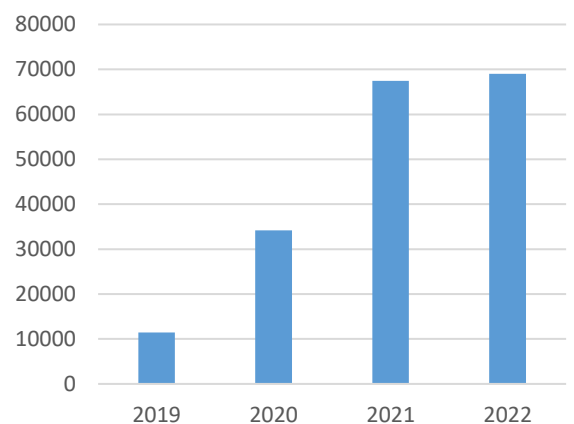
Gli arrivi via mare in Italia, attraverso le rotte del Mediterraneo allargato (2011-2022). Fonte:

Elaborazione su dati UNHCR



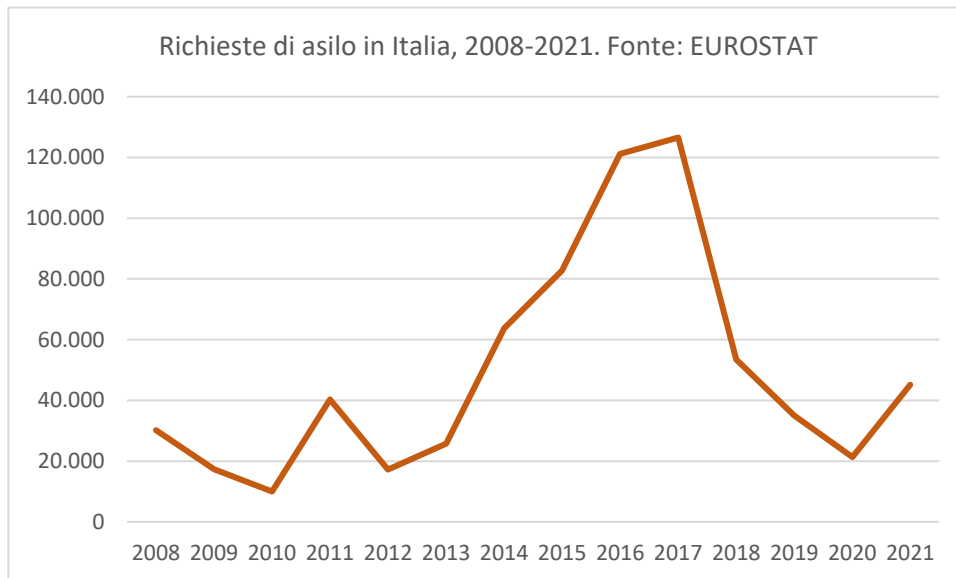
Al di là delle percezioni iniziali, la pandemia di COVID-19 non ha contribuito a ridurre i flussi verso l'Italia. Sebbene gli arrivi si siano drasticamente ridotti durante i mesi del primo lockdown (Marzo-Maggio 2020), a causa delle restrizioni alla mobilità a livello globale, i flussi migratori sono aumentati drasticamente già durante l'estate 2020, per poi continuare a crescere nel 2021 e nel 2022. In tal senso, la pandemia ha agito da 'amplificatore', esacerbando quegli stessi *push factors* strutturali che spingevano le persone a partire già in epoca pre-Covid. Nel 2021 e nel 2020, in Italia è arrivato via mare un numero di migranti rispettivamente sei volte e tre volte maggiore rispetto al 2019.

Arrivi via mare in Italia attraverso le rotte del Mediterraneo allargato: pre e post pandemia. Fonte: UNHCR



Le rotte del Mediterraneo allargato verso l'Italia si sono, inoltre, diversificate: paesi originariamente di transito sono diventati anche paesi di origine (es: l'Algeria); paesi di origine sono diventati anche paesi di transito (es: la Tunisia); paesi tradizionalmente non rilevanti quanto ad origine di flussi lo sono diventati improvvisamente (es: Afghanistan); nuovi porti di imbarco sono emersi non solo dalla Libia, ma anche dalla Turchia e dall'Algeria.

Inoltre, i movimenti migratori nel Mediterraneo allargato hanno acquisito sempre di più la caratteristica di flussi misti di migranti e richiedenti asilo, di persone che si spostano per un complesso intrecciarsi di motivazioni legate non solo alla ricerca di opportunità economiche, ma anche incolumità personale, persecuzione, violazioni dei diritti umani. In tutto, tra il 2008 e il 2021, l'Italia ha ricevuto quasi 690,000 richieste di asilo.



In una regione che ha da sempre una valenza strategica per l'Italia, la necessità di cooperare e dialogare con i paesi di origine e transito per una gestione dei flussi migratori nelle diverse dimensioni umanitarie, economiche, politiche, di sicurezza e di sviluppo, è diventato sempre più un elemento rilevante non solo della politica interna, ma anche dell'agenda di politica estera e delle relazioni internazionali tra l'Italia e i paesi terzi.

Il concetto di 'Dimensione Esterna delle Politiche Migratorie

Il concetto di politica 'esterna' di migrazione è stato originariamente e prevalentemente sviluppato nell'ambito degli studi sull'Unione Europea. La dimensione esterna viene definita come il 'coinvolgimento dei paesi di origine e transito nella gestione dei flussi migratori verso l'UE attraverso un'ampia gamma di accordi e strumenti (Boswell 2003; Carrera et al. 2015; European Parliament 2015). Tale dimensione esterna emerge quando politiche tradizionalmente appartenenti al *policy field* degli affari interni, come le politiche migratorie e di asilo, vengono incorporate nella sfera delle relazioni esterne e della politica estera. La dimensione esterna delle politiche di migrazione, pertanto, può essere definita come quell'area di mezzo tra gli affari interni e la politica estera. Negli studi sull'Unione Europea, il ricorso a pratiche di 'esternalizzazione' viene spiegato attraverso la necessità di identificare nuove strategie che possano integrare le tradizionali politiche migratorie 'interne' (Boswell 2003) e renderle più efficaci, guardando alla cooperazione con i paesi di origine e transito come uno strumento per la gestione dei fenomeni migratori nelle loro molteplici dimensioni.



Tale cooperazione con i paesi terzi comprende una vasta gamma di *policy tools* che possono essere raggruppati secondo tre grandi 'clusters' (Carrera et al. 2019; Chou 2009; Vara e Matellan 2021). Il primo è quello degli strumenti di gestione dei flussi, in termini di cooperazione nell'ambito della gestione della migrazione economica irregolare, dello scambio di informazioni e dati, della lotta ai fenomeni di *human smuggling* e *human trafficking*, degli accordi di riammissione e rimpatrio, e della collaborazione per un maggiore controllo delle rotte principali e delle frontiere. Il secondo cluster riguarda l'insieme degli strumenti di aiuto allo sviluppo e di investimento diretto estero rivolti a stabilire una cooperazione che agisca sulle *root causes* degli spostamenti migratori. Il terzo riguarda la cooperazione in merito allo sviluppo di canali regolari di migrazione, attraverso schemi di mobilità (temporanea, circolare, etc.) rivolta a lavoratori, professionisti e studenti.

Questi diversi tipi di strumenti della politica migratoria possono essere considerati 'esterni' in quanto decisi e implementati in coordinamento con i paesi partner (Carrera et al. 2015). Ci sono anche altri tipi di strumenti 'interni', che sono frutto di processi decisionali unicamente domestici senza il coinvolgimento di attori terzi, ma che tuttavia possono avere un impatto di politica estera. Un esempio è il concetto di paese di origine sicuro, o la scelta di includere o meno un paese nelle liste

dei paesi che sono esenti dall'obbligo del visto. Per quanto in entrambi i casi si tratti di strumenti che vengono decisi in maniera autonoma da processi interni, hanno comunque un effetto 'esterno', sulle dinamiche di mobilità, sull'asilo, o per la negoziazione di futuri accordi di riammissione con potenziali paesi partner.

Infine, i vari strumenti esterni delle politiche migratorie possono avere una diversa natura (Longo e Fontana, in fase di pubblicazione): possono essere strumenti 'legali' (come accordi formali o trattati internazionali); politici (semplici dichiarazioni di intenti, memoranda di intesa etc.) o operativi (es: accordi tecnici di cooperazione su aspetti specifici).

Sebbene la letteratura che analizza la dimensione esterna delle politiche migratorie dell'Unione Europea sia molto ricca e variegata, poca attenzione è stata rivolta all'analisi di tale aspetto relativamente alle politiche migratorie dei singoli stati membri,³ inclusa l'Italia. Pertanto, partendo dalle premesse concettuali applicate al caso dell'UE e riadattandole al caso italiano, questa ricerca si è concentrata sull'analisi della dimensione esterna delle politiche migratorie italiane, con lo scopo di comprendere i diversi strumenti che caratterizzano la cooperazione politica, diplomatica e funzionale avviata dall'Italia con i paesi di origine e transito ai fini della gestione dei flussi verso il paese.

La Dimensione Esterna della Politica di Migrazione Italiana (DEPMI): verso un tentativo di mappatura

Esplorare e mappare la dimensione esterna delle politiche migratorie italiane nell'area del Mediterraneo allargato è di grande interesse per diverse ragioni. La prima è che la cooperazione internazionale in questa area di *policy* non è più una misura straordinaria, ma rappresenta una nuova normalità che caratterizza le politiche migratorie di un gran numero di paesi. La partnership con gli stati di origine e gli sforzi di concertazione internazionale tra paesi di arrivo, transito e provenienza sono state identificate come aree prioritarie tanto dal Nuovo Patto Europeo sulla Migrazione (2020) quanto dal Compact sui Rifugiati delle Nazioni Unite (2018). In tal senso, è rilevante comprendere l'*actorness* dell'Italia e il contributo delle sue politiche estere e di cooperazione funzionale. In secondo luogo, fare uno sforzo di *stock-taking* è rilevante per comprendere i modelli di cooperazione, potenziali problematiche e *best practices*.

³ Le poche analisi disponibili, si concentrano prevalentemente sul ruolo degli accordi di riammissione. Si veda al riguardo : J.-P. CASSARINO, Il sistema ibrido della riammissione: Genealogia di un allineamento tra sovranazionalismo e bilateralismo, ADiM Blog, Editoriale, febbraio 2020

Per mappare la DEPMI e i suoi strumenti, la ricerca in questione ha combinato due diversi aspetti: l'aspetto della politica estera e l'aspetto della cooperazione funzionale.

La prima rappresenta la dimensione della *politics*, vale a dire l'insieme degli sforzi diplomatici, degli accordi politici e degli strumenti operativi che riflettono la politica estera e lo spettro delle relazioni internazionali tra l'Italia e un paese partner nell'ambito della migrazione. Nello specifico, per analizzare la dimensione della *politics*, la ricerca si è mossa partendo dalle seguenti domande: quali tipologie di strumenti caratterizzano la DEPMI? Come possono essere classificati e che caratteristiche hanno? Per rispondere a queste domande è stato identificato un *toolbox* della DEPMI, composto da 8 elementi, come illustrato nella tabella.

- 1) **Accordi di Riammissione**
- 2) **Migrazione come oggetto di dialogo politico**
- 3) **Accordi tecnico operativi**
- 4) **Uso delle quote flussi come strumento di condizionalità positiva**
- 5) **Aspetti migratori come parte di accordi più ampi (es: accordi di cooperazione; accordi di partenariato)**
- 6) **Accordi bilaterali specifici**
- 7) **Accordi in materia di lavoro, migrazione regolare e mobilità circolare**
- 8) **Corridoi umanitari**

Gli strumenti della dimensione esterna della politica di migrazione italiana.

Gli accordi di riammissione (1) sono uno strumento che, tanto a livello UE, quanto a livello bilaterale degli stati membri (Cassarino 2020) è diventato sempre più rilevante per cooperare con i paesi terzi ai fini dell'identificazione, riammissione e rimpatrio dei cittadini stranieri in posizione irregolare. Previsti dal testo unico sull'immigrazione, e modificati dalla Legge Bossi Fini (189/2002), tanto il Ministro degli Affari Esteri quanto il Ministro dell'Interno possono promuovere, d'intesa con i paesi interessati, iniziative per accelerare le procedure di rilascio dei documenti ai fini del rientro nel paese di origine. La conclusione di accordi di riammissione è stata spesso legata alla politica dei flussi e alla definizione di quote privilegiate per l'ingresso dei lavoratori stranieri regolari. Come indicato nel testo dei vari Decreti Flusso emanati annualmente fino al 2010 (ultimo anno in cui sono state definite le quote per lavoro non stagionale), queste ultime erano destinate a 'cittadini di Paesi che hanno

sottoscritto o stanno per sottoscrivere specifici accordi di cooperazione in materia migratoria'. Lo stesso è previsto per l'identificazione delle nazionalità che possono competere nell'ambito delle quote previste per lavoro stagionale. In tal senso, le quote flussi emergono come uno strumento di condizionalità positiva (4) nei confronti dei paesi che collaborano in materia di riammissione.

La migrazione come oggetto di dialogo politico (2) si riferisce all'uso del dialogo e degli scambi diplomatici per trattare tematiche legate ai fenomeni migratori. La presenza di tali tematiche negli incontri ad alto livello e nelle consultazioni bilaterali permette di avviare un dialogo che fornisca una base per ulteriori strumenti di cooperazione.

Gli accordi tecnico operativi (3) si riferiscono ad accordi bilaterali nella forma di protocolli, memorandum o scambi di intese che mirano a regolare aspetti tecnici come la cooperazione di polizia, programmi di training o forniture.

La presenza di aspetti migratori in accordi bilaterali più ampi (4) si riferisce all'inclusione delle tematiche migratorie tra gli obiettivi di accordi trasversali come gli accordi di partenariato e cooperazione che sono ampi per loro natura e possono ricomprendere tra i vari obiettivi, una cooperazione in ambito migratorio.

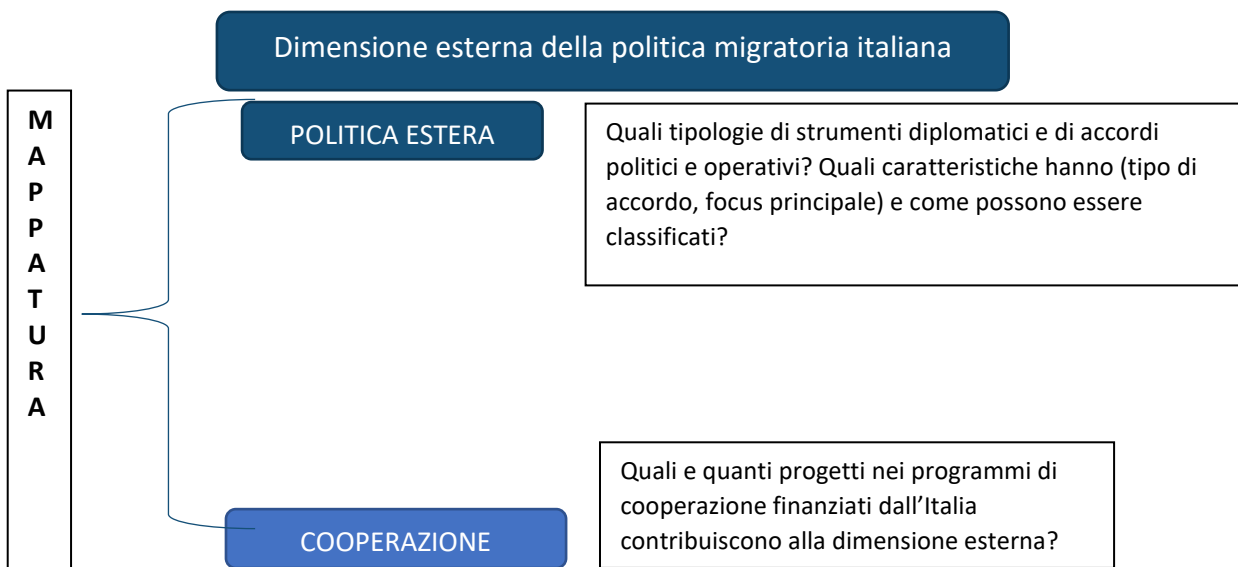
Il *tool* 'accordi specifici' (5), si riferisce ad accordi che si occupano specificatamente di un aspetto legato ai fenomeni migratori ma che non rientrano né tra gli accordi operativi, né tra gli accordi di riammissione.

Gli ultimi due strumenti regolano due diverse forme di mobilità regolare. Gli accordi in materia di lavoro, migrazione regolare e mobilità circolare (7) stabiliscono forme di cooperazione per l'ingresso di lavoratori stranieri nel mercato del lavoro italiano, per facilitare l'incontro tra domanda e offerta e la capitalizzazione delle competenze attraverso programmi di rientro e mobilità circolare. Rientrano in questa categoria anche eventuali programmi di facilitazione del rilascio dei visti di ingresso.

I corridoi umanitari (8) sono invece lo strumento più recente della DEPMI. Avviati per la prima volta nel 2015 con il primo protocollo siglato tra il Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, il Ministero dell'Interno, la Comunità di Sant'Egidio, la Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche e la Tavola Valdese, sono meccanismi per consentire il trasferimento sicuro e legale di persone bisognose di protezione internazionale da un paese ospitante di primo asilo all'Italia (Caritas 2019). Sebbene formalmente i corridoi umanitari non siano un accordo tra due paesi, ma piuttosto

un'intesa siglata da vari attori istituzionali e non, si tratta in ogni caso di uno strumento importante che contribuisce a definire la cooperazione in ambito migratorio con i paesi di origine dei soggetti vulnerabili e con i paesi terzi ospitanti.

La dimensione della cooperazione funzionale, invece, riguarda il ruolo della cooperazione allo sviluppo, attraverso il finanziamento di programmi e progetti focalizzati su aspetti legati ai fenomeni migratori; oppure concentrati su un'area diversa (agricoltura, food security, employability etc.) ma indirettamente rivolti alle dinamiche e alle *root causes* dei movimenti. Questa dimensione è stata analizzata identificando quanti e quali programmi e progetti nell'ambito della cooperazione allo sviluppo sono rivolti alla migrazione, ed eventualmente a quali aspetti di quest'ultima.



Partendo da queste due dimensioni, la mappatura della DEPMI si è concentrata sull'analisi degli strumenti e degli accordi di cooperazione in ambito migratorio tra l'Italia e 14 paesi dell'area del Mediterraneo allargato, tra la fine degli anni 1990 e il 2022.



La metodologia adottata è di tipo qualitativo, basata prevalentemente sull'uso di fonti secondarie e primarie. Le fonti secondarie hanno permesso di ricostruire storicamente il percorso di 'cooperazione migratoria' tra l'Italia e i vari paesi oggetto dell'analisi, individuando gli accordi e gli strumenti principali adottati. Le fonti primarie (il testo degli accordi stessi laddove disponibili) hanno permesso di analizzare in maniera diretta il contenuto degli strumenti, per comprenderne gli obiettivi e caratteristiche. La mappatura della DEPMI ha prodotto quattro diversi outputs che possono fornire a funzionari, policymakers e studiosi interessati alla tematica, degli strumenti permanenti di conoscenza dotati di informazioni complete e immediatamente accessibili.

Gli output dello sforzo di mappatura

Il toolbox della DEPMI: database degli accordi

L'attività di ricerca ha prodotto un database contenente **85 accordi e strumenti politici** adottati tra l'Italia e 14 paesi del Mediterraneo allargato per gestire i fenomeni migratori, tra la fine degli anni 1990 e il 2022.

I vari accordi e strumenti sono classificati considerando:

- la tipologia secondo gli otto elementi identificati nel toolbox;
- il paese partner;
- il contenuto dell'accordo rispetto all'aspetto dei fenomeni migratori che viene trattato: rimpatrio, controllo dei confini, lotta alla migrazione irregolare; asilo; mobilità; lotta ai fenomeni di *human smuggling*; visti; lavoro; studio etc.

Il database offre una fonte innovativa di dati frutto di una raccolta sistematica e dettagliata di informazioni sulla DEPMI. Rappresenta, pertanto, una risorsa di valore tanto per funzionari quanto per ricercatori interessati alla tematica e fornisce una base di dati utile per analisi qualitative e quantitative.

Navigare la DEPMI: l'implementazione di una mappa grafica

Il database sugli accordi è stato trasformato in una mappa grafica, *user-friendly*, interattiva, e open source che permetta letteralmente di 'navigare' la DEPMI in termini di strumenti e paesi, e di averne un quadro completo, intuitivo e immediato. Lo strumento della mappatura ha acquisito sempre di più una propria rilevanza metodologica come strumento che permette non solo di raccogliere e analizzare i dati ma anche di presentare i risultati di ricerca in maniera innovativa attraverso concetti grafici (Conceição et al. 2017).

La mappa è visitabile a questo link https://umap.openstreetmap.fr/it/map/depmi-dimensione-esterna-politica-migratoria-itali_711517#

Sulla sinistra è possibile 'filtrare' i livelli di analisi, per identificare un aspetto dei tanti aspetti di interesse della DEPMI. Cliccando sui vari livelli è possibile visualizzare o nascondere tutti gli accordi e strumenti DEPMI relativi solo a quel livello.

- Corridoi Umanitari
- Paese di origine sicura
- Mobilità
- Controllo dei Confini e Lotta all'immigrazione irregolare
- Riammissione e rimpatrio

Ogni livello è poi identificato da un'icona univoca. Cliccando su ciascuna, l'utente potrà inoltre avere informazioni dettagliate sulla data e contenuto dello strumento e, dove possibile, il relativo link o fonte.

Questo tipo di analisi fornisce un punto di partenza interessante per sviluppare analisi sulla DEPMI che non siano solo limitate all'aspetto dei rimpatri, ma che tengano conto di tutte le molteplici dimensioni delle politiche esterne di migrazione.

La cooperazione funzionale: database dei programmi su tematiche migratorie

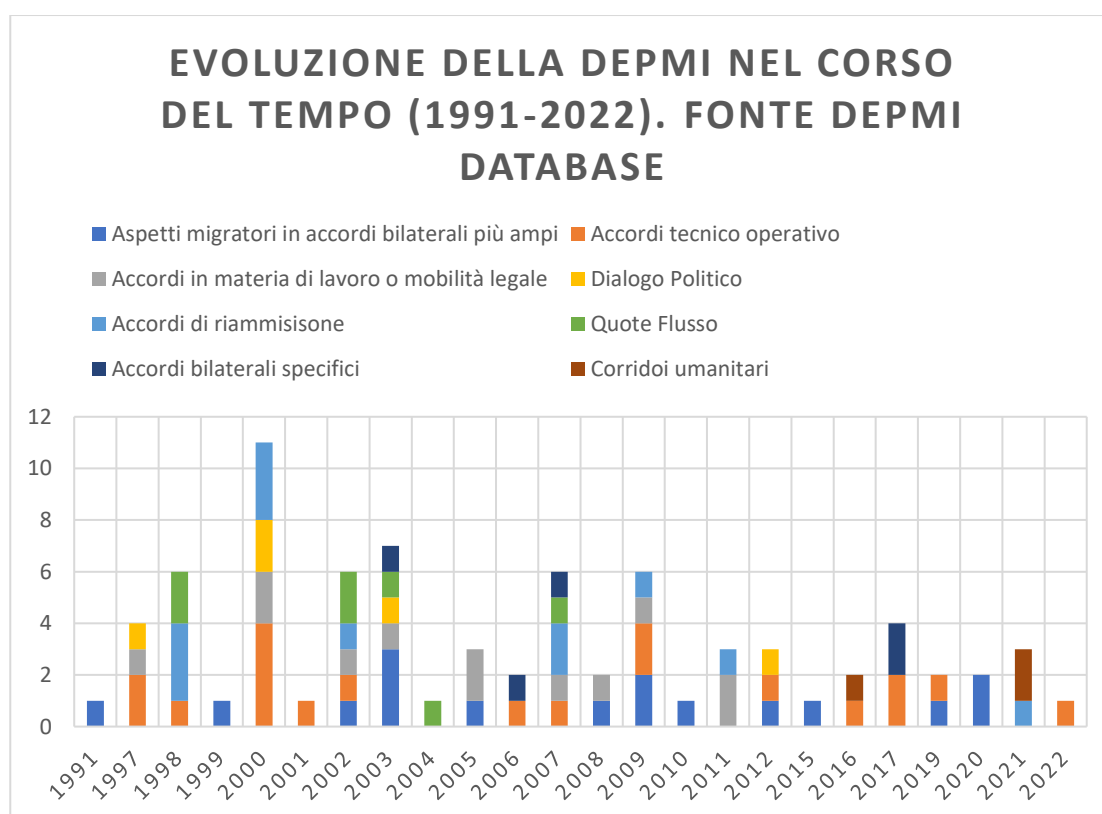
Il terzo output prodotto è un database sulla cooperazione funzionale, contenente i programmi e strumenti di cooperazione adottati dall'Italia in ambito migratorio con i 14 paesi considerati. Il database contiene circa **280 osservazioni**, divise per ambito migratorio (governance, protezione, controllo dei confini, rimpatri, root causes) e paese. La fonte di raccolta sono i Rapporti sull'Implementazione della Cooperazione allo Sviluppo pubblicati annualmente dall'Agenzia Italiana Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (precedente Direzione Generale Cooperazione allo Sviluppo) tra il 2001 e il 2021. Dato che i report in questione riportano spesso solo i programmi più rilevanti, e non in tutti i report c'è una copertura sistematica anno dopo anno dei programmi/progetti implementati complessivamente, il database non ha pretese di esaustività. Tuttavia, fornisce una fonte originale e ricca di dati che rappresentano uno sforzo di raccolta sistematica delle attività della cooperazione funzionale dedicata al fenomeno migratorio.

I DEPMI Country Profiles

Il quarto output prodotto sono 14 'DEPMI Country Profiles'. Si tratta di brevi schede in inglese che forniscono un'analisi della dimensione migratoria tra l'Italia e uno dei 14 paesi terzi oggetto di analisi. Nello specifico, ogni *Profile* è organizzato in due sezioni. La prima sezione fornisce un'analisi della rilevanza migratoria del paese in termini di flussi regolari e irregolari verso l'Italia e di richieste di asilo, nonché dell'impatto della pandemia sulle dinamiche migratorie. La seconda parte invece esplora i rapporti bilaterali di cooperazione in ambito migratorio, individuando strumenti, aspetti chiave ed evoluzione della DEPMI.

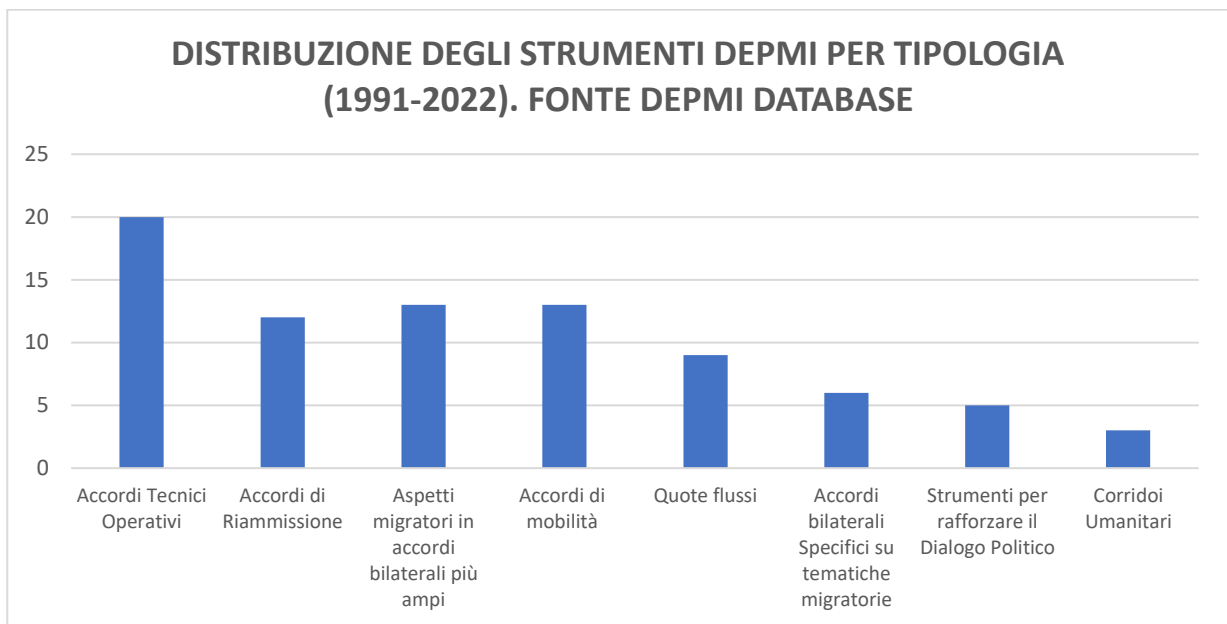
Alcuni risultati della ricerca: La DEPMI tra accordi tecnico-operativi e uso della condizionalità

Dall'analisi preliminare della DEPMI tra gli anni 1990 e il 2022 nei paesi oggetto dell'analisi, sono emersi 85 strumenti che rispecchiano la tipologia del toolbox. Il periodo più 'intenso' per lo sviluppo della dimensione esterna della politica migratoria italiana è stato il 2000, con 11 accordi conclusi con ben 9 diversi paesi dei 14 considerati. La DEPMI è molto diversificata in quegli anni, con l'utilizzo di varie tipologie di strumenti (Fig.1). Negli anni recenti invece, emergono due nuovi aspetti: l'introduzione dei corridoi umanitari dal 2016; e una minore diversificazione degli strumenti, sempre più orientati su accordi tecnico operativi e accordi bilaterali specifici.

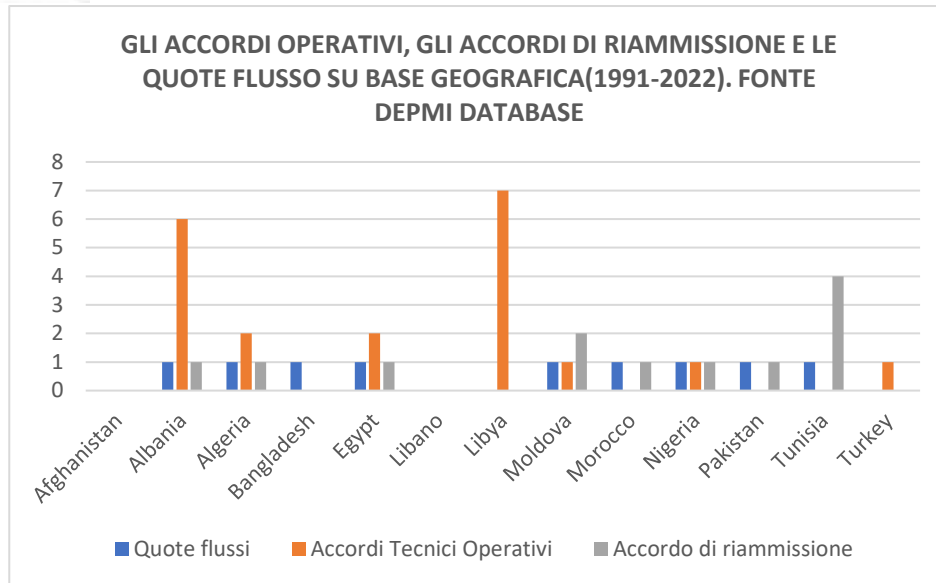


Se si osserva infatti la distribuzione degli strumenti DEPMI per tipologia, lo strumento più utilizzato sono proprio gli accordi tecnico operativi nella forma di Intese, Memoranda, Accordi di Polizia e Protocolli tecnici. Si tratta di strumenti che si concentrano prevalentemente sulla

gestione del fenomeno migratorio attraverso aspetti tecnici o pratici e prevalentemente orientati alla prevenzione dell'immigrazione irregolare: training delle forze di polizia o guardia costiera di un paese partner, scambio di informazioni, fornitura di equipaggiamenti. In questa tipologia di accordi rientrano anche due Accordi conclusi con l'Algeria e con la Libia in materia di cooperazione per le operazioni marittime di salvataggio, ricerca e soccorso in mare (SAR- Search & Rescue).



I paesi partner con il più alto numero di accordi tecnico operativi sono quelli che nel passato o negli ultimi anni hanno acquisito un ruolo rilevante come paesi di origine o di transito (Libia e Albania). La Tunisia è invece il paese che registra il numero più alto di accordi informali di riammissione. Con l'eccezione del Bangladesh, il dato numerico conferma inoltre un parallelismo tra accordi di riammissione e concessione di quote riservate nell'ambito dei Decreti Flusso.



L'analisi qualitativa, attraverso lo studio dei *country profiles*, conferma ulteriormente e completa le considerazioni che emergono dall'analisi quantitativa:

1. La prevalenza numerica di accordi tecnico operativi e di accordi informali di riammissione è in linea con una prevalenza generale di *policy tools* soft e informali. Come si evince dall'analisi dettagliata dei *country profiles*, la DEPMI è prevalentemente caratterizzata da un elevato numero di accordi verbali, scambi di lettere, memoranda o *gentlemen's agreements*.
2. Le tematiche della riammissione e rimpatrio, da una parte, e quelle della mobilità regolare, dall'altra, vengono prevalentemente gestite con un 'approccio di pacchetto'. Dallo studio qualitativo della cooperazione migratoria con i paesi partners, è emerso un importante ruolo delle quote flusso come strumento di condizionalità positiva e negativa, sfruttando la concessione di quote riservate per l'ingresso dei lavoratori stagionali e non dei paesi terzi ai fini della conclusione o della buona operatività degli accordi di rimpatrio.

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The External Dimension of Italian Migration Policies (DEPMI- Italian acronym)

COUNTRY PROFILES

DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Afghanistan



Sahizer Samuk Carignani⁴

Migration Outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	Medium – High in 2012 and in 2020-2022.
Relevance as a country of transit	NO
Safe country of origin list ⁵	NO
Schengen Visa Exemption	NO

Migration from Afghanistan to Italy gets back to the early 1970s, when flows were predominantly composed of refugees and asylum-seekers and accounted only for a low percentage of economic migrants.

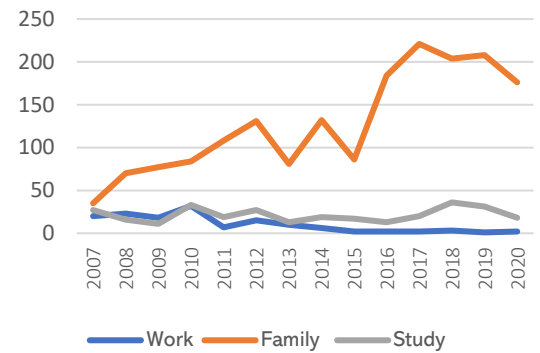
The first Afghans -mainly aristocratic members of the population- took refuge in Italy for the first time in 1973, following political turmoil in the country (Foschini and Bjelica 2017). In the following years, flows remained quite low with only occasional arrivals until the 1990s, when a new wave of Afghan refugees arrived in Italy as a result of the displacement caused by the civil war (ibid.). The trend continued in the early 2000s, even if most headed to Northern Europe (Scandinavian countries, the UK, Germany) thereby putting Italy in the position of a transit country within the EU (ibid.). A new flow was recorded during the years of the Mediterranean migration crisis, even if Afghans were not among the most relevant nationalities of arrivals to Italy. From the end of 2020, a new surge in Afghans irregular migration was recorded.

⁴ DEPMI Researcher; Post-doc researcher IMT LUCCA

⁵ According to the list of safe countries of origin as indicated by the Italian Decree 4 October 2019.

Concerning **regular migration**, 12,198 Afghan citizens were regularly present in Italy according to the data for 2021, compared to 11,121 in 2020 and 10,600 in 2019 (ISTAT, data on foreign residents). Looking at the data on Afghan yearly entries to Italy by reason, it can be observed that regular migration from Afghanistan is mainly due to family reunification, and only a very limited percentage is related to study or work reasons (Fig.1).

Fig.1 Afghan regular yearly entries to Italy by reason of entry (2007-2020). Source: ISTAT



In terms of **irregular flows**, figures went up to almost 2,500 arrivals in 2012 and then they fell sharply until 2020 (Fig.2).

In this sense, **the COVID-19 pandemic** does not seem to have impacted flows of Afghans to Italy across the Central Mediterranean, as there were already no sea landings before the first Italian lock-down of March 2020 (fig.3). At the end of 2020, flows inexorably increased. According to the latest data, between January and September 2022 Afghans accounted for 8% of all sea landings to Italy and represented the fourth nationality for arrivals (UNHCR 2022). Most flows were detected on sea routes directly from Izmir in Turkey (UNHCR 2020; 2021), on a route that goes from Afghanistan, through Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and Italy (Barbisan 2020).

Fig. 2 Afghans, FRONTEX irregular detected border crossings, Central mediterranean route to Italy (2009-2022). Source: author's elaboration from Frontex.

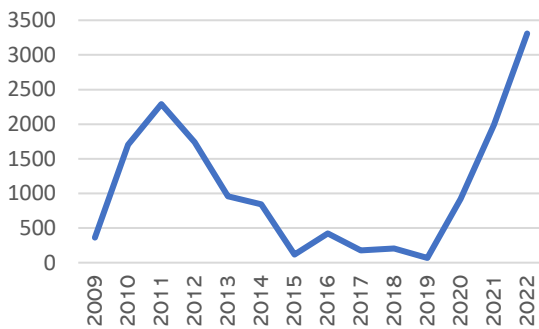
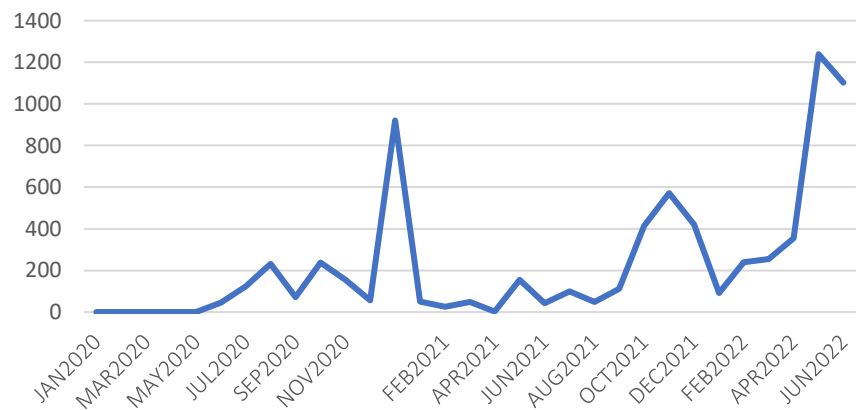


Fig. 3 Impact of Covid-19 on irregular arrivals of Afghans to Italy via Central Mediterranean Route. Source: FRONTEX



Afghans can also reach Italy from Turkey by land, across the Western Balkans. Overall, according to Frontex data, in 2009-2022, over 133,000 Afghans were detected on this route. Whereas it is not possible to know exactly how many of these people eventually crossed the Italian land border in the North from the Western Balkans, reports suggest that figures grew in recent years (IOM 2021).

Afghan migration to Europe has been primarily due to continuous political instability in the country including civil wars and Taliban rule (Danish Refugee Council 2022; Sobczyński 2019), which was exacerbated after the US decisions to pull troops from the country in summer 2021. Reasons for moving therefore include violence, general insecurity, risks for personal safety and family reasons while only a few leave the country primarily to look for economic opportunities (ibid.).

In terms of **asylum**, Afghans are one of the most significant groups of asylum applicants in Italy. Figures went up to almost 4,000 requests in 2015 and they decreased in 2016-2020 (Fig.4). Interestingly, even if Afghans were among the first ten nationalities for asylum applications in 2015, the same year only 117 Afghans landed in Italy by sea. This suggests that most asylum-seekers took alternative routes, mainly land routes through the Balkans, that were therefore more significant than sea journeys. Following the withdrawal of the Western military forces from the country in 2021, asylum requests recorded a spike – from 645 in 2020 to 5,545 in the following year. In this regard, Italy was among the European countries receiving the highest number of Afghan evacuees since August 2021 (Danish Refugee Council 2022). Moreover, it is also one of the European countries with the lowest rejection rate for asylum-seekers from Afghanistan⁶ (Fig.5).

In parallel, permits for asylum, asylum requests or humanitarian reasons form the first category of permits for Afghans, compared to family, study and work-related entries (Fig. 6).

Fig.4 Afghans asylum applications to Italy (2008-2021). Source: author's elaboration from EUROSTAT.

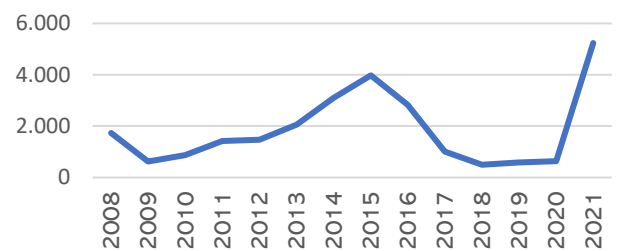


Fig. 5 Outcome of Afghan asylum applications to Italy (2012-2021). Source: own elaboration from EUROSTAT.

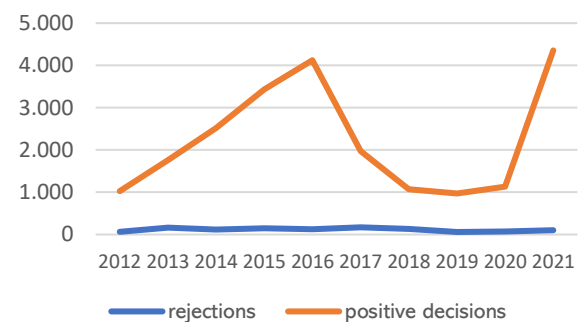
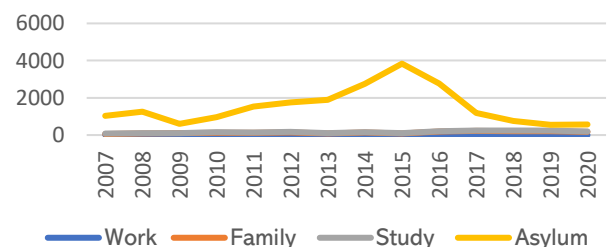


Fig.6 Afghan Asylum residence permits compared to other kind of permits (2007-2020). Source: ISTAT.



⁶ According to EUROSTAT, Greece, France and Italy all had rejection rates for Afghans under 25 percent, with Italy having the lowest at 8 percent. Eurostat, *First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age, and sex Annual aggregated data (rounded)*, last updated 4 October 2017, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asydcfstst. Accessed via <https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/neglected-population-afghan-migrants-europe> on 14th of April 2022

Italy- Afghanistan Cooperation on Migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Since the early 2000s, Italy and Afghanistan's bilateral relations have been focused on the stabilisation of the country in terms of national reconciliation, security, democratisation, and fight against terrorism - with Italy joining international multilateral forces (MAECI 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008). In 2012, relations were framed in the context of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement,⁷ that identifies economic, political, security and police cooperation, as well as institutional capacity building, as key axes.

The External Dimension of Italian Migration Policy (DEPMI – Italian acronym) to the country is very recent and focused on one specific instrument: **humanitarian corridors**.

Following the rapid deterioration of the security situation of the country during summer 2021, in November of the same year Italy signed a '**Protocol for humanitarian corridors from Afghanistan**'.⁸ In addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior, the signatories included IOM and UNHCR, and civil society organisations such as the Community of Sant 'Egidio, CEI (Italian Episcopal Conference)/Caritas, FCEI (Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy) and Waldensian Table, ARCI (Italian Cultural Recreational Association) and NIHMP (National Institute for Health, Migration and Poverty).⁹ The goal of the Protocol is to implement legal and safe channels for at least 1,200 Afghan refugees in two years from bordering countries, such as Pakistan and Iran. In July 2022, over 300 Afghans benefited of the first humanitarian corridors implemented from Teheran.¹⁰

Other channels of **legal mobility**, include scholarships. Afghanistan is currently in the list of foreign countries eligible for grants financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹¹

Bilateral Development Cooperation

Italian Development Cooperation has been supporting the reconstruction and development efforts of Afghanistan since 2001, with initiatives for about 900 million Euro in grants and 186 million Euro in soft loans in 2001-2018 (AICS 2021). The Development Cooperation Framework Agreement (October 2010) and the

⁷ <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/50288>

⁸ Protocollo di Intesa per la realizzazione del Progetto 'Corridoi Umanitari/Evacuazioni per l'Afghanistan'.
https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/2021-11/protocollo_corridoi.pdf

⁹ https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2021/11/firma-del-protocollo-per-i-corridoi-umanitari-dallafghanistan/

¹⁰ https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2022/07/farnesina-e-viminale-impegnati-per-nuovi-corridoi-umanitari-per-circa-300-cittadini-afghani/

¹¹ https://www.esteri.it/it/opportunita/borse-di-studio/per-cittadini-stranieri/borsestudio_stranieri/

Long-Term Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan (January 2012) define criteria and modalities for Italy's support to Afghanistan, focusing on priority sectors such as economic and rural development; governance and rule of law; infrastructure and natural resources; health, humanitarian aid, and support to vulnerable groups. An analysis of the Italian Development Cooperation Reports (2001-2021) reveals that funds related to migratory issues were mainly addressed to support Afghan refugees and their return and reintegration from Pakistan and Iran. In cooperation with UNHCR and IOM, over € 30 Mil. were committed in 2001-2021 to sustain refugees' protection and return (Table 1).

Table 1. Italian aids – Support to Afghan refugees. Source: Analysis of Italian Development Cooperation Reports (2001-2020)

Urgent Intervention in support of Afghan Refugees (Cooperation Report 2001), in cooperation with WHO.	7.746.853,00 €
Support to refugees (Cooperation Report 2005-2008), in cooperation with UNHCR	2.000.000,00 €
Return of refugees from Pakistan and Iran (Cooperation Report 2005), in cooperation with UNHCR	9.100.000,00 €
Support to voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Afghans to Iran and Pakistan (Cooperation Report 2008), in cooperation with UNHCR	4.100.000,00 €
Action Plan for the socio-economic reintegration of returnees, IDPs and vulnerable Afghans (Cooperation Report 2009), in cooperation with IOM	3.100.000,00 €
Multilateral contribution to UNHCR to support and reintegrate returnees from Iran in the North part of the Country (Cooperation report 2009), in cooperation with UNHCR	400.000,00 €
Improving maternal health for Afghan refugees (Cooperation report 2017)	130.000,00 €
Sustainable return and reintegration of Afghan refugees and IDPS (Cooperation Report 2017)	2.000.000,00 €
humanitarian protection- assisting refugees and documenting migration flows in Afghanistan (Cooperation report 2018)	1.000.000,00 €
Support to internal IDPs (Cooperation Report 2021)	1.000.000,00 €

EU-Afghanistan cooperation as an additional framework for Italy's DEPMI

EU-Afghanistan cooperation on migration and asylum is based on two key axes.

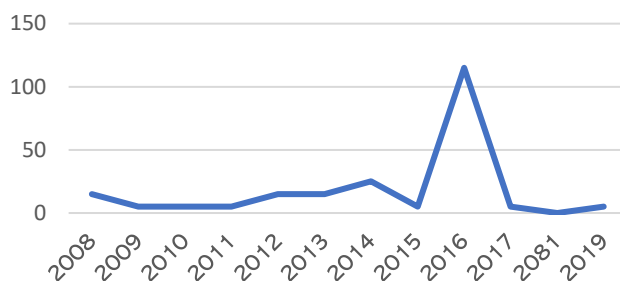
The first is return. In 2016, the EU and Afghanistan signed the 'Joint Way Forward', a document providing an informal framework for cooperation on migration, as well as for forced return and readmission to Afghanistan.¹² According to the agreement, Afghanistan commits to readmit its nationals who entered into the EU or are staying on the EU territory irregularly. The informal readmission arrangement was renewed in April 2021, with the 'Joint Declaration on Migration Cooperation' that reaffirmed commitment to return and

¹² https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_afghanistan_joint_way_forward_on_migration_issues.pdf

readmissions, voluntary return and reintegration programs, as well as common efforts against human smuggling.¹³

The signature of the Joint Way Forward in 2016 provided for the first time a common framework for the implementation of return, albeit informal, for the EU Member States. Even if returns of Afghans migrants from Italy have generally been very low, after the adoption of the document, return rate increased from 2% in 2015 to over 35% in 2016 (Fig. 7). After the humanitarian crisis of 2021, more and more organizations -such as UNHCR- have called the Member States to stop forced returns towards a country where security conditions are precarious.¹⁴

Fig. 7 Afghanistan- Returns from Italy (2008-2019). Source: EUROSTAT



The second axe is humanitarian support and refugee assistance. In light of the humanitarian crisis of 2021, the European Commission put in place a set of priority actions, to guarantee the safe evacuation of EU nationals from Afghanistan and ensure safe and legal pathways for people in need of immediate protection (Council of the EU 2022). The EU currently chairs the Core Group within the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), which was established in 2019 to provide political, financial, and technical support to protracted Afghan refugee situations.¹⁵

¹³ <https://www.statewatch.org/media/1801/eu-council-joint-declaration-afghanistan-5223-21-add1.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://integrazionemigranti.gov.it/it-it/Ricerca-news/Dettaglio-news/id/1914/Afghanistan-stop-ai-rimpatri-forzati>

¹⁵ <https://ssar-platform.org/core-group/cha>

Overview of DEPMI in Afghanistan

	Italy-Afghanistan (2000-2022)		EU-Afghanistan broader cooperation framework (2000-2021)
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return and Readmission		Most of programs/projects in cooperation with IOM and UNHCR address the issue of return of Afghan refugees from bordering countries, such as Pakistan and Iran	Joint Declaration on Migration Cooperation (JDMC) (2021) Joint Way Forward (2016)
Border control and fight against irregular migration			
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking			
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	Protocol for humanitarian corridors from Afghanistan (2021)	Most of programs/projects in cooperation with IOM and UNHCR provide support to refugees	Chair of the Core Group, Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees
Legal Mobility			
Visa			
Political Dialogue			

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UNHCR (2020) Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard, December 2020.

UNHCR (2021) Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard, December 2021.

UNHCR (2022) Italy's Weekly Snapshot. September 2022.

DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE



Albania

Matilde Rosina¹⁶

Migration outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	High for irregular migration in the 1990s	High for regular migration
Relevance as a country of transit	Limited	
Safe country of origin list ¹⁷	Yes	
Schengen Visa Exemption ¹⁸	Yes	

Italy and Albania are connected by strong migration links.

As far as **regular migration** is concerned, 433,171 Albanians resided in Italy in 2021. This makes Albanians the **largest group of non-EU nationals** residing in Italy (and the second largest when EU nationals are included too, after Romanians - ISTAT 2021b).

Specifically, most of the yearly permits granted to Albanians are given for **family** reunification, followed by **work** purposes (Fig. 1). Both work and family permits were at their highest in 2010, at over 20,000 each. While the former fell steeply after that year (to about 1,500 in 2019), the latter saw a less significant decrease (amounting to about 13,500 in 2019). Despite the drop in work permits following 2010, Albanians still account for some of the highest numbers of **seasonal workers** in Italy, making up 18% of those coming from outside the EU in 2019 (De Marco 2020: 71-2).

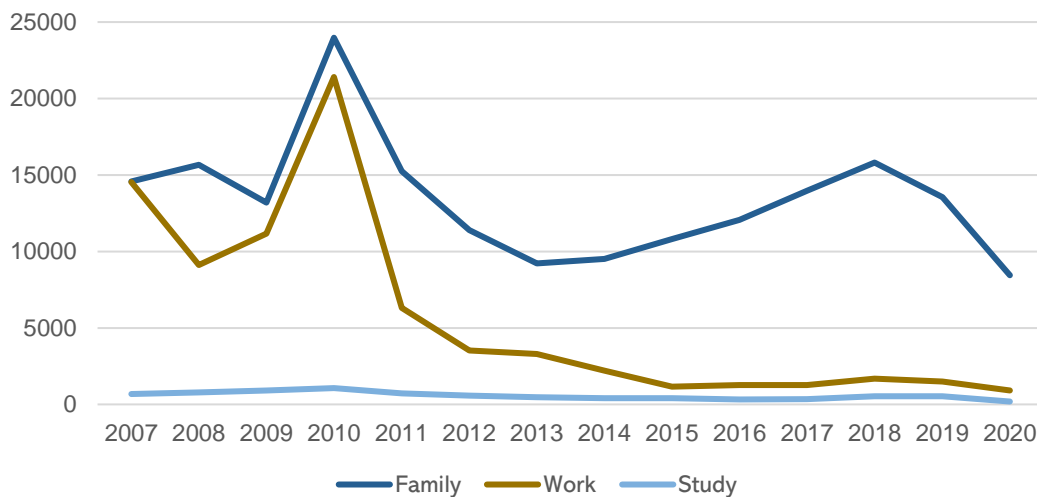
¹⁶ DEPMI Researcher, Lecturer London School of Economics and Political Science.

¹⁷ Decreto 4 ottobre 2019, Art 1, <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/10/07/19A06239/sg>.

¹⁸ Regulation 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02018R1806-20210101>.

In line with the above, **study** permits for Albanians have also been decreasing - from slightly over 1,000 in 2010 to about or less than 500 per year since 2012. Yet, Albanians are the largest group of foreign students attending Italian universities (MAECI 2019a).

Figure 1 Albanian regular entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



Focusing now on irregular migration, **unauthorised sea landings** have been substantial in the 1990s, but much lower in the last two decades (Fig. 2). The 1990s saw significant flows from Albania to Italy: in 1991 first, with the fall of the communist regime, and in 1996-7 then, following the ‘Pyramid crisis’ and the ensuing economic and political unrest (Niglia 2009: 28; Chaloff 2008: 5).¹⁹ Since the 2000s, however, undocumented sea landings from Albania to Italy have **dropped**, passing from almost 50,000 in 1999, to about 14,000 in 2004, and virtually none in 2014-2021. Given the low number of Albanians’ sea landings in the last decade, it is not possible to see any effect of **Covid** restrictions on such flows.

Today, Albanian irregular migration to Italy seems to mainly occur through **overstaying**. While irregular landings have been negligible in the last decade, the number of Albanians found irregularly staying has fluctuated between 3,700 and 1,700 in 2008-2020 (Fig. 3). This makes Albania the third country by number of migrants apprehended as irregularly staying in Italy in 2008-2020 (after Morocco and Tunisia, based on Eurostat 2022). As no short-term visa is necessary for Albanians to enter Italy, the above suggests that at the expiration of the 90 days visa-free period, many ‘overstay’ (i.e., they do not leave).

¹⁹ For more on Albania’s Pyramid Crisis, see Jarvis (1999) <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2000/03/jarvis.htm>.

In this context, Albania’s relevance as a **transit country** for irregular migration to Italy is limited. As reported by the UNHCR (2020), less than 1% of Italy’s sea arrivals in 2020 departed from Albania and Montenegro together (114 people, out of a total of 14,685 landings).

Figure 2 Albanian irregular arrivals by sea to Italy, 1998-2021 (Source: author’s elaboration on Ministry of the Interior²⁰ and Frontex data)

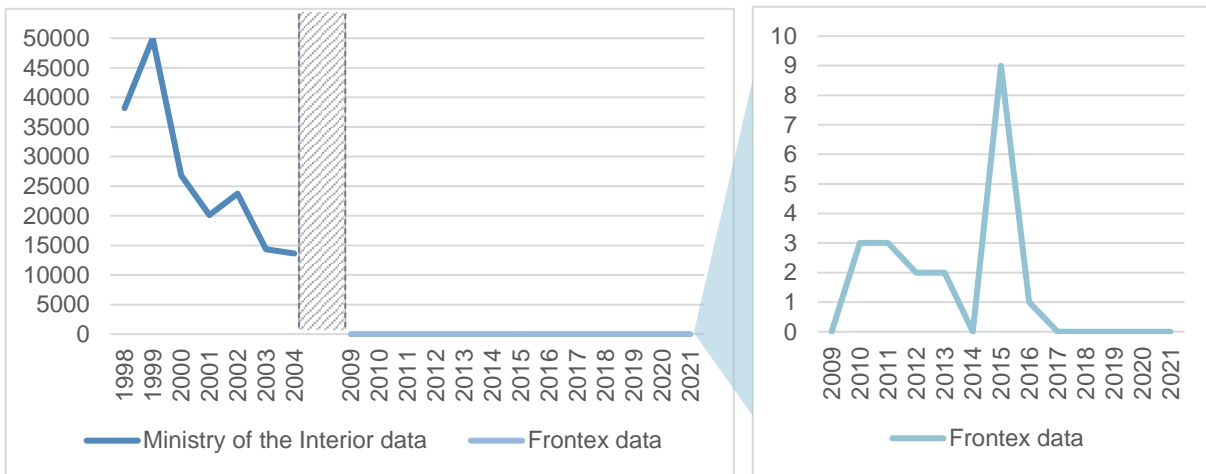


Figure 3 Albanian irregular stays in Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author’s elaboration on Eurostat data)



²⁰ As reported in Chaloff 2008: 37.

Economic factors are among the main reasons for emigrating from Albania today. Indeed, despite the improvements in the country’s living and economic conditions over the last decades, Albania is among the poorest countries in Europe (Italian Senate 2012: 235; World Bank 2022). A survey among potential migrants in Albania found that most of those considering leaving did so because of **economic reasons** (57%), the lack of future prospects (from an economic, social and political viewpoint) (19%), and **education** (for them or their children) (17%) (Gëdeshi and King 2018: 63).

Albanians however also make up high number of victims of **trafficking in human beings**, both in Italy and Europe more broadly (De Marco 2020: 158). In the EU, they represented the second nationality by number of registered victims in 2015-2018 (after Nigeria).²¹ Most of them are trafficked for sexual exploitation (European Commission 2020: 27-28).

Finally, requests for **international protection** make up a low proportion of overall Albanian migration to Italy, (having much lower numbers than both family and work migration – see Fig. 6). Still, asylum applications have **increased** following 2014, peaking at around 1,500 in 2019 (Fig. 4). Importantly, this has been paralleled by rising rejections, signalling a drop in Albanians’ asylum recognition rate, particularly pronounced in 2018-2020 (Fig. 5).

Figure 3 Albanian asylum applications in Italy (1st time applicants), 2008-2020
(Source: author’s elaboration on Eurostat data)

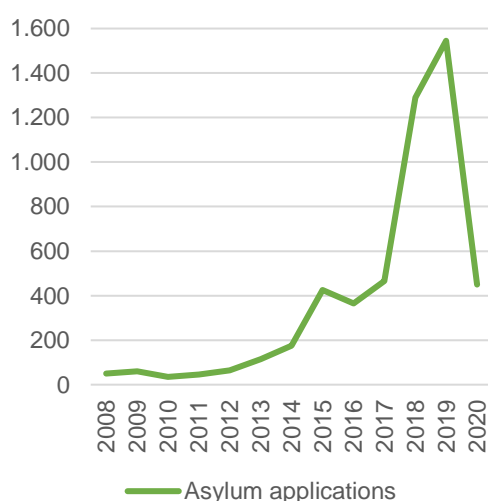
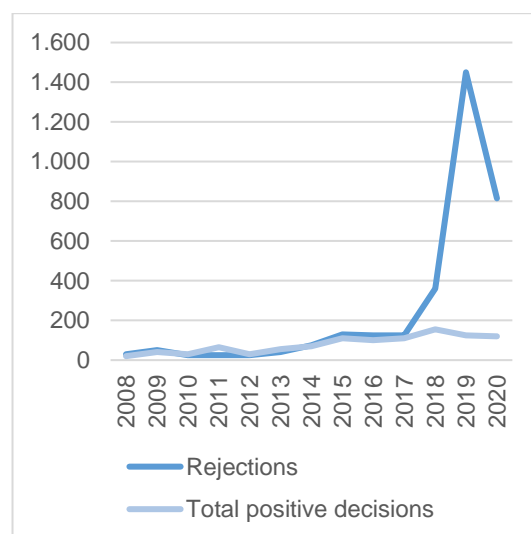
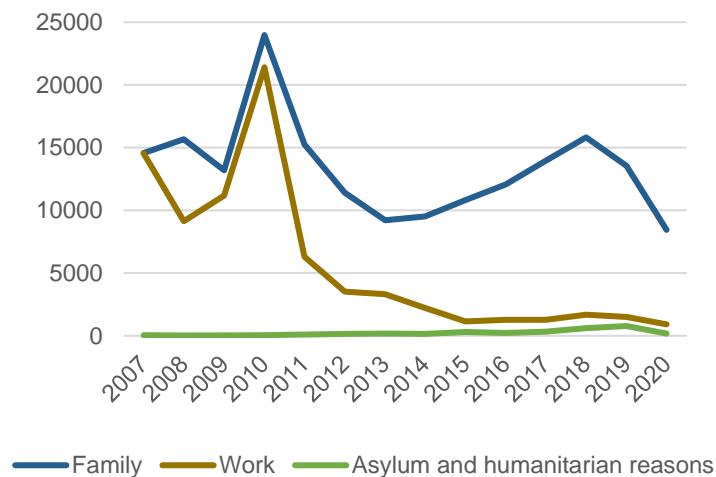


Figure 4 Outcome of Albanian asylum applications in Italy, 2008-2020
(Source: author’s elaboration on Eurostat data)



²¹ Only considering victims with non-EU nationalities.

Figure 5 Albanian entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020
 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



Italy-Albania cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Cooperation on migration-related issues between Italy and Albania dates to the 1990s, when the two countries aimed to respond to the increase in unauthorised landings. Specifically, the toolkit of the External Dimension of Italian Migration Policy (DEPMI – Italian acronym) in Albania includes a broad range of instruments.

In terms of **border controls and fight against irregular migration**, Italy and Albania have cooperated through joint patrols, police cooperation, and in the context of the fight against criminality.

To begin with, the two countries agreed to conduct **joint patrols** of Albanian borders in 1997 (see *Exchange of Letters on Irregular Migration*²² and *Protocol on Irregular Migration*²³). This enabled the Italian Navy to operate in Albanian national waters, and to push unauthorised boats back to Albanian ports. Although such activities led to the controversial collision between an Italian Navy corvette and an Albanian boat in the Otranto Canal in March 1997, causing the death of 81 people (Leogrande 2011), the joint patrols went ahead. In 2000, a

²² [Atrioesteri.it/search/allegati/43126](https://atrioesteri.it/search/allegati/43126)

²³ [Atrioesteri.it/search/allegati/43127](https://atrioesteri.it/search/allegati/43127)

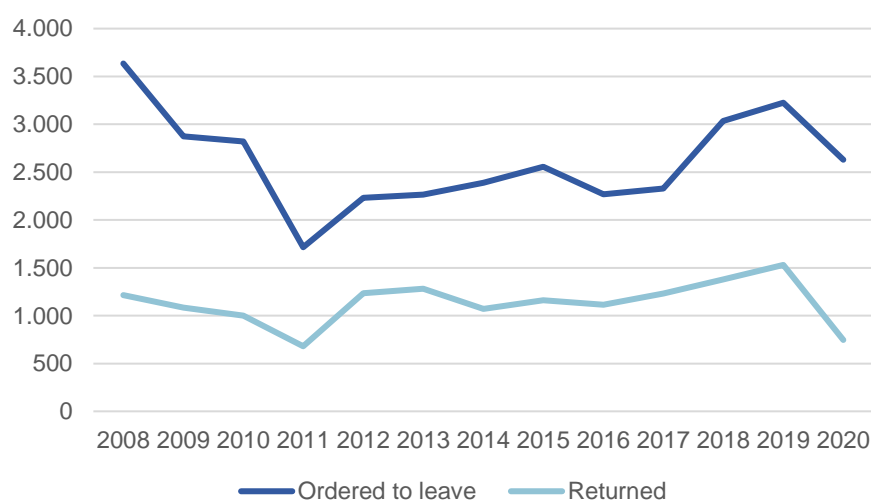
Memorandum of Understanding on Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations in the Adriatic Sea was signed, delimiting the respective SAR areas, and establishing cooperation on SAR activities.

Agreements have also been signed in the field of **police cooperation**. In this context, the 1997 *Protocol Concerning Support and Advice for the Reorganisation of the Albanian Police* (renewed in 1998, 2000, and 2002) established an Italian Interforce Police Mission in Albania. The mission was meant to help reorganise the Albanian police forces, including the border police and sea border controls, through consultancy projects, training, and support. As of 2008, the delegation of Italian experts still had 25 members in Albania. In the 1997-2005 period, it spent €8.7million for training, and €62million in goods and services (Chaloff 2008: 7). More recently, in 2020, the two countries launched a *Police Cooperation Dialogue*, setting up biannual meetings on strategic directions and joint operational activities, including on the fight against organised crime and irregular migration.

As the above suggests, Italy and Albania have also cooperated in the context of the **fight against criminal activities**. The 2007 *Cooperation Agreement on the Fight against Criminality* promoted information sharing, investigative support, and training, for infractions including irregular migration, trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation (art. 2 and 3).

In terms of **returns**, Albania signed a **Readmission Agreement** with Italy at the end of 1997. Today, Italy returns roughly 44% of Albanians who are issued an order to leave, against an 18% average for all nationalities (based on 2008-2020 data, see Fig. 7).

Figure 6 Albanians ordered to leave and returned by Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)



Concerning **legal migration** schemes, the *Italy-Albania Seasonal Work Agreement* was signed in 1997 (together with the above-mentioned Readmission Agreement). Specifically, it foresaw the possibility to open seasonal work schemes with Albania, in case of labour shortages in Italy (art. 1). In 1998, Albania was included in the entry quotas established by *Decreto Flussi*. In 2008, the *Agreement on Migrant Workers* expanded quotas to subordinate labour activities (rather than just seasonal work).

Finally, as far as **political dialogue** is concerned, this does not appear strongly focused on migration today, with most of the attention dedicated instead to Albania's prospects for EU membership (supported by Italy - see MAECI 2019b, 2020b, 2020c). Still, in 2019, a meeting between Italy's and Albania's vice-ministers for foreign affairs included discussions on the Albanian diaspora, and on the possibility of teaching Albanian as a second language in selected Italian schools (where the Albanian community is most present) (MAECI 2019c).

Bilateral development cooperation

Albania is among the top recipients of Italian Official Development Funds. As of 2020, it was the 8th top recipient, having received **€14.8million** in the previous year (including grants and credits) (MAECI 2020a: 110, 230). Likewise, in the early 2000s, Italy was Albania's **1st bilateral donor**, having provided about €650million between 1991 and 2008, and having over 93 active projects in the country in 2008 (Italian Senate 2005: 35 and 2008: 41).

In the 1990s, Italian development projects in Albania were mainly targeted at addressing the **emergency** condition of the country (Italian Senate 2008: 41-52). Humanitarian aid and migration goals were at times linked, such as in the 1991-1993 Operation Pellicano, with the aim of providing humanitarian assistance, while also deterring irregular migration and facilitating returns (MoD n.d., Mehillaj 2010).

In the early 2000s, development cooperation with Albania evolved into projects supporting institutional capacity building, infrastructure **development**, and poverty reduction (Italian Senate 2008: 41-52 and 2000-2019). As noted by a Parliamentary report, Italy's 'commitment in terms of civil cooperation, security and defence, was paralleled by a significant decrease in irregular migratory flows (of roughly 60%)' (Italian Senate 2001: 250). Projects throughout the 2000s also targeted a variety of migration-related aspects. These included preventing **irregular migration**,²⁴ enhancing **remittances**,²⁵ training returnees,²⁶ and fostering the implementation of the Albanian **National Strategy on Migration**.²⁷

²⁴ Through the 2003 project 'Sostegno alle politiche sociali nel distretto di Scutari per la prevenzione dell'emigrazione clandestina dei giovani', for €300,196.

²⁵ Through the 2008-9 project 'Enhancing the impact of migrant remittances in Albania', for €170,000, and the 2008-2010 project 'The Albanian National Action Plan on Remittances: Moving from policy development to implementation', for €130,000.

²⁶ Through the 2009-2011 project 'Riconoscimento e formazione per migranti rientrati nel nord Albania', for €981,969.

²⁷ In 2009, for €141,176.

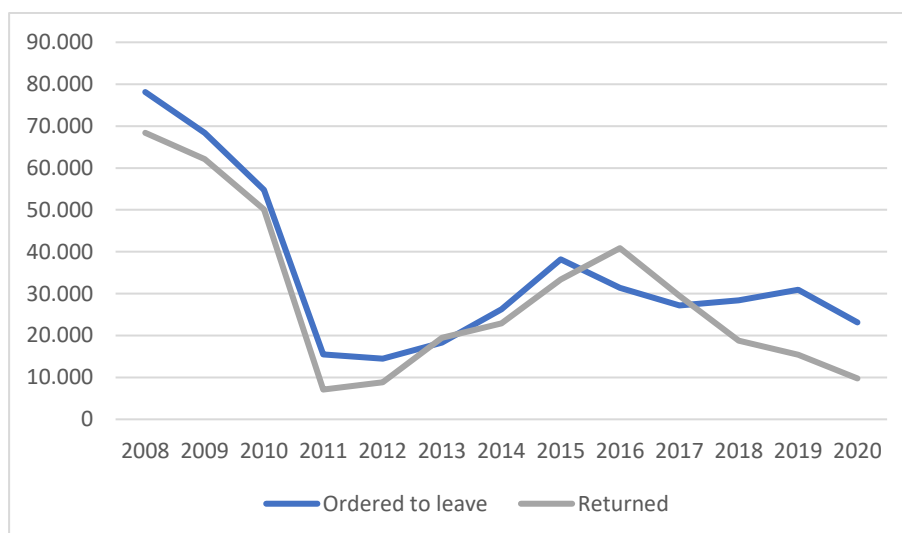
More recently, a few development projects were related to migration in the late 2010s. This was done by emphasising **co-development**,²⁸ promoting **diaspora engagement**,²⁹ and supporting the fight against **trafficking** in human beings.³⁰

EU-Albania cooperation as an additional framework for DEPMI

Cooperation between Italy and Albania on migration has been framed in the context of broader multilateral relations. This has been through both the EU (with Albania being an EU candidate country), and the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative.

EU cooperation has focused on returns, visas, and police cooperation. First, the EU signed a **Readmission Agreement** with Albania in 2006. Since then, (forced) returns from the EU to Albania have been rather high, when compared to the number of expulsion orders issued, representing on average 81% of the latter in 2008-2020 (Fig. 8).

Figure 7 Albanians ordered to leave and returned by EU27, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat 2022)



²⁸ Through the 2014-2016 project 'Buke, Kripë and Zemer - Food, Tradition and Culture: Processes of Co-Development in Areas Marginal Northern and Southern Albania', for €2,999,128.

²⁹ Through the 2017-2020 project 'Engage the Albanian Communities Abroad to the Social and Economic Development of Albania', for €2,876,500.

³⁰ Through the 2016 project 'Gemal - Gender Mainstreaming in Albania: on the side of women against violence and exploitation', for €800,000, and the 2016 project 'Albania - Support to Minors' Protection from Trafficking and Labour Exploitation', for €74,900.

Second, the EU launched a process of **visa facilitation and liberalisation** with Albania. The two parties signed a *Visa Facilitation Agreement* in 2007, which was followed by a political dialogue on visa liberalisation since 2008. Eventually, Albania (together with Bosnia and Herzegovina) was added to the Schengen visa-exemption list in 2010 (Council of the EU 2010).

Third, just like at the national level, EU agreements with Albania have also involved police cooperation. Albania has signed agreements with both **Europol and Frontex** concerning border controls - including the 2013 *Europol-Albania Cooperation Agreement*, the 2018 *EU-Albania Status Agreement on Frontex*, and the 2021 *Frontex-Albania Working Agreement*. Importantly, the 2018 Agreement with Frontex was the first time the agency was allowed to carry out joint operations in a non-EU country. As of March 2021, Frontex had 71 officers in Albania, working on matters including border control, migrant smuggling and trafficking, and terrorism (Frontex 2021b).

Finally, both Italy and Albania are part of the **Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII)**.³¹ As such, they were both signatories of the *AII Joint Declaration on Irregular Migration* of 2002 which, among other things, aimed to facilitate returns, joint patrols, and measures to contrast irregular migration.

³¹ The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative was established in 2000 to stimulate cooperation in South-Eastern Europe. Its members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia (AII, n.d.).

Overview of DEPMI in Albania

	Italy-Albania (2000-2020)		EU-Albania
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	Readmission Agreement (1997)	Training project for returnees (€981,969)	Readmission Agreement (2006)
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Border patrols: Exchange of Letters on Irregular Migration (1997), Protocol on Irregular Migration (1997), Memorandum of Understanding on SAR Operations in the Adriatic (2000) - Police cooperation: Protocol Concerning Support and Advice for the Reorganisation of the Albanian Police (1997, 1998, 2000, 2002), Police Cooperation Dialogue (2020) - Fight against criminal activities: Cooperation Agreement on the Fight against Criminality (2007) 	Project to prevent youth irregular migration (€300,196)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Europol-Albania Cooperation Agreement (2013), EU-Albania Status Agreement on Frontex (2018), Frontex-Albania Working Agreement (2021)
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	(See above)	Project implemented in cooperation with OSCE (€75,000) to address minors' trafficking	
Fight against Root Causes	/	Projects implemented in cooperation with IOM and NGOs (for a total of €5.8 Mil.) to support economic development and diaspora engagement.	
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	/	/	
Legal Mobility	Seasonal Work Agreement (1997), Agreement on Migrant Workers (2008)	Support to family reunification in several countries (including Albania), in cooperation with INCA-CGIL.	/
Visa	/	/	Visa Facilitation Agreement (2007), Schengen visa liberalisation (2010)
Political Dialogue			

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DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Algeria



*Iole Fontana*³²

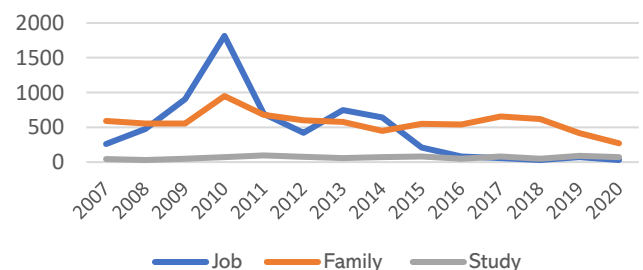
Migration Outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	LOW between 2011-2015	MEDIUM-HIGH between 2017-2022
Relevance as a country of transit	LOW	
Safe country of origin list ³³	YES	
Schengen Visa Exemption	NO	

Unlike other Northern African countries, Algeria is not a country originating substantial flows of regular and irregular migration to Italy. Regular migration has traditionally been towards France, and Algerian residents are only the 33rd community of non-EU citizens in Italy. Similarly, most irregular flows have always been recorded over the Western Mediterranean route to Spain. However, from 2016 onwards, an increasing number of Algerian migrants has landed on Italian coasts, across new emerging sea routes to Sardinia.

In terms of **regular migration**, about 18,538 Algerian citizens resided in Italy in 2021.³⁴ Most regular entries are for work reasons, followed by family reunification (Fig.1). While entries for family reunification remained stable in 2007-2020, work entries decreased after the peak value recorded in 2010.

Figure 1 Algerian regular entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



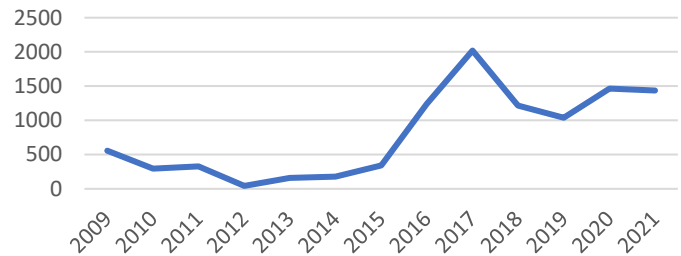
³² Scientific Coordinator, DEPMI Program; Assistant Professor, University of Catania.

³³ According to the list of safe countries of origin as indicated by the Italian Decree 4 October 2019.

³⁴ ISTAT, data on foreign residents.

Concerning **irregular migration** by sea, this has increased after 2015. Starting from an average of 270 yearly unauthorized landings in 2009-2015, figures went up to 2,020 in 2016 only (Fig.2). In 2018 and 2019, Algeria accounted for 5% and 9% respectively of all sea arrivals to Italy (UNHCR 2018; 2019). According to latest data, over 850 Algerians landed in Italy between January-September 2022 (UNHCR 2022). Reasons for movement mainly include unemployment among young people and political repression.³⁵ As policing of borders and stricter controls started to be implemented on the route to Spain and to Libya, more Algerians have autonomously landed in Sardinia from Annaba, on a route that had never recorded significant arrivals before (Caritas 2017). In line with these developments, Algeria has increasingly played a role as a **transit country**. In 2019, 8% of people reaching southern Italy departed from Algeria (UNHCR 2019).

Fig. 2 Algeria- FRONTEX Irregular Border Crossings across the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy (2009-2021). Source: Author's own elaboration from FRONTEX



If **Covid-19** might have played a role in keeping Algerians' sea landings limited, this was only during Italy's first lock-down in March-May 2020 (Fig.3). Arrivals from Algeria raised again during summer 2020 and, with the exception of winter months in 2021 and 2022, they continued to increase. Overall, more people landed in Italy after 2020 compared to the pre-pandemic period (Fig.4).

Fig. 3 Impact of Covid on irregular arrivals of Algerians to Italy across the Central Mediterranean. Source: Elaboration from FRONTEX

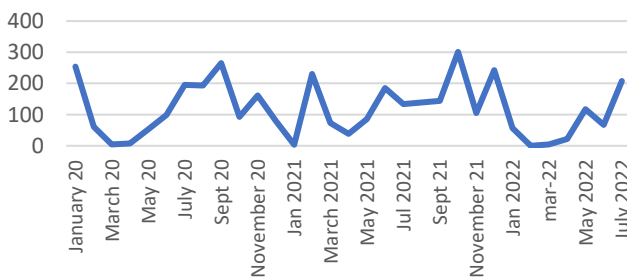
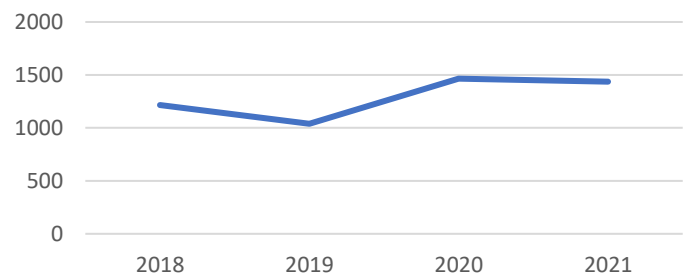


Fig. 4: Algeria- Frontex Detected border crossings, Central Mediterranean Route to Italy, before and after the pandemic. Source: Author's elaboration from FRONTEX

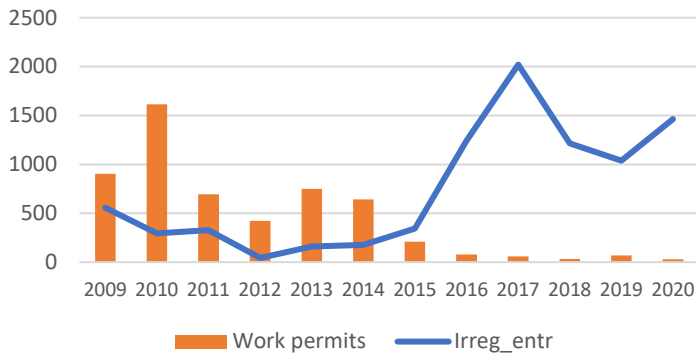


Comparing regular entries for work with irregular sea landings, an inverted trend emerges (Fig. 5). If until 2014, the former were high and the latter low, the trend reversed after that year, with lower work permits being paralleled by higher landings. Whereas the increase of irregular movements from Algeria is rooted in a complex

³⁵ <https://www.aics.gov.it/oltremare/articoli/pace/mediterraneo-le-rotte-della-disperazione-e-del-profitto/>

combination of factors (unemployment, increased border controls on the Algeria-Spain route and on Libya-Italy routes), still data suggest the lack of regular entry channels might contribute to play a role.

Figure 5 Algerian irregular landings in Italy versus regular entries with work permit, 2007-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT and Frontex data)



In terms of **asylum**, the number of Algerian asylum-seekers is not high compared to other nationalities. Requests of asylum remained stable in 2009-2021, and always under 200 per year (Fig. 6). Rejection rate of asylum requests is very high (fig.7): Algerian migrants are mainly seen as ‘economic migrants’ and many asylum applications are considered as manifestly unfounded, especially after the Italian government decided to include Algeria in the list of safe countries of origin³⁶ (Decree 4 October 2019). In line with these considerations, permits for asylum, asylum request or humanitarian reasons are very low (Fig 8).

Fig. 6 Algeria- Asylum requests to Italy (2008-2021). Source: Elaboration from EUROSTAT

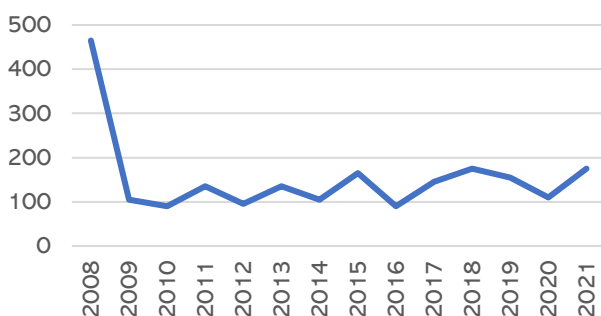
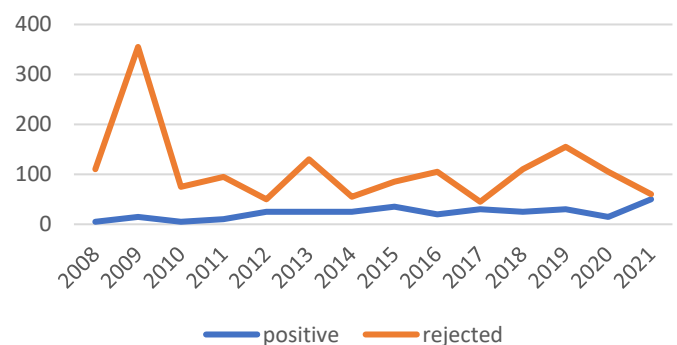
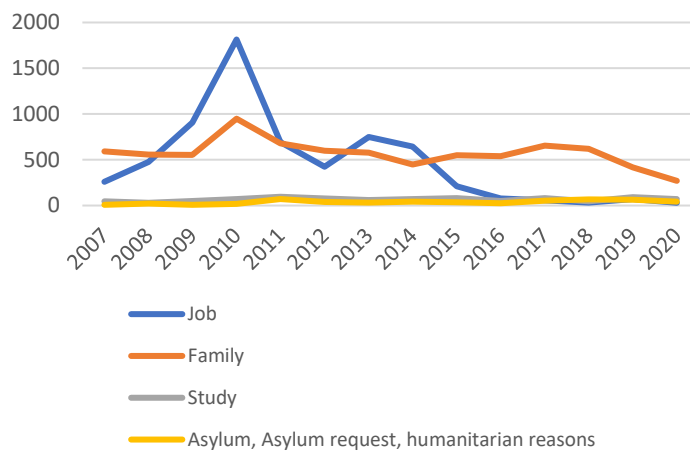


Fig. 7 Algeria - Outcomes of asylum applications to Italy 2008-2021. Source: author's elaboration from EUROSTAT



³⁶ A safe country of origin is a place where there is apparently no persecution, torture, or degrading treatment. Asylum applications from these countries can thus be rejected as being manifestly unfounded.

Figure 8 Algeria- entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



Italy-Algeria cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Italy and Algeria's relations are framed in the context of the over 45 agreements, protocols, cooperation frameworks and memorandum of understandings that have been concluded between the two countries since the 1960s, in a variety of sectors.³⁷

In this dense web of relations, management of regular and irregular migration, mobility and human exchanges were identified by art. 12 of the **Treaty of Friendship and Good Neighbourhood³⁸ (2003)** as a matter of 'utmost importance' for bilateral cooperation. The Treaty set the framework for **bilateral dialogue**, by making the commitment to hold regular annual consultations at the highest political level. Similarly, the **Protocol on Enhanced Consultations (2002)³⁹** included mobility and fight against irregular migration as key issues for annual exchanges between the Italian and Algerian Foreign Affairs Ministers. As irregular arrivals from Algeria increased in the latest years, diplomatic contacts by the Italian interior Ministers were intensified, on the attempt to upgrade ongoing cooperation on security matters and actions against irregular migration.⁴⁰ In **2020**,

³⁷ For the full list, check 'Archivio Trattati Internazionali Online', Ministero degli Esteri.

³⁸ *Trattato di Amicizia, Buon Vicinato e Cooperazione* (2003). <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/48530>

³⁹ *Protocollo sulle consultazioni rafforzate tra il Ministero degli Affari Esteri Italiano e il Ministero degli Affari Esteri Algerino* (2000), <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/47961>

⁴⁰ For instance, the call between former Interior Minister Minniti and the Algerian homologous in 2017: <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/stampa-e-comunicazione/comunicati-stampa/comunicati-stampa-raccolta-anni-precedenti/colloquio-telefonico-ministro-marco-minniti-ministro-dellinterno-algerino-noureddine-bedouj>; or the visit of Italian Interior Minister Lamorgese to Algeri in 2020: <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/notizie/ministro-lamorgese-missione-ad-algeri>

a new Memorandum on a Strategic Dialogue on Security⁴¹ gave a new impetus to bilateral relations and incorporated the fight against irregular migration as a key axe of cooperation.

In terms of **fight against irregular migration**, in 1999 the two countries signed an **Agreement of Cooperation in the domain of terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking and irregular migration**⁴². The Agreement, which entered into force in 2008, aims to prevent irregular migration, collaborate, and exchange information on migratory routes and criminal networks involved in human smuggling and trafficking (art.1D). Moreover, it paves the way to periodic bilateral high-level consultations on the issues of the agreement (art.5). **Police cooperation** was further strengthened ten years later, with a **new Agreement**⁴³ signed in **July 2009** by the Italian Head of Police and the Algerian homologous. The memorandum focused on training, sharing of information and fight against irregular migration. Moreover, in **2012**, Algeria and Italy concluded an **Agreement on Search and Rescue**⁴⁴ (SARs) with the goal to clearly identify SARs areas and better coordinate in terms of rescue operations.

Concerning **readmission**, a **Readmission Agreement**⁴⁵ was concluded in **2000**, with the purpose to readmit and return irregular migrants 'without bureaucratic formalities' and lengthy identification procedures. However, the agreement did not enter into force for several years, due to the lack of ratification from the Algerian side. Therefore, in order to promote enhanced cooperation on returns, in 2007 Algeria was reserved for the first time 1000 entry quotas for non-seasonal work by the *Decreto Flussi*. The year after, the readmission agreement eventually entered into force. Operative collaboration was further reinforced in light of the Memorandum on police cooperation concluded in 2009. Since then, cooperation on return by Algerian authorities was heralded as a case of 'full collaboration'⁴⁶ that 'works well'⁴⁷ and is 'effective'.⁴⁸ Overall, in

⁴¹ *Memorandum di Intesa sul Dialogo Strategico sulle relazioni bilaterali, e le questioni politiche di sicurezza globale* (2020). <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/51382>

⁴² Accordo di Cooperazione in materia di lotta al terrorismo, alla criminalità organizzata, al traffico illecito di sostanze stupefacenti e psicotrope e all'immigrazione illegale, <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/47870>

⁴³

https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/notizie/immigrazione/0162_2009_07_24_accordo_italo-algerino.html_503021030.html

⁴⁴ Accordo per la cooperazione nel settore della ricerca e soccorso in mare (2012). <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/50414>

⁴⁵ Accordo in materia di circolazione delle persone (riammissione) (2000) <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/47948>

⁴⁶

https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/notizie/rapporti_internazionali/0976_2007_08_31_incontroAlgeria.html_143217929.html

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https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/notizie/sottosegretarioprecedenti/2100_500_ministro/0175_2009_06_24_question_time.html_327374429.html

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https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/notizie/immigrazione/000105_2011_02_03_rimpatriati_16_algerini.html_21563083.html ;

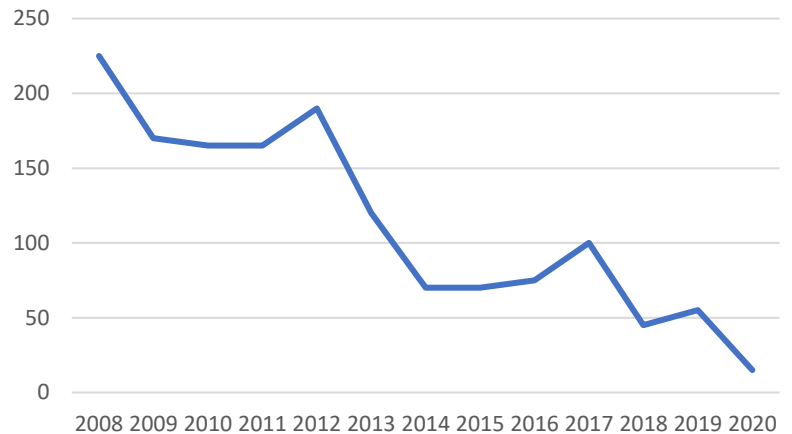
Interrogazione a risposta orale in Commissione n. 5-05750 dell'On. Cateriana Pes ed altri sulla gestione di flussi migratori dal Nord Africa, con particolare riguardo a quelli dall'Algeria. https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/24/2012_07_12_Pes_On._n._5-05750.pdf

2011-2020, over 1,400 Algerian irregular migrants were returned -many with flights once or twice a week.⁴⁹ Figures are higher until 2012 (Fig. 9), but they rapidly decrease in the following years recording historic lows in 2020 due to the stop of return operations in the pandemic context.

In terms of **legal migration**, as already mentioned, in 2007-2010, Algeria was reserved 1,000 entry quotas for non-seasonal work. From 2012 onward and for the first time, Algerian citizens were also allowed to compete for seasonal work along with other nationalities as indicated in the annual Flow Decrees. Moreover, the **Agreement for cultural, scientific and technological cooperation**⁵⁰ concluded in 2002 introduces commitment over cultural exchanges and scholarships. Algeria is currently in the list of eligible nationalities for scholarships offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Fig. 9 Algeria- Migrants returned from Italy (2008-2020).

Source: Elaboration from EUROSTAT.



Bilateral Development Cooperation

An analysis of the Italian Cooperation Reports (2001-2020) reveals that most of Italian aids to Algeria were addressed to support debt conversion, improve water and agriculture infrastructures, and support small and medium enterprises (Fig.9). Migration plays a minor role compared to other sectors. Out of the programs dealing with migration, they focus on two key dimensions: 1) support to Saharoui refugee community in Algeria⁵¹ 2) border control, with a new program launched in 2019 to enhance border police at the frontier with Niger.⁵²

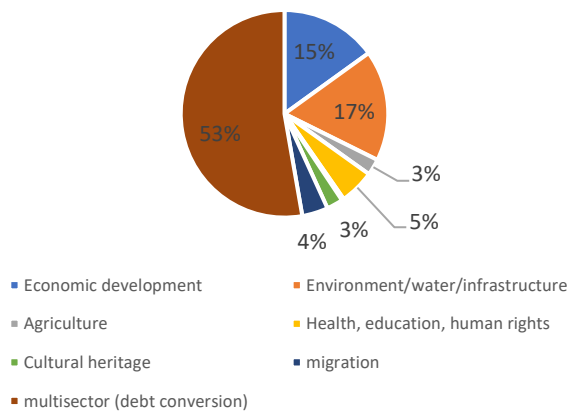
⁴⁹ On the point, see Italian Ministry of Interior, Press Releases, Archive 2003-2014.

⁵⁰ <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/48382>

⁵¹ For instance, Assistance to refugees from western sahara hosted in Tindouf (2013), € 300.000.

⁵² Project ' To strengthen border police, at the Assamaka frontier with Niger' (2019) € 1,000,000

Fig.9 Italian development cooperation to Algeria (2001-2020).
Source: Author's analysis from Italian Development cooperation reports



EU-Algeria cooperation as an additional framework for DEPMI

The EU and Algeria’s relations are framed in the context of the Association Agreement that entered into force in 2005. In 2002, the European Commission received a mandate to negotiate a Readmission Agreement with Algeria, but negotiations never took place due to the country’s reluctance. In this sense, the European Parliament notes that Algeria seems to be more prone to negotiate return issues at bilateral level with the Member States, who were able to sign bilateral readmission agreements or memoranda⁵³ well before the Commission could even barely launch negotiations on returns (European Parliament 2015). Readmission of Algerian nationals from Italy is therefore only managed in the context of bilateral relations.

Despite the commitment to engage in regular dialogue on issues related to mobility, migration and asylum, as stated in the 2017 EU-Algeria Partnership Priorities,⁵⁴ migration field seems to be marked by non-cooperation (Zardo e Loschi 2020). Unlike other North Africa countries, Algeria did not negotiate a Mobility Partnership and did not express interest in participating to the EU Trust Fund for Africa (Council of the EU 2022).

⁵³ France has also a readmission agreement in place with Algeria.

⁵⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/13/eu-algeria/>

Overview of DEPMI in Algeria

	Italy-Algeria (2000-2020)		EU-Algeria
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	Readmission Agreement (2000), entered into force in 2008		Mandate to negotiate a readmission agreement, but negotiations stalled
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	Cooperation in the context of the Agreement of cooperation against organised crime (1999) and the Police Agreement (2009) In 2012, Agreement on cooperation on Search and Rescue Operations	/	/
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	Cooperation in the context of the Agreement of cooperation against organised crime (1999)	Project 'To strengthen border police, at the Assamaka frontier with Niger' (2019)	/
Fight against Root Causes	/	/	
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	/	Programs supporting Saharoui refugees	
Legal Mobility	Reserved quotas for non-seasonal work (2007-2010); Included among the nationalities for seasonal work (2013-2020).	Scholarships and fee exemptions.	/
Visa	/	/	/
Political Dialogue	Focused on migration management, mobility and fight against irregular migration. Framed in the context of: Treaty of Good Friendship (2003); Protocol on Enhanced Consultations (2000); Memorandum on Strategic Dialogue on Security (2020)		EU-Algeria Partnership Priorities (2017)

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Bangladesh



Matilde Rosina⁵⁵

Migration outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	High after 2014
Relevance as a country of transit	Low
Safe country of origin list ⁵⁶	No
Schengen Visa Exemption ⁵⁷	No

First migration from Bangladesh to Italy go back to the 1990s, when many Bangladeshis young male migrants moved to Italy in search of economic opportunities and in the attempt to support families back home through remittances (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2021). In recent years, migratory flows have intensified, and Bangladesh has become one of the first countries of origin for irregular arrivals to Italy. As the country experienced political repression, rising unemployment and staggering poverty, aggravated also by the unprecedented flow of Rohingya refugees from the near Myanmar, more and more people emigrated or sought asylum in Italy.

Starting with **regular migration**, about 158,020 Bangladeshis resided in Italy in 2021. This makes them the 7th largest group of non-EU citizens in the country (ISTAT 2021b). Indeed, Italy is a popular destination country for Bangladeshi migrants, hosting their 2nd largest community in Europe (after the UK) (Embassy of Bangladesh in Rome: 2022). Most Bangladeshis in Italy are **men** (73% in 2018 - Giacomello et al 2018: 17).

In terms of yearly regular entries, in 2007-2020, these were predominantly for **work and family** reunification, rather than study (Fig. 1). Specifically, work permits predominated until 2014, after which year they dropped

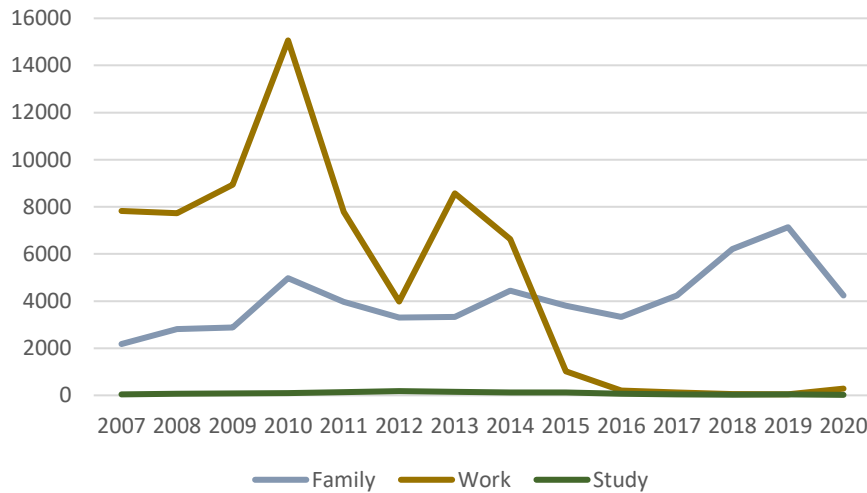
⁵⁵ DEPMI Researcher; Lecturer, London School of Economics and Political Science.

⁵⁶ Decreto 4 ottobre 2019, Art 1, <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/10/07/19A06239/sg>.

⁵⁷ Regulation 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02018R1806-20210101>.

to less than 1,000 per year. Family reunification permits remained more constant, fluctuating between 2,000 and 7,000 in the same period.

Figure 8 Bangladeshi regular entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



Shifting to **irregular migration** by sea, this has increased after 2013 (Fig. 2). Starting from an average of 530 yearly unauthorized landings in 2009-2013, figures went up to 9,009 in 2017. They then fell sharply in 2018-2019, in parallel with lower overall inflows, to eventually return to almost 8,000 in 2021.

If **Covid-19** might have played a role in keeping Bangladeshi sea landings limited in 2020, its effects weakened already by 2021 (Fig. 3), when Bangladesh was the **3rd most common country of origin** for migrants reaching Italy by sea (UNHCR 2021). The substantial drop in landings during Italy's first lockdown (March-May 2020) was indeed soon reversed in the summer months (when restrictions were eased and sea conditions improved), and particularly so since May 2021 (Fig. 4). Figures for 2022 confirm Bangladesh's role a key country of origin, with over 10,000 sea landings between January and September 2022 (Ministero dell'Interno 2022).

Figure 9 Bangladeshi irregular arrivals to Italy via the Central Mediterranean Route, 2009-2021
(Source: author's elaboration on Frontex and UNHCR data)

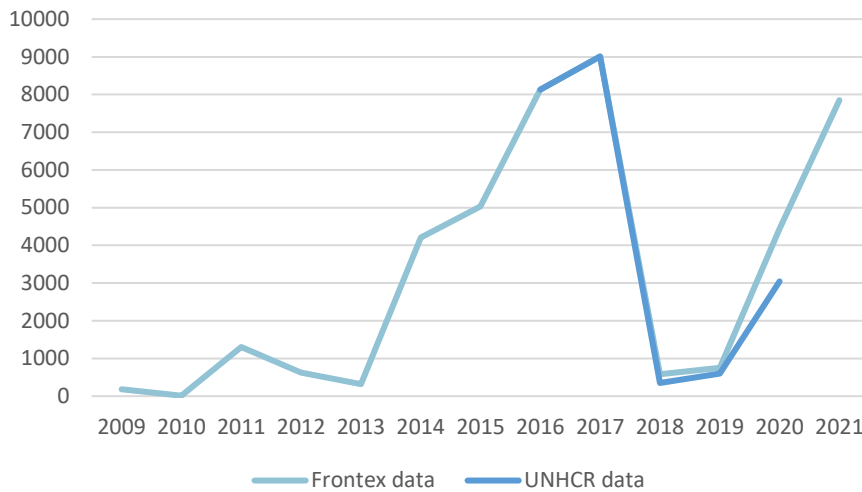


Figure 10 Bangladeshi irregular arrivals to Italy via the Central Mediterranean Route before and after Covid-19 (Source: author's elaboration on Frontex data)

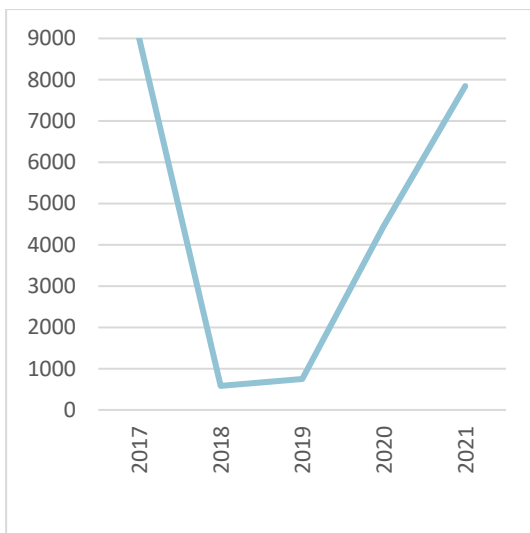
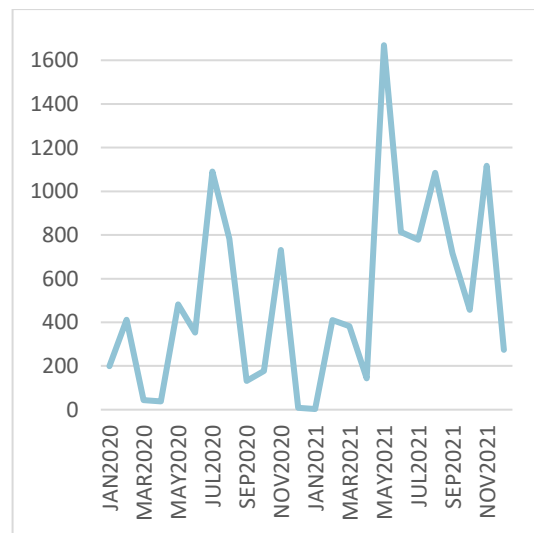
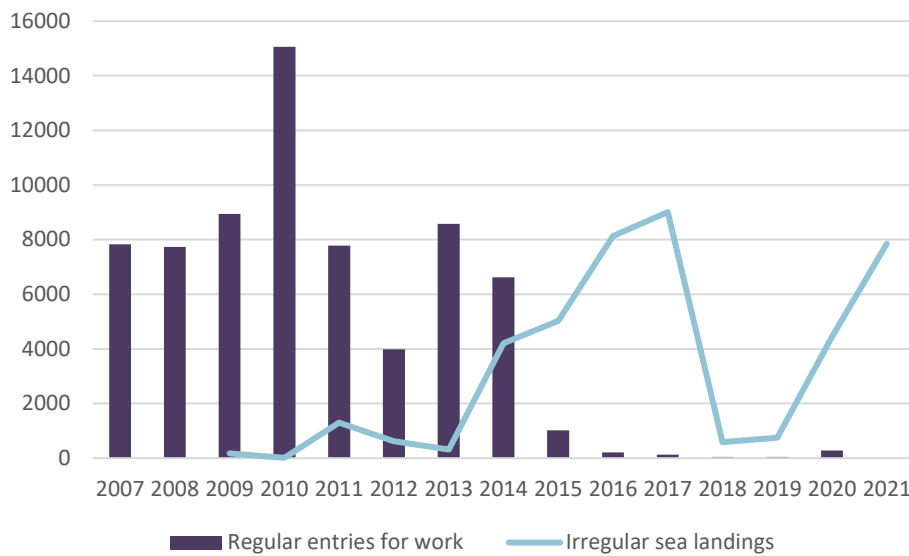


Figure 11 Impact of Covid-19 on irregular arrivals of Bangladeshis to Italy via Central Mediterranean Route (Source: author's elaboration on Frontex data)



Comparing regular entries for work with irregular sea landings, an inverted trend emerges (Fig. 5). If until 2014, the former were rather high and the latter low, the trend reversed after that year, with lower work permits being paralleled by higher landings.

Figure 12 Bangladeshi irregular landings in Italy versus regular entries with work permit, 2007-2021
(Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT and Frontex data)



In parallel to the above, Bangladeshi’s **asylum** requests have drastically increased in 2015-2017 (Fig. 6). They passed from less than 500 in 2013, to over 12,000 in 2017. Positive decisions concerning such claims increased in parallel, though to a more limited extent (Fig. 7). Interestingly, yearly permits for asylum and humanitarian protection outnumbered any other type of permits granted by Italy to Bangladeshi migrants, in 2015-2018 (Fig. 8).

Figure 13 Bangladeshi asylum applications in Italy (1st time applicants), 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)

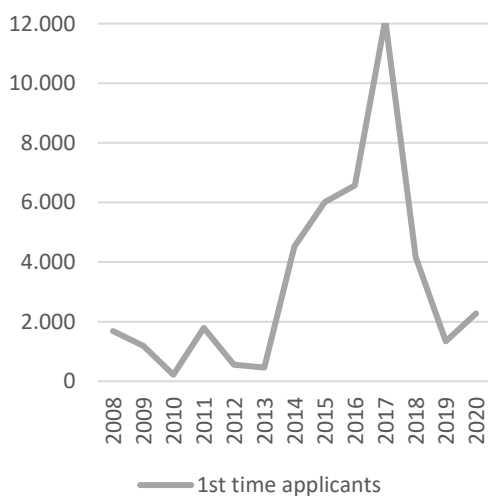


Figure 14 Outcome of Bangladeshi asylum applications in Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)

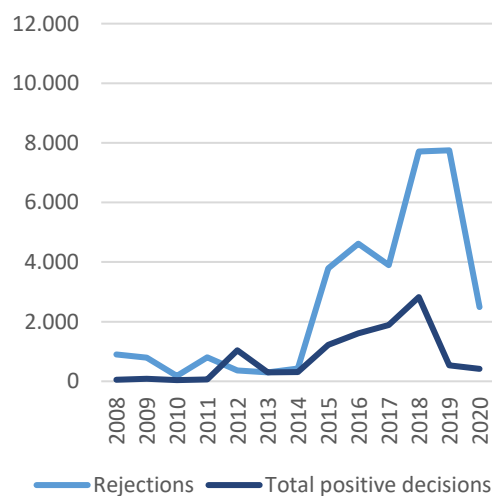
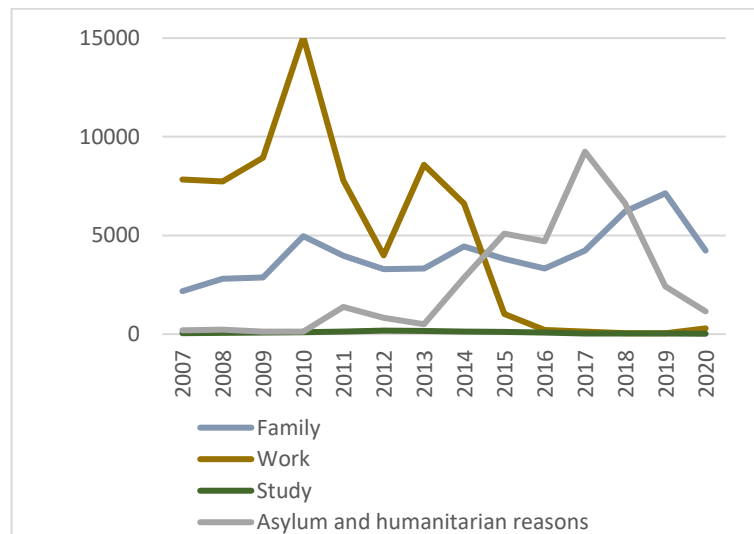


Figure 15 Bangladeshi entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020
 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



Migration from Bangladesh can be related to several factors. First, the economy of Bangladesh is highly dependent on **remittances** and, hence, on migration itself (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou 2021). With a per capita GDP below \$2,000, remittances to the country accounted for 6.7% of the overall GDP in 2020, 10.6% in 2012 (World Bank 2022). The country is also characterised by overpopulation, malnutrition, lack of access to sanitary services and environmental degradation (Italian Senate 2010: 447). Indeed, **natural disasters** such as the 2017 Cyclone Mora have caused significant displacement in the country, leading to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people (McAuliffe and Ruhs 2017: 62). Finally, it is estimated that up to 70,000-80,000 Bangladeshis lived in Libya before the 2011 civil war, finding themselves in the position of either having to return home, or to migrate to another country (Zain Al-Mahmood 2011, Cupolo 2017). Overall, an IOM (2020: 3) survey found that most Bangladeshi respondents intending to leave did so to seek better job and opportunities (73%), for financial reasons (13%), or in the hope of improving their social status (11%).

Italy-Bangladesh cooperation on migration

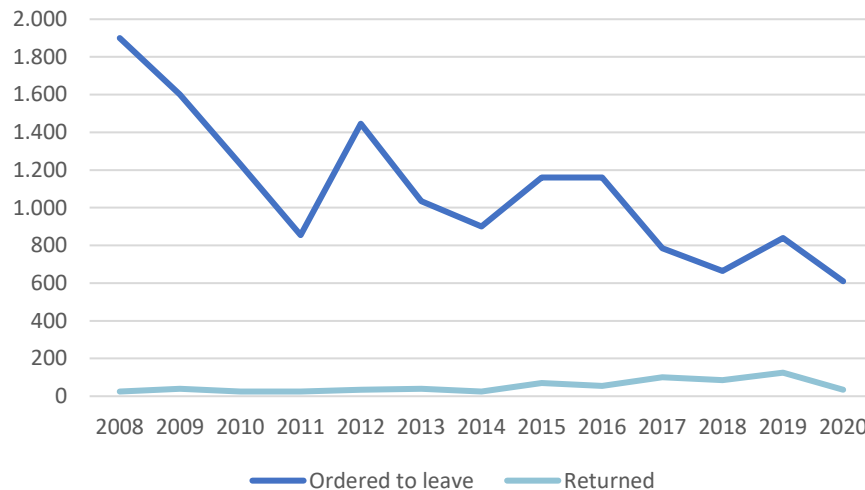
Bilateral political cooperation

Cooperation on migration-related issues between Italy and Bangladesh is articulated along the following lines.

To begin with, Italy does not have a **return** agreement with Bangladesh. Although it started negotiations in 1994 (Cassarino 2005: 17), no such agreement was finalised. As a result, Italy's returns of Bangladeshi nationals

are very **low**: On average, only 6% of Bangladeshis ordered to leave were returned in 2008-2020 (based on Eurostat data, see Fig. 9).

Figure 16 Bangladeshis ordered to leave and returned by Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)



Concerning **legal migration**, Bangladesh has had reserved around 3,000 quotas for subordinate work in Italy's *Decreto Flussi* between 2003-2010. When entry quotas for subordinate work were stopped by the Italian government in 2010, *Decreto Flussi* came to identify countries whose nationals would be admitted for competition over quotas for seasonal work. Bangladesh was not included in this list for eight years, between 2012-2019, and only in *Decreto Flussi* 2020 it was admitted for reserved quotas on seasonal work.

In terms of **political dialogue**, this has largely focused on (1) migration management and (2) Bangladesh's response to the inflow of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar.⁵⁸ Such issues have been the object of discussion during Bangladeshi prime minister Hasina's visit to Italy's homologous Conte in early 2020. During the visit, the two also discussed possible legal pathways, and intensifying the fight against irregular migration (Joint Press Statement 2020). Previous relevant bilateral talks included a meeting between foreign affairs ministers and vice-ministers in late 2019 (which included discussions on the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh), and a visit of Italian under-secretary for foreign affairs in Dhaka in 2016 (which also covered migratory matters) (Rutigliano 2019, MAECI 2016).

⁵⁸ By late 2020, Bangladesh hosted over 860,000 refugees, most of whom were Rohingya (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou 2021: 86).

Bilateral development cooperation

Bangladesh received €1.5million from Italy as official development assistance in 2020 (MAECI 2020: 240). Italian development projects related to migration in Bangladesh can be classified along three main lines (based on the analysis of Italian Cooperation Report 2000-2019). First, Italy has focused on supporting **Rohingya refugees** displaced in Bangladesh, by contributing funds to the World Food Programme, the Red Cross, and the UNHCR, especially since 2017.⁵⁹ Second, several Italian universities offered **scholarships** or fee exemptions to students from Bangladesh in the 2010s.⁶⁰ Third, a few projects have focused on **gender** discrimination and violence, including for refugees currently in Bangladesh.⁶¹

EU-Bangladesh cooperation as an additional framework for DEPMI

Limited cooperation on migration matters connects Bangladesh and the EU. As far as returns are concerned, the EU has **non-binding readmission arrangements** with Bangladesh.⁶² Negotiations were launched in 2016, with the arrangements entering into force in 2017 (European Court of Auditors 2021). The electronic Readmission Case Management System (meant to automate return procedures) was deployed in the country since 2020 and paralleled by training projects⁶³ to streamline the process (ibid.). However, the effective return rate remains very low, with an average of only 9% of Bangladeshis ordered to leave having been effectively returned, in 2017-2020 (Fig. 10). Scarce improvements led the Commission to propose **temporary restrictive measures on visa** applications from Bangladesh in July 2021 (European Commission 2021).

⁵⁹ It provided €500,000 to the World Food Programme in 2017, €1.5million to the Red Cross in 2018, and €1.4million to the UNHCR in 2019. It also provided €100,000 to the UNHCR in 2009.

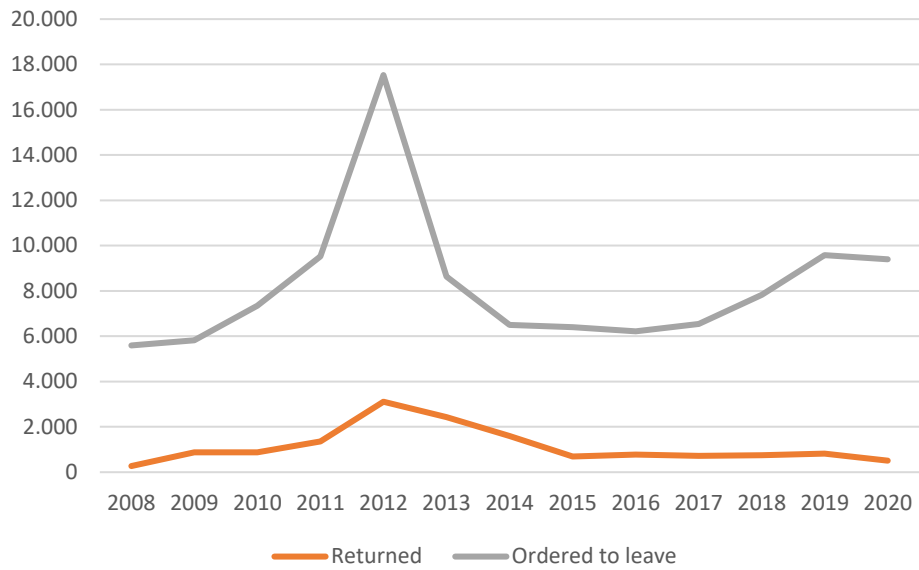
⁶⁰ In 2018, these included: The University of Genoa, the University of Aquila, the University of Trento, Ente Regionale per il Diritto allo Studio delle Marche, University of Brescia, University of Trento.

⁶¹ Through the 2020 contribution to the Red Cross for activities of protection and response to sexual violence in Bangladesh (€1million), and the 2015-2019 project 'Combat gender discrimination and promote social development by expanding the life choices of girls and boys and adolescents in five slums of Dhaka' (€582,181). Although latter does not mention migration explicitly, it aims to promote more equal gender relations, and to expand girls' and boys' opportunities.

⁶² See EU-Bangladesh Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification and Return of Persons without an Authorisation to Stay.

⁶³ Running in 2018-2020, with a budget of €4.8m.

Figure 17 Bangladeshis ordered to leave and returned by EU27, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat 2022)



Overview of DEPMI in Bangladesh

	Italy-Bangladesh (2000-2020)		EU-Bangladesh
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	/	/	Non-binding readmission arrangements (2017)
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	/	/	/
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	/	/	/
Fight against Root Causes	/	/	
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	/	Support to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh in cooperation with the UNHCR, Red Cross, World Food Programme (for a total of €3.5million)	
Legal Mobility	Reserved quotas for non-seasonal work (2003-2010); Included among the nationalities for seasonal work (2020).	Scholarships and fee exemptions.	/
Visa	/	/	Commission proposed temporary restrictions in 2021
Political Dialogue	Focused on migration management, and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.		

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DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Egypt



Iole Fontana⁶⁴

Migration Outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	Medium-High 2012-2016	High 2021 & 2022
Relevance as a country of transit	Medium-low	
Safe country of origin list ⁶⁵	NO	
Schengen Visa Exemption	NO	

The first Egyptian migratory wave to Italy goes back to 1970s, when flows of highly qualified workers started to enter the country (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2018). Since then, migration of both high and low qualified people, mainly young and male, has been recorded. In 2000, Italy stood as the first European country for Egyptian emigration.⁶⁶ Thousands of fresh graduates or poorly educated unemployed youth engaged in irregular migration to Italy, pushed by unemployment, lack of economic opportunities (Zohry 2009) and President Hosni Mubarak's repressive regime. A new migration stream was observed in the 2010s. As the Libyan crisis pushed many Egyptians who worked in Libya to go back home, the number of young unemployed people dramatically increased (Cespi 2012) and coupled with the country's political drama and military coup of 2013. In recent years, and especially in 2021, the country has emerged as a crucial country of origin -not only of young male migrants but also of Unaccompanied Minors (UMNs).

In terms of **regular migration**, 139,569 Egyptians were regularly present on the Italian territory in 2021, compared to 128,095 in 2020 and 119,864 in 2019,⁶⁷ representing the 8th biggest community of non-EU citizens in Italy. In terms of yearly regular entries, between 2007 and 2020 job and family reunification permits were the most common if compared to mobility for study reasons (Fig.1). Yet, while entries for family reunification remained stable and slightly increased after 2015, regular entries for job and seasonal work

⁶⁴ Scientific Coordinator, DEPMI Program; Assistant Professor, University of Catania.

⁶⁵ According to the list of safe countries of origin as indicated by the Italian Decree 4 October 2019.

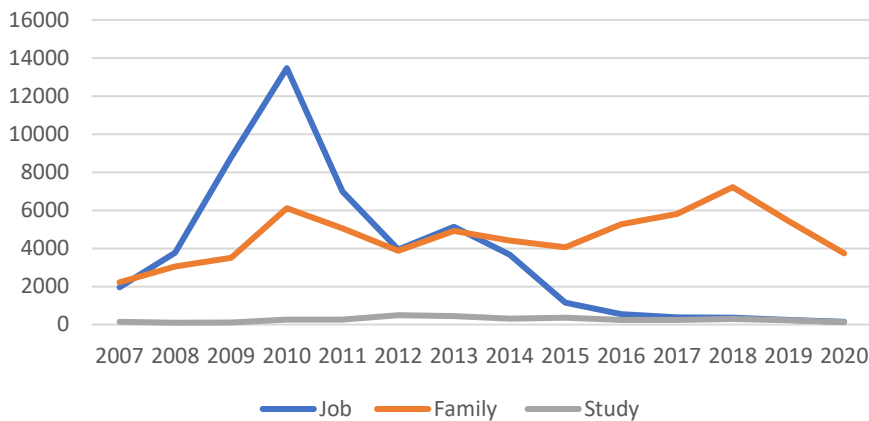
⁶⁶ Gli immigrati egiziani in Italia e in Veneto.

<http://bancadati.italialavoro.it/bdds/download?fileName=C_21_Strumento_5444_documenti_itemName_0_documento.pdf&uid=01105f69-7e46-48c9-9aad-7987dea0d48c>

⁶⁷ ISTAT, data on foreign residents.

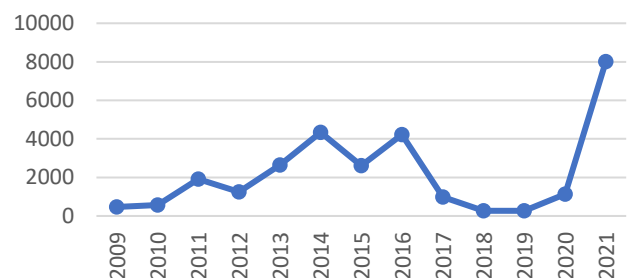
drastically decreased after the peak recorded in 2010. This is partly related to a general closure of immigration entry channels for employment in Italy, also due to the general reduction of annual entry quotas established by governmental Flows Decree (the so-called Decreto Flussi) from 2011 onward (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2018).

Fig. 1 Egyptians- Regular Entries to Italy by reason of entry (2007-2020). Source: Author's elaboration from EUROSTAT



In terms of **irregular flows** and unlike others ‘Arab Spring’ countries, Egypt did not emerge as a crucial country of origin in 2011. While arrivals from the country increased after the Tahrir Square Revolution and the fall of President Hosni Mubarak, there was no particular surge in 2011 (Fargues and Fandrich 2012). However, irregular flows of Egyptians to Italy rose between 2012 and 2016 (Fig.2), in line with the political and economic developments of the country. The economic crisis, the massive number of Egyptian returnees from Libya who found themselves unemployed, the military coup that overthrew President Mohamed Morsi and the new military regime by President Al-Sisi put a strain on young people and families. Figures decreased between 2017-2020 but recorded an unprecedented spike in 2021, when Egyptians became the second most common nationality of migrants reaching Italian shores irregularly (UNHCR 2020).

Fig. 2 FRONTEX Detected border crossings of Egyptians across the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy. Source: Author's Elaboration from FRONTEX.



In this regard, **COVID-19 pandemic** did not reduce flows from Egypt (Fig.3). As the pandemic hit the country, it exacerbated existing push factors, exposed deeper socio-economic inequalities (ILO 2022; Abdel Ghafar 2021) and higher levels of political repression, and impinged upon key economic sectors such as tourism (IMF 2021). After a substantial drop in landings during Italy’s first lockdown (March-May 2020), movements increased during summer 2020 and continued to grow with a peak in summer 2021 (Fig.4).

Fig. 3 FRONTEX Detected border crossings of Egyptian across the Central Mediterranean Route before and after COVID-19. Source: Elaboration from FRONTEX

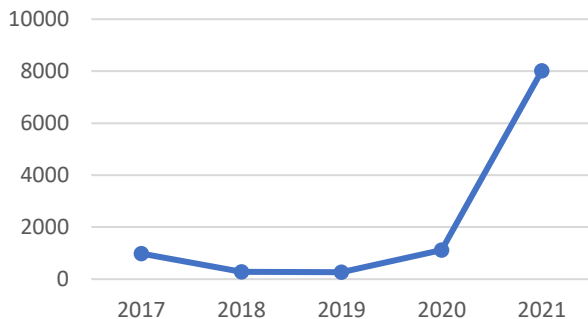
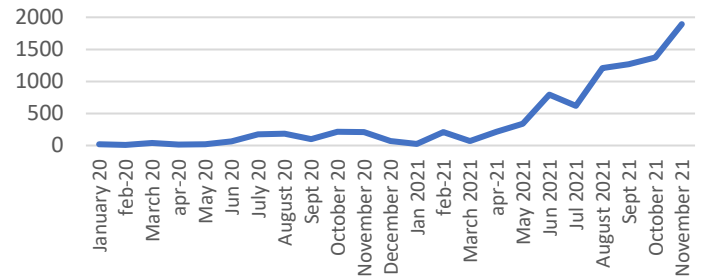
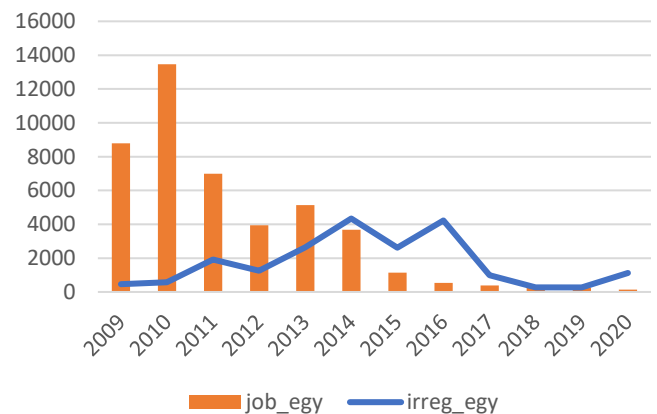


Fig. 4 Impact of Covid on irregular arrivals of Egyptians to Italy across the Central Mediterranean. Source: Elaboration from FRONTEX



Whereas the increase of irregular movements from Egypt is rooted in a combination of factors, the closure of Italian regular channels for non-seasonal employment migration seems to also have played a role. Comparing regular Egypt's entries for work with irregular sea landings, an inverted trend emerges (Fig. 5). As the former decrease, irregular arrivals increase.

Fig. 5 Egypt irregular landings in Italy versus regular entries with work permit, 2009-2020. (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT and Frontex data)



According to latest data, 12,697 Egyptians disembarked in Italy between January-September 2022 (Ministero dell'Interno 2022), suggesting that Egypt is continuing to play a significant role as a country of origin, also for Unaccompanied Migrant Minors (UMNs). In 2016, Egyptian minors were the most present community of UMNs in Italy.⁶⁸ In 2021, out of 10,053 UMNs arriving in Italy, 18% were Egyptian (UNHCR 2021) and the trend is even higher for 2022 (EUAA 2022).

As the Egyptian government has cracked hard on irregular migration in recent years, only a few people leave from Egyptian coastlines (EUAA 2022).⁶⁹ Rather, most of those travelling irregularly by boat to Italy depart

⁶⁸ Egitto, le politiche di Al Sisi ed i minori che se ne vanno, <https://www.meltingpot.org/2018/05/egitto-le-politiche-di-al-sisi-ed-i-minori-che-se-ne-vanno/>

⁶⁹ The 2014 Constitution and Al Sisi's regime set the ground for stricter border controls, as the new government turned migrant arrivals into an opportunity to reinforce the partnership with European neighbors. Moreover, in 2016 a new legislation to prevent irregular migration was introduced and in April 2022 tougher penalties on people smuggling were adopted. See. Fattah at al. 2021, Egypt, the

from Libya, mainly from Zuwarah, Zawiya and Sabratha, or, in small proportion, from Turkey (ibid., UNHCR 2020). For this reason, Egypt is not a relevant **transit country** of movements to Italy. While between 2015-2016 many people, including migrants from the Horn of Africa, departed from Egypt as an alternative safer embarkation area if compared to Libya (UNHCR 2016),⁷⁰ the relevance of Egypt as a **transit country** of movements to Italy has decreased in recent years due to harsh controls.

In terms of **asylum**, and in line with irregular arrivals, applications from Egyptian asylum seekers to Italy have increased in recent years with a peak value in 2021 (Fig. 6) - when Egyptians accounted for the 5th nationality in terms of asylum applications to Italy. In the first quarter of 2022, most Egyptian asylum applications to the European Union (EU) were lodged in Italy (EUAA 2022). In the period 2007-2020, residence permits for asylum request, asylum or humanitarian reasons for Egyptian citizens saw a significant increase, especially between 2011 and 2014 (Fig.7). However, they are very low if compared to other types of residence permits (work, family reunification or study reasons) (Fig.8).

Fig. 6 Egypt- Asylum applications to Italy (2008-2021). Source: Author's elaboration from EUROSTAT

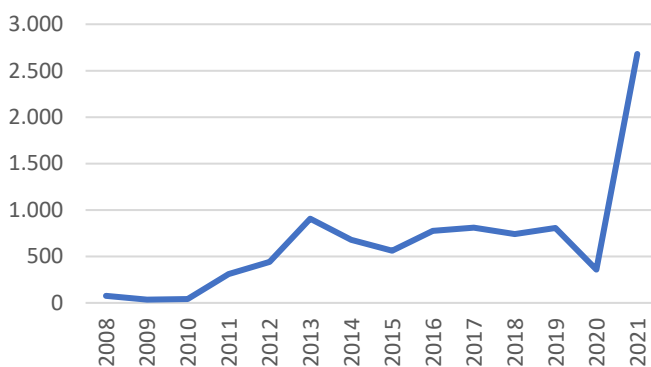
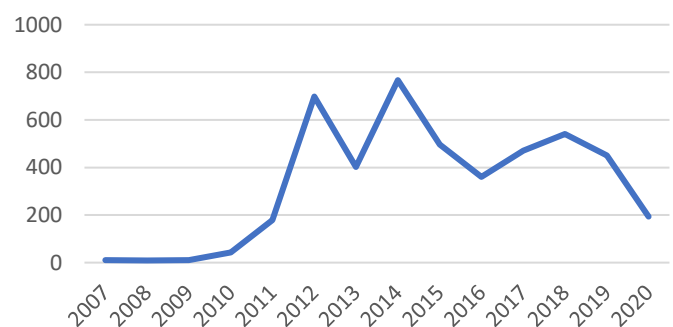


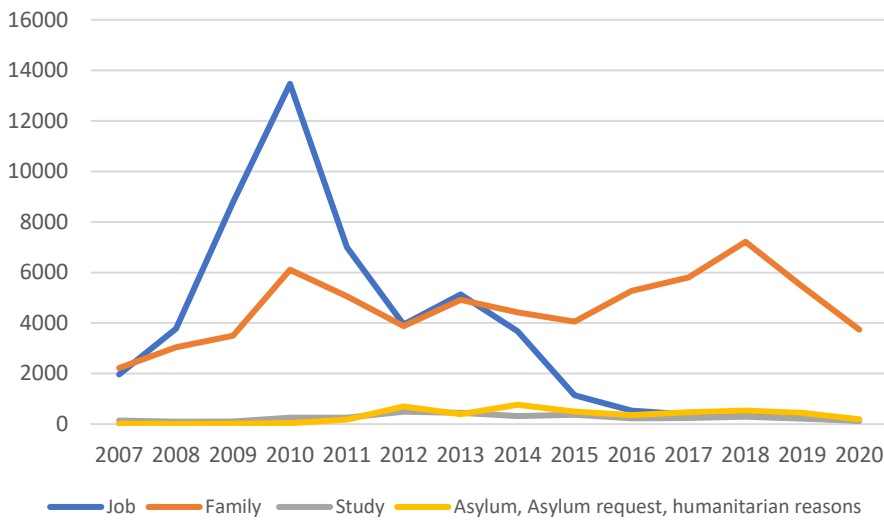
Fig. 7 Egyptians- Permits for Asylum, Asylum request, humanitarian reasons (2007-2020). Source: Author's own elaboration from ISTAT



EU, and Migration: An Uncomfortable Yet Unavoidable Partnership. <https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/egypt-eu-and-migration>; EUAA (2022).

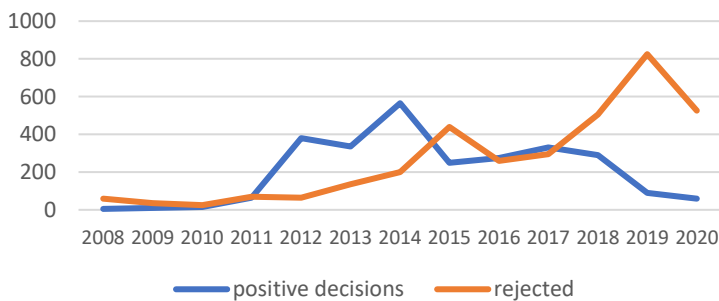
⁷⁰ See also: Migration through Egypt: The Safe Alternative to Libya? <https://reliefweb.int/report/egypt/migration-through-egypt-safe-alternative-libya>

Fig. 8 Egypt- Asylum residence permits compared to other kind of permits (2007-2020). Source: Author's elaboration from ISTAT



In terms of asylum decisions, rejection is the most common outcome for asylum applications of Egyptian asylum-seekers to Italy between 2007-2020 (Fig.8). Positive decisions increased only for a few years, between 2011 and 2014, mainly due to a significant recognition of humanitarian protection in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.

Fig. 8. Egypt. Outcome of asylum applications to Italy. Source: author's elaboration from EUROSTAT



Italy-Egypt cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Political and economic relations between Italy and Egypt are defined by the over 110 agreements, protocols and memorandum of understandings concluded since the 1950s in a variety of sectors.⁷¹ Cooperation on migration has intensified in the early 2000s.

⁷¹ For the full list, check 'Archivio Trattati Internazionali Online', Ministero degli Esteri.

Bilateral political dialogue on migration was identified as a ‘strategic goal’ by the Italian government⁷² and a key issue of diplomatic relations both before and after Mubarak’s regime, with discussions over irregular migration, border management and legal mobility that paved the way to agreements making up the External Dimension of Italian Migration Policy (DEPMI, Italian acronym) in Egypt. Political dialogue was interrupted after the murder of the Italian PhD student Giulio Regeni in 2016, but despite diplomatic controversies cooperation on migration was resumed in 2017.

In terms of **legal mobility**, an ‘**Agreement on cooperation in the domain of bilateral labour migration**’⁷³ and its **Executive Protocol**⁷⁴ were sealed in 2005, with the goal to regulate fluxes of workers and facilitate the encounter of demand and offer in the job market. Italy agreed to provide a preferential treatment to Egyptian workers in terms of ‘special’ annual entry quotas established by the Flow Decree (Decreto Flussi). As a matter of fact, in 2006, 7000 Egyptians could benefit of preferential treatment for job reasons against the mere 300 available quotas of 2003. This number was further increased to 8000 in 2011, reaching the highest quota reserved to foreign nationals.⁷⁵ Always in **2011**, a new **Memorandum of Understanding on Migration and Employment** was signed, with the goal to support vocational training and circular mobility for seasonal workers, as well as open a coordination office in Cairo to facilitate the matching of Egyptian workers and Italian enterprises.⁷⁶ Moreover, in the context of **the Framework Agreement for Cooperation** (2010),⁷⁷ the Italian government agreed to provide financial assistance for inter-university cooperation and scholarships for Egyptian nationals.

Building upon the preferential treatment reserved in the domain of legal mobility as a bargaining chip, a **Return and Readmission Agreement** was signed in Rome in **2007** and is still in place.⁷⁸ The Agreement allows to expel irregular migrants through quick procedures, between seven and twenty-one days, according to the type of identification process (art.1). The Agreement is generally considered to be working effectively in terms of the number of Egyptians being repatriated. According to the former Italian Interior Minister Maroni, the Agreement permitted rapid repatriation ‘by 24 hours with quick bureaucratic and consular procedures’.⁷⁹

⁷² (Legislatura 16 Risposta ad interrogazione scritta n° 4-06711, fascicolo n.171)

⁷³ *Accordo Di Cooperazione In Materia Di Flussi Migratori Bilaterali Per Motivi Di Lavoro*

⁷⁴ https://siti archeologici.lavoro.gov.it/AreaSociale/Immigrazione/flussi_migratori/Documents/ProtocolloEsecutivoAccordoEgitto.pdf

⁷⁵ Visita On. Ministro Frattini, Cairo, 22 febbraio 2011,

https://ambilcairo.esteri.it/ambasciata_ilcairo/it/i_rapporti_bilaterali/cooperazione_politica/incontri/visitafrattini.html

⁷⁶ <https://agenziastampaitalia.it/politica/politica-estera/3547-egitto-frattini-sosteniamo-il-processo-democratico->

⁷⁷ *Accordo Quadro di Cooperazione*

⁷⁸ <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/48977>

⁷⁹ <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/530158.pdf>

Between 2013-2014, more than 1,000 irregular migrants were repatriated. These were 685 in 2016 and more than 350 in 2019, according to EUROSTAT data (Fig.9). In this sense, whereas irregular arrivals to Italy increased in 2016 following the interruption of political dialogue between Rome and Cairo after Regeni’s case, return cooperation does not seem to have been affected by tensed relations.⁸⁰ Overall, if one considers the percentage of people being repatriated out of the number of those receiving an expulsion order, Egypt has generally recorded some of the highest return percentages if compared to other countries bound to Italy by some return agreement (Table 1).

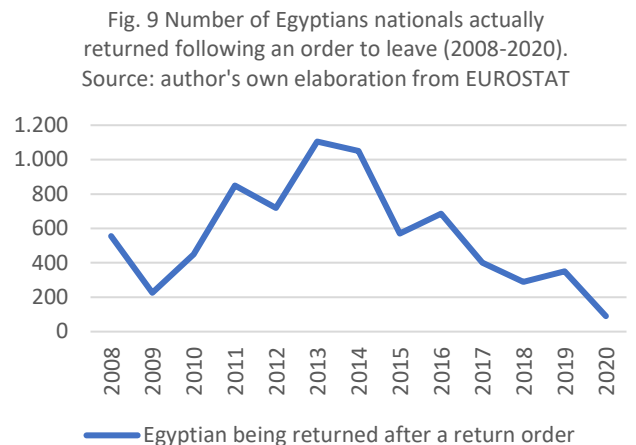


Table 1. Return Rate. Number of people being actually returned (%) out of the number of people receiving a return order for three countries cooperating with Italy on migration. Source: Elaboration from EUROSTAT.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Egypt	43,58974	41,02564	59,09091	56,30027	38,25503	33,74384	25,39683	23,86831	34,65347	10,11236
Tunisia	34,04908	35,3902	24,13793	31,25811	31,3253	38,58268	30,06536	27,33945	37,5	22,55937
Nigeria	6,432749	14,17722	22,98851	14,8	13,95349	9,065934	16,09195	11,47959	16,52542	3,977273

Whereas in the latest years the number of forced returns to Egypt has decreased also due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Agreement continues to work and new repatriations (between 60-120)⁸¹ took place during the first months of 2022.⁸²

In terms of **fight against irregular migration and border control**, Italy and Egypt concluded a ‘**Police Cooperation Agreement**’⁸³ in 2000 (entered into force in 2005), with the goal to share information on human trafficking and irregular migration networks. A **Memorandum of Understanding** on bilateral cooperation to favor the containment of the migratory phenomenon of **unaccompanied Egyptian minors** to Italy was signed in December 2009.⁸⁴ On that occasion, Italy provided Egypt with two patrol boats to control territorial waters

⁸⁰ The ongoing return cooperation in the post-Regeni political bilateral relations has been criticised by several Non Governmental Organisations < <https://www.internazionale.it/bloc-notes/catherine-cornet/2019/01/25/tre-anni-verita-giulio-regeni>>

⁸¹ <https://www.africa-express.info/2022/07/07/cinismo-della-diplomazia-europea-legitto-e-un-buon-amico-per-respingere-i-migranti-quindi-allemoci/>

⁸² The Italian National Guarantor for Prisoner’s Rights has recently raised concerns over the implementation of the Agreement, also due to Egypt’s worsening human rights situation which is different from 2007, when the agreement was signed (EuroMed Rights 2021).

⁸³ <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/48215>

⁸⁴ Legislatura 16 Risposta ad interrogazione scritta n° 4-06711, fascicolo n.171)

and intercept irregular movements.⁸⁵ Police cooperation was further strengthened in 2011, when after numerous meetings with the Italian Interior Minister, Egypt's ambassador manifested his country's interest to boost the police apparatus. As a response, Italy provided development assistance to modernize Egyptian police and its assets.⁸⁶ Cooperation on border control became problematic in 2016, considering the diplomatic spats between Rome and Cairo over the murder of Giulio Regeni and the recall of the Italian ambassador (Liberti, 2016). The sudden increase of irregular arrivals to Italy was immediately intended as a retaliation of the Egyptian government, who seemed to have turned a blind eye to the implementation of border control (ibid.).

In September 2017, the central director of Italian Immigration and Border Police, on the one hand, and the Egyptian Head of the Police Academy, on the other, signed a **“technical agreement” on migration**. This paved the way to the opening of a Centre for International Training on migration at the Egyptian Police Academy in Cairo for 360 border officers from 22 African countries (ARCI 2019). The so-called 'ITEPA Project' was then presented in 2018 as a 'best practice' during a meeting co-chaired by Italy and Egypt in the context of the Khartoum Regional Dialogue. ITEPA, which is also supported by the EU Agency FRONTEX (Frontex 2019), was renewed for further 14 months in 2021.⁸⁷ Training cooperation has been implemented also by the Italian Coast Guard. Between 2017 and 2018, several exchanges occurred with the Egyptian Coast Guard for training and exchange of information.⁸⁸ Finally, in 2019, Italy supplied new naval equipment with accompanying radars and modern remote-sensing devices (EuroMed Rights 2021).

Bilateral Development Cooperation

Egypt has traditionally been identified as a 'Priority 1' Country by the Italian Development Cooperation.⁸⁹ An analysis of the Italian Cooperation Reports (2001-2020) reveals that at least € 16 Mil. were tailored to projects and programs that directly focus on migration issues. Of these, most of funds was devoted to approaching root causes (72%) (Fig.10). Moreover, if one looks at the general sectoral distribution of programs financed by the Italian Cooperation, these are mainly addressed to employment, fight against poverty, boost small and medium enterprises (Fig.11). In this sense, while only 8% of the analysed programs is explicitly on migration, the 'root causes' dimension in terms of reducing push factors stands as a predominant one even in the case of programs/projects that are not directly focused on migration among their immediate goals.

⁸⁵ <https://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/19012/>

⁸⁶ Legislatura 16 Risposta ad interrogazione scritta n° 4-06711, fascicolo n.171)

⁸⁷ <https://fondosicurezza.interno.gov.it/progetti/assegnazione-diretta/progetto-12024>

⁸⁸ <https://www.africa-express.info/2021/03/23/guerini-sostiene-dopo-omicidio-regeni-ridotti-i-rapporti-italia-egitto-ma-non-e-vero/>

⁸⁹ Rapporti sull'implementazione della politica di cooperazione allo sviluppo (2009; 2010; 2011; 2012).

Figure 10. Italian Development Cooperation in Egypt - Funds addressing migration issues per type (2000-2021). Source: Author's own from Italian Development Cooperation Reports 2000-2021.

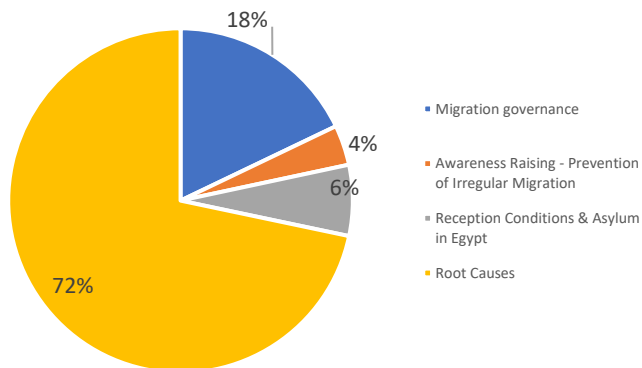
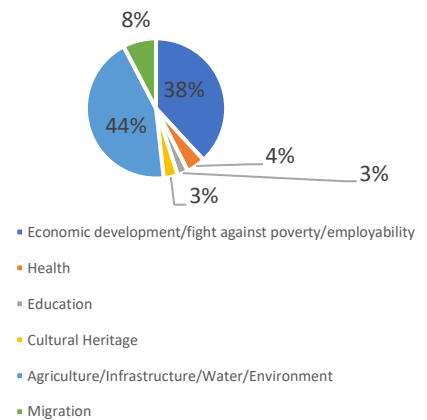


Fig. 11 Italian Development Cooperation in Egypt - General Distribution of Funds by Sector (2000-2021). Source: Author's own elaboration from Italian Development Cooperation Report 2000-2021



EU-Egypt cooperation as an additional framework for DEPMI

Since 2004, the relations between the EU and Egypt have been governed by an Association Agreement, which also provides the main framework for dialogue on migration. Unlike other North African countries, in 2011 Egypt declined the offer made by the EU to start a Dialogue on Mobility, Migration and Security, and thus refused to enter into negotiations of a Mobility Partnership (European Commission 2014; Fargues and Fandrich 2012). In July 2017, the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities 2017-2020 were adopted, with a chapter on the strengthening of bilateral co-operation on migration and mobility (Council of the EU, 2022). The main goals included strengthening Egypt's migration governance framework; addressing the root causes of, and prevent, irregular migration; fight against human trafficking and smuggling; and protection of migrants' rights.⁹⁰

The EU-Egypt Migration Dialogue was eventually launched in December 2017 by Commissioner Avramopoulos and the Egyptian First Minister Shoukry (Council of the EU 2022). The subsequent rounds of dialogue on the different aspects of migration cooperation took place in July 2019⁹¹ and in November 2021.⁹² There is currently no EU-Egypt Readmission Agreement. The topic is not currently on the agenda, even if the commitment to 'facilitate cooperation for the identification, return, readmission and reintegration of irregular migrants' is among the key goals of the Renewed Partnership Priorities 2021-2027⁹³ and was reiterated during the latest

⁹⁰ EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities 2017-2020, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23942/eu-egypt.pdf>

⁹¹ <https://south.euneighbours.eu/news/second-meeting-migration-dialogue-between-european-union-and-egypt/>; https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/second-meeting-migration-dialogue-between-european-union-and-egypt_en?s=95

⁹² <https://south.euneighbours.eu/news/joint-press-statement-third-eu-egypt-political-dialogue-migration/>

⁹³

[https://www.parlamento.it/notes9/web/docuorc2004.nsf/8fc228fe50daa42bc12576900058cada/715095d8b4fcd172c1258833002f8363/\\$FILE/COM2022_0191_IT_ALL1.pdf](https://www.parlamento.it/notes9/web/docuorc2004.nsf/8fc228fe50daa42bc12576900058cada/715095d8b4fcd172c1258833002f8363/$FILE/COM2022_0191_IT_ALL1.pdf)

9th EU-Egypt Association Council Meeting in June 2022.⁹⁴ Readmission of Egyptian nationals from Italy is therefore only managed in the context of bilateral relations.

In 2017, the € 60 million programme ‘Enhancing the Response to Migration Challenges in Egypt (ERMCE)’ was adopted under the EU Trust Fund for Africa with the goal to enhance Egypt’s migration management; address the root causes of irregular migration; and support Egyptian communities hosting migrants and refugees.⁹⁵ Italy’s Development Cooperation Agency has financially contributed to the Program, by providing € 6,000,000 for the Project ‘Multi-Educational Programme for Employment Promotion in Migration-affected areas’.⁹⁶

Finally, Egypt cooperates with the EU Agencies on different dimensions. In the domain of fight against irregular migration, Egypt is part of the Africa Frontex Intelligence Community and takes part in information exchange programmes and capacity building projects on border control (EUAA 2022). Moreover, in February 2020, it started a dialogue with the European Asylum Office (EASO) on potential developments of asylum legislation in line with international standards (ibid). A two-year Roadmap for Cooperation was started in this regard on 1 February 2021.

Overview of DEPMI in Egypt

	Italy-Egypt (2000-2021)		EU-Egypt broader cooperation framework
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	2007: <i>Readmission and Return Agreement</i>	\	
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	2000: <i>Police cooperation agreement</i>	Program in cooperation with IOM to implement awareness campaigns (€ 630,000)	-EU Egypt Partnership Priorities -Cooperation with FRONTEX -2017 EU Trust Fund for Africa, Enhancing the Response to Migration Challenges in Egypt (ERMCE)
	2009: <i>Memorandum of Understanding on bilateral cooperation to favor the containment of the migratory phenomenon of unaccompanied Egyptian minors</i>		
	2011: Resources and Equipment to Egyptian Police		
	2017: <i>Technical Agreement on Migration</i> – ITEPA Project and Center of International Training at the Egyptian Police Academy.		

⁹⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/06/20/joint-press-statement-9th-association-council-meeting-between-egypt-and-the-european-union/>

⁹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/north-africa/egypt/enhancing-response-migration-challenges-egypt-ermce_en

⁹⁶ <https://eutf.akvoapp.org/dir/project/8505>

Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	2000: <i>Police cooperation agreement</i>		-2017 EU TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA Enhancing the Response to Migration Challenges in Egypt (ERMCE)
Fight against Root Causes	\	Programs/Projects to address poverty, unemployment, lack of economic opportunities in order to reduce migration push factors	-2017 EU TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA Enhancing the Response to Migration Challenges in Egypt (ERMCE)
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	\	Projects to improve Egyptian Asylum systems and reception	EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities 2020-2021: Dialogue with EASO and launch of two RoadMaps
Legal Mobility	2005: <i>Agreement on cooperation in the domain of bilateral labour migration</i> 2010: <i>Framework Agreement for Cooperation</i> , scholarships for Egyptian Nationals 2011: <i>Memorandum of Understanding on migration and employment</i> 2004-2010: Preferential Treatment and Entry quotas for non-seasonal employment 2003-2020: Allowed to compete for seasonal employment quotas	Project, in cooperation with IOM, to support mobility and the encounter of demand and offer in the job market.	EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities
Visa			\
Political Dialogue	Migration as a key issue of high-level political dialogue in terms of mobility, border management and fight against irregular migration – interruption of dialogue due to diplomatic spat over the murder of Giulio Regeni		Migration as a key issue of high-level political dialogue in the context of the Association Council and of the Dialogue of migration, security and mobility launched in 2017

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COUNTRY PROFILE

Iraq



Matilde Rosina⁹⁷

Migration outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	Medium-high since 2014
Relevance as a country of transit	Low
Safe country of origin list ⁹⁸	No
Schengen Visa Exemption ⁹⁹	No

Migration from Iraq to Italy has intensified in recent years, as a result of the instability and conflict in the country.

Starting with **regular migration**, in 2015-2020, this was mainly for family reunification purposes (Fig. 1).¹⁰⁰ Specifically, while **family** reunification permits stood at 247 in 2017, study permits were just over 50 in the same year. As for work permits, these were especially low, averaging 14 per year in 2007-2020, and being in single-digit figures since 2017.

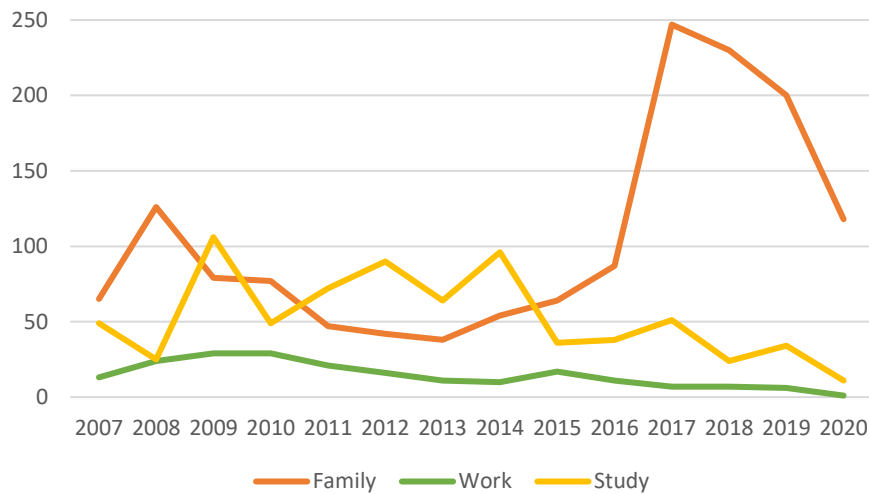
⁹⁷ DEPMI Researcher; Lecturer, London School of Economics and Political Science

⁹⁸ Decreto 4 ottobre 2019, Art 1, <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/10/07/19A06239/sg>.

⁹⁹ Regulation 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02018R1806-20210101>.

¹⁰⁰ Not considering here migration for asylum and humanitarian purposes. See Fig. 7.

Figure 18 Iraqi regular entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



Moving on to unauthorised migration to Italy, this has risen in recent years (Fig. 2). Iraqi **sea arrivals** particularly increased after 2013, experiencing a first peak in 2016-2017 (with over 1,400 yearly arrivals), and a second and more substantial one in 2021 (with over 2,500 landings). If Covid-19 may have contributed to limiting Iraqi arrivals in the first part of 2020 (February-June), the 2021 peak shows that the effect was short-lived (Figs. 3, 4). Iraqi sea migration to Italy tends to have a somewhat higher proportion of women (as compared to total sea arrivals), which may be explained by the greater presence of families (UNHCR 2017, 2021). Overall, in 2018-2021, Iraqis accounted for **between 2% and 8%** of sea arrivals to Italy (7% in 2018, 8% in 2019, 2% in 2020, 4% in 2021) (UNHCR 2018-2021).

Figure 19 Iraqi irregular arrivals to Italy via the Central Mediterranean Route, 2009-2021 (Source: author's elaboration on Frontex and UNHCR data)

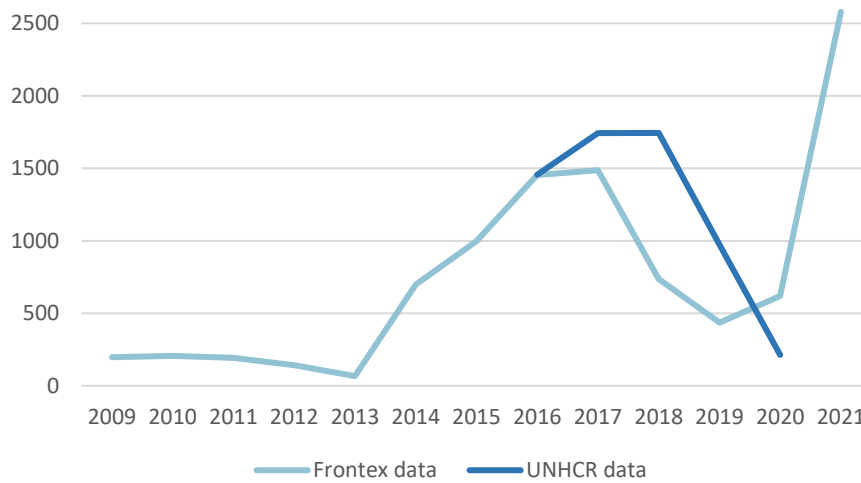


Figure 20 Iraqi irregular arrivals to Italy via the Central Mediterranean Route before and after Covid-19 (Source: author's elaboration on Frontex data)

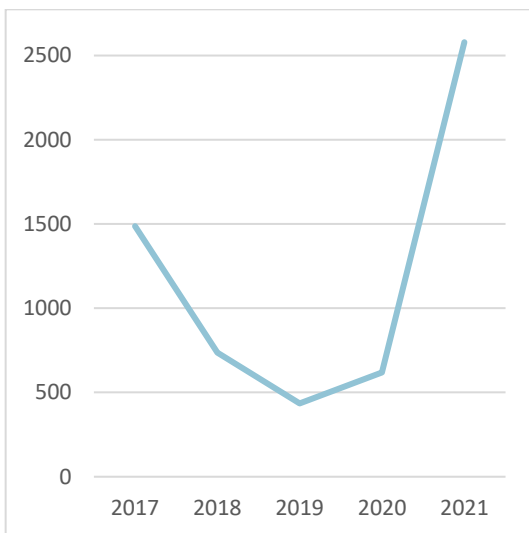
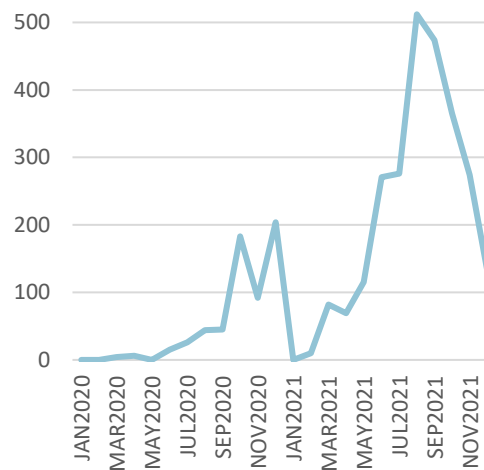


Figure 21 Impact of Covid-19 on irregular arrivals of Iraqis to Italy via Central Mediterranean Route (Source: author's elaboration on Frontex data)



Reflecting rising sea entries, Iraqi **asylum** applications increased after 2013, peaking at 1,650 in 2017 (Fig. 5). Their asylum recognition rate was very high, and increasing with time: 71% in 2008-2013, 87% in 2014-2020 (Fig. 6). Overall, the number of Iraqi citizens entering Italy for asylum and humanitarian reasons in 2007-2020

was substantially higher than that of Iraqis entering for any other purpose (including family, work, and study) (Fig. 7).

Figure 22 Iraqi asylum applications in Italy (1st time applicants), 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)

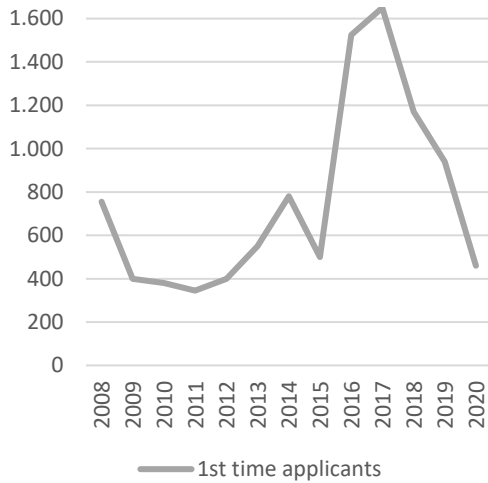


Figure 23 Outcome of Iraqi asylum applications in Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)

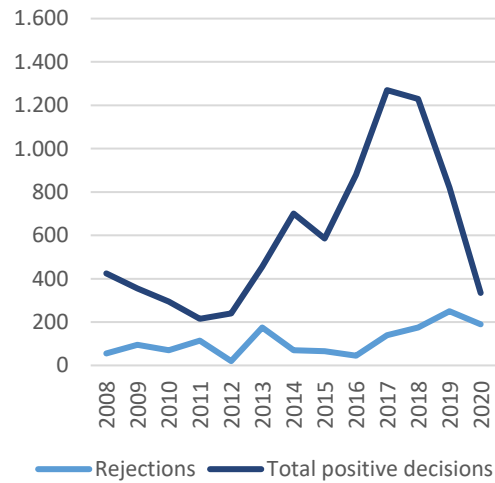
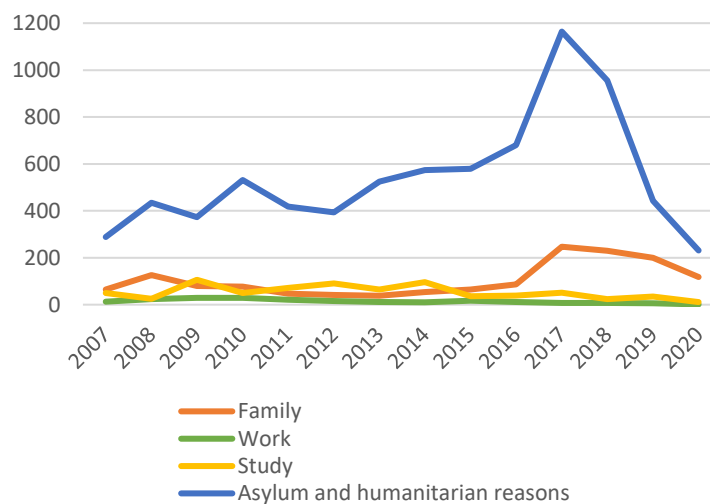


Figure 24 Iraqi entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



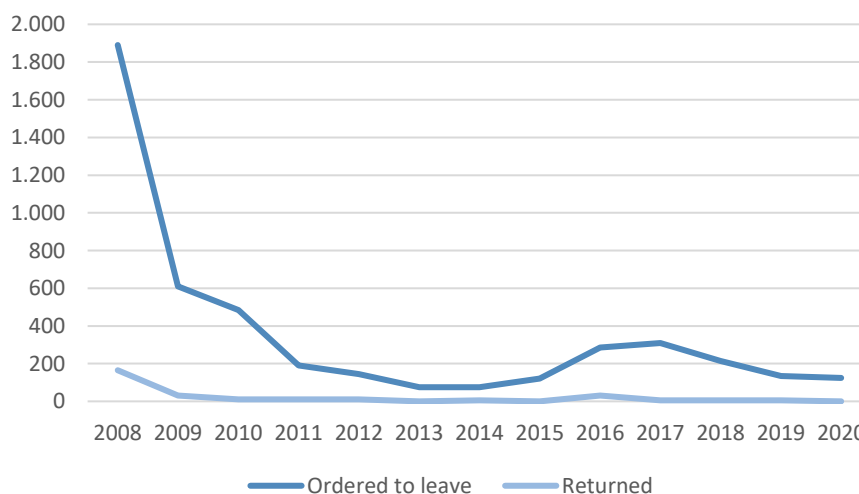
The rise of undocumented migration from Iraq parallels a situation of **instability and conflict** in the country of origin. Not only did the conflict with Daesh/ISIL lead to substantial displacement since 2014 (Italian Senate 2014: 182; 2016), but today most Iraqi sea arrivals are also ethnic Kurds, escaping ethnic discrimination and economic difficulties (UNHCR 2021). When it comes to the most recent increase (in 2021), this seems the result of a shift in Iraqi migration from the Greek land route to the Italian sea one, considered shorter and safer. Indeed, 97% of Iraqis arriving in Italy in 2021 departed from Turkey (UNHCR 2021).

Italy-Iraq cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Cooperation on migration-related issues between Italy and Iraq is limited. To begin with, neither Italy nor the EU have a **return** agreement with Iraq. It must be said however that the number of people ordered to return to the country is rather low: Despite some expulsion orders being issued in the late 2000s, both these and actual returns flattened since then, paralleling the unstable situation in the country (Fig. 8). In 2010-2020, a yearly average of 196 Iraqis were ordered to leave Italy, and a yearly average of 7 were effectively expelled.

Figure 25 Iraqis ordered to leave and returned by Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)



Since at least 2010, Iraq has never had reserved quotas in Italy's *Decreto Flussi*, and there are no humanitarian corridors or resettlement schemes between the two countries, to the best of our knowledge: Only few resettlements were conducted from Iraq to Italy over the years (4 in 2017) (UNHCR 2022b).

Finally, **political dialogue focused** on Iraq's emergency and reconstruction efforts, including through Italy's cooperation funds targeted at supporting internally displaced people and hosting communities.¹⁰¹

Bilateral development cooperation

Iraq is among the top 20 recipients of Italian development funds (being number 12, with €13 million provided in 2019) (MAECI 2020: 230).

In the 2000s, several projects targeted the **reconstruction** of the country, focusing on agriculture, water, cultural heritage, governance, and the private sector (Italian Senate 2011: 184). At that time, cooperation also increasingly focused on the humanitarian crisis for the over 3.5million **internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees from Iraq**, both in the country itself and in neighbouring states (primarily Jordan and Syria) (Italian Senate 2008: 98; 2009: 128).¹⁰²

With the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, and of the Iraqi conflict with the Islamic State in 2014, Italian development assistance incorporated such priorities. On one hand, following the Syrian crisis and flows of refugees into Iraq, several projects aimed to improve living conditions for both **Syrian refugees** and Iraqi hosting communities, including concerning employment opportunities, education, access to food and services.¹⁰³ On the other hand, since the conflict with the Islamic State, cooperation became increasingly targeted at helping the Iraqi authorities to address the emergency, including by supporting **Iraqi IDPs, returnees, and hosting communities**.¹⁰⁴

EU-Iraq cooperation as an additional framework to DEPMI

Cooperation on migration with Iraq is limited at the EU level too. In particular, there is no **return** agreement, and the Iraqi government has traditionally been reluctant to cooperate on readmissions, especially when forced (COM 2021/414: 1). The EU-wide effective return rate for Iraqis was on average 30%, in 2008-2020 (Fig. 9). Notably, expulsions to the country vary substantially by member state, with Germany for instance returning over 5,000 Iraqis in 2016, Malta returning none (Eurostat 2022). Overall, Iraq's reluctance to cooperate on

¹⁰¹ E.g., through a meeting of Italian vice-minister Sereni with Iraqi authorities in 2022 and with the Iraqi under-secretary for foreign affairs in 2021, encounters between the Italian and Iraqi foreign affairs ministers in 2021, and the visit of Italian vice-minister for foreign affairs Pistelli to Iraq in 2014 (MAECI 2022, 2021b, 2021a, 2014).

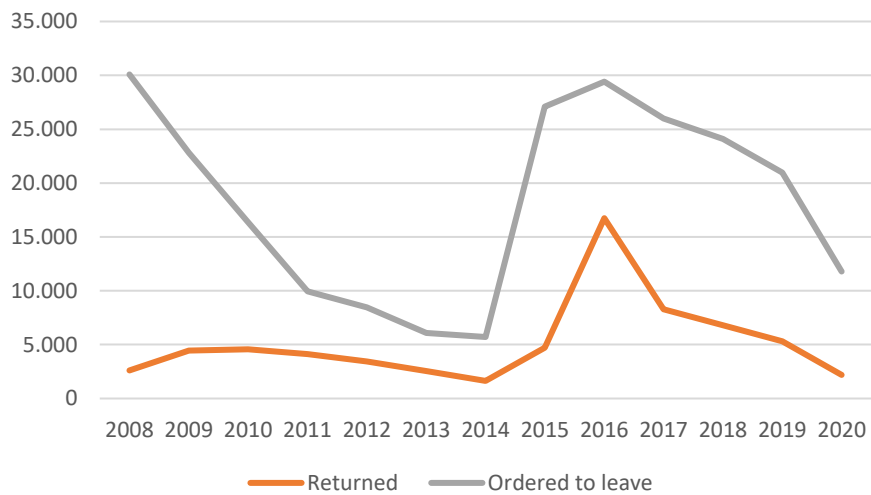
¹⁰² E.g., supporting UNHCR-UNICEF activities for Iraqi IDPs and refugees in Syria and Jordan (2007-2009) with €4.6m. Iraqi IDPs and refugees were 1.5million and 2million, respectively, between 2006 and 2009 (Italian Senate 2008: 98; 2009: 128).

¹⁰³ Including through a €4m intervention to protect and educate IDPs, refugees and returnees in Iraq (2021-2022), a €3m initiative to support vulnerable people, IDPs, refugees and returnees in Iraq (2019-2022), a €1m food assistance to IDPs and Syrian refugees in Iraq through cash transfers (2019), and a €1m project to ensure access to water and sanitation and prevent gender-based violence for IDPs and refugees (2019).

¹⁰⁴ Including through the €2.5m Emergency program in support of IDPs, refugees and hosting community in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and neighbouring areas (2017-2020), and the €1.8m Emergency Program in support of the Mosul Crisis (2017).

readmissions led the Commission to propose leveraging visas to ensure greater cooperation on the matter, in summer 2021 (COM 2021/414: 1; State Watch 2022, 2022b). Indeed, while in 2014-2017 the situation in Iraq was too unstable, in 2018, establishing a migration dialogue with the country (including on returns) became one of the key objectives of the EU Strategy for Iraq (European Court of Auditors 2021: 18).

Figure 26 Iraqis ordered to leave and returned by EU27, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat 2022)



Overview of DEPMI in Iraq

	Italy-Iraq (2000-2020)		EU-Iraq
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	/	/	EU aiming to increase returns.
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	/	/	/
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	/	/	/
Fight against Root Causes	/	/	
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	/	Support to Syrian refugees and Iraqi IDPs, returnees, and host communities.	
Legal Mobility	/	Scholarships for Iraqi students and diplomats.	
Visa	/	/	Commission proposed leveraging visas to enhance returns.
Political Dialogue	Often focused on emergency and reconstruction.		

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DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Lebanon



Matilde Rosina¹⁰⁵

Migration outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	Low
Relevance as a country of transit	Low – However, arrivals from Lebanon to Italy were recorded in 2022 for the first time and a new route Lebanon-Italy seems to be emerging
Safe country of origin list ¹⁰⁶	No
Schengen Visa Exemption ¹⁰⁷	No

Lebanon is among the top receivers of refugee flows globally. Yet, it does not in itself originate substantial migration to Italy.

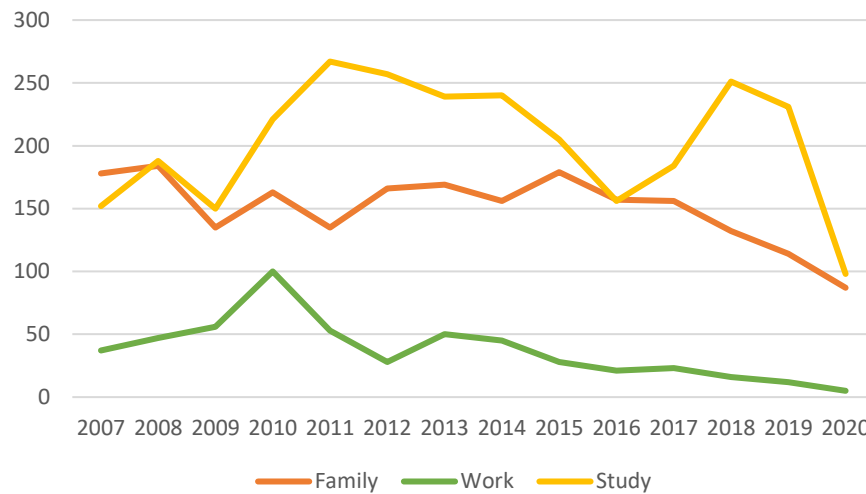
Considering regular migration, most movements from Lebanon to Italy are for **study** purposes, followed by family reunification and work (Fig. 1). Indeed, yearly study permits fluctuated between 150 and 270 in 2007-2019, for an average of 211. By contrast, family reunification and (especially) work entries were more limited in 2007-2019, being on average 156 and 40, respectively. In 2020, entries for all purposes (study, family reunification, work) dropped, most likely due to the Covid-19 lockdowns and mobility restrictions.

¹⁰⁵ DEPMI Researcher; Lecturer London School of Economics and Political Science

¹⁰⁶ Decreto 4 ottobre 2019, Art 1, <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/10/07/19A06239/sg>.

¹⁰⁷ Regulation 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02018R1806-20210101>.

Figure 27 Lebanese regular entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



Irregular migration from Lebanon to Italy is limited. Lebanese sea arrivals via the Central Mediterranean route were extremely low in 2009-2020, averaging 4 per year (Fig. 2). Landings went up to 84 in 2021, but even this number is very low when compared to other nationalities. Similarly, few Lebanese citizens were found irregularly staying in Italy in 2008-2020: 45 in 2008, and only 5 in 2020 (Fig. 3). Because of the low numbers of Lebanese migration to Italy, it is not possible to appreciate any substantial impact of **Covid-19** on such flows. In line with these considerations, Lebanon has never played a role as a transit country to Italy. However, UNHCR figures for 2022 suggest that a new route of irregular migration Lebanon-Italy via Mediterranean Sea might be emerging in the near future. Between January and September 2022, 1,323 migrants embarked from Lebanon to Italy on a route never been popular in the last years (UNHCR 2022).

Figure 28 Lebanese irregular arrivals to Italy via the Central Mediterranean Route, 2009-2021 (Source: author's elaboration on Frontex data)

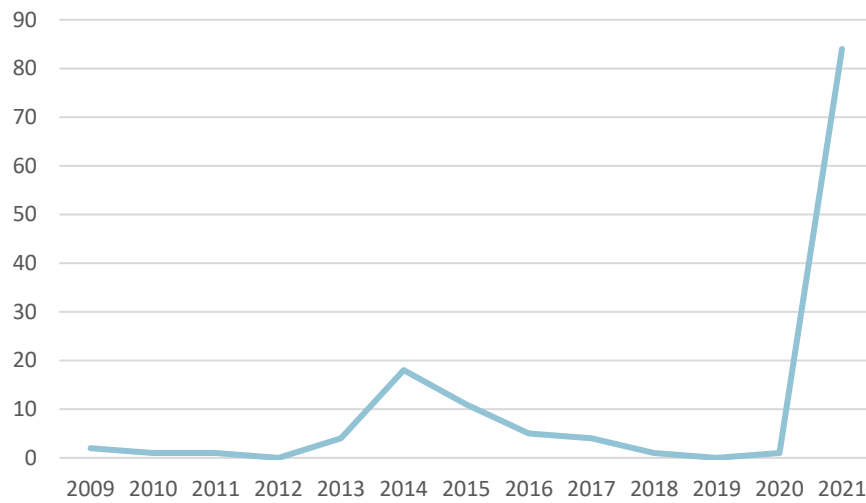
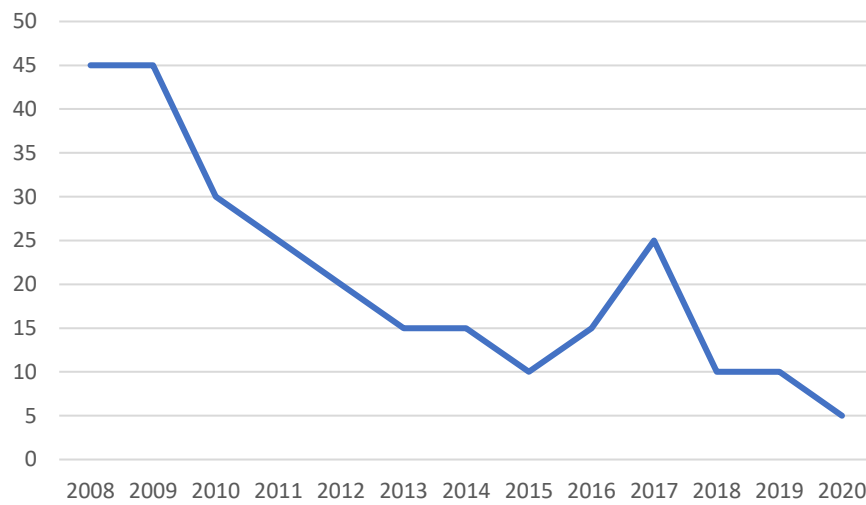


Figure 29 Lebanese irregularly staying in Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)



In parallel to the above, yearly Lebanese **asylum** applications have remained low in the last decade. They fluctuated between 40 and 75 in 2008-2017 (for an average of 59), and have dropped below 40 since 2018 (reaching their lowest point in 2020 with 10 applications) (Fig. 4). Importantly however, most applications were accepted in 2008-2020: total positive decisions were consistently higher than rejections (except for 2008, 2009 and 2015), for an average recognition rate of 74% (Fig. 5). Overall, entries for asylum and humanitarian reasons roughly paralleled the number of work entries (and were thus lower than study and family reunification entries) (Fig. 6).

Figure 30 Lebanese asylum applications in Italy (1st time applicants), 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)

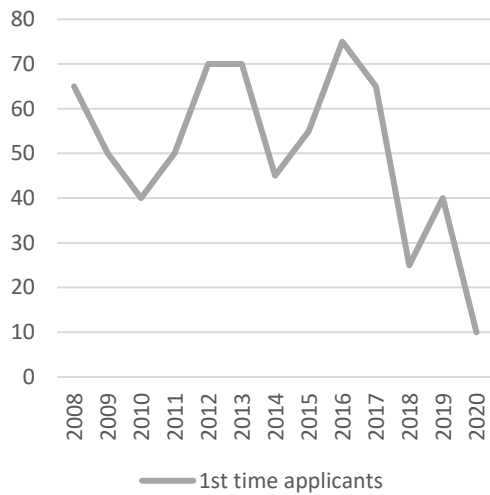


Figure 31 Outcome of Lebanese asylum applications in Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)

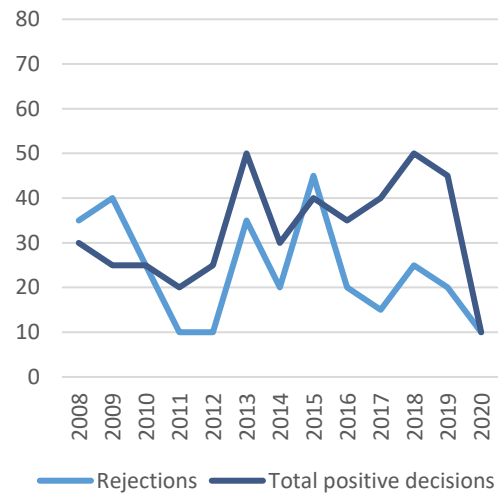
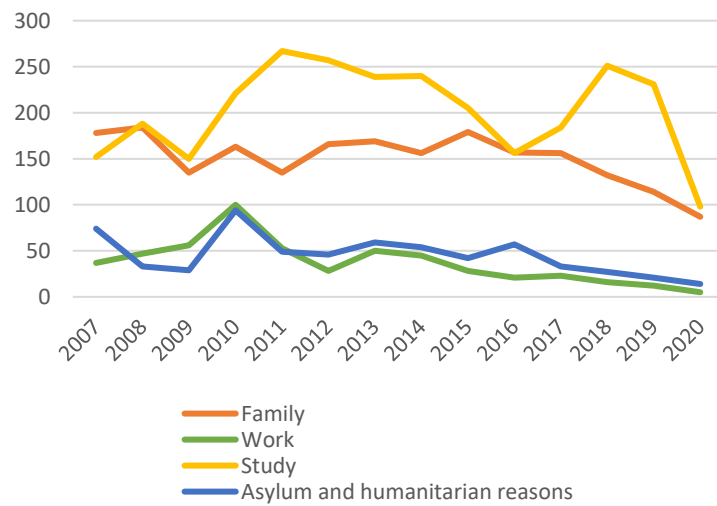


Figure 32 Lebanese entries in Italy by reason, 2007-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)



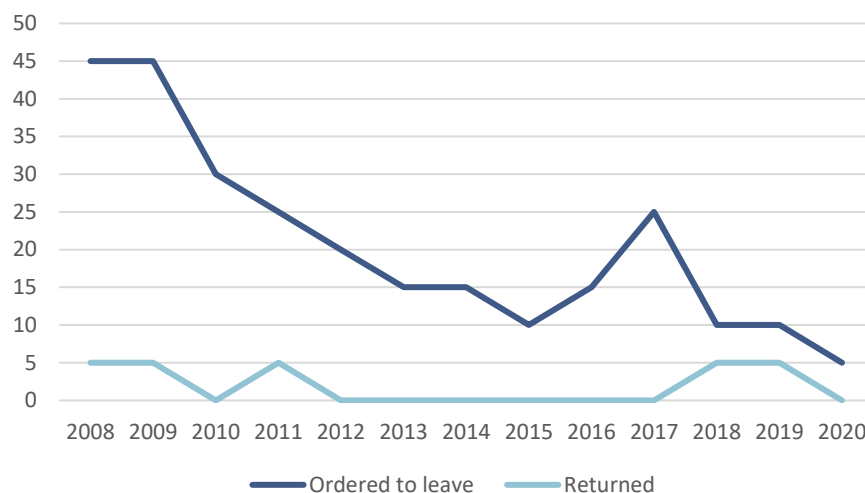
Italy-Lebanon cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Cooperation on migration-related issues between Italy and Lebanon is limited. As an example, Italy does not have a **return** agreement with the country, and Lebanon did not have reserved quotas in Italy's *Decreto Flussi* in the last decade.

Focusing on return figures, the number of Lebanese sanctioned to expulsion in 2008-2020 was very low, and mostly decreasing: from 45 in 2008, to 5 in 2020 (Fig. 7). The number perfectly matches that of Lebanese found irregularly staying in Italy (Fig. 3), suggesting that all those apprehended were issued an expulsion order. When it comes to enforced expulsions, however, for several years, no returns to Lebanon were conducted by Italy: these stood at 0 in 2010, 2012-2017, and 2020 (Fig. 7).

Figure 33 Lebanese ordered to leave and returned by Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat data)



Importantly, **humanitarian corridors** were launched in 2016, enabling refugees in Lebanon to be resettled to Italy. As of May 2022, they enabled 2,330 people (mainly Syrians) to reach Italy legally and apply for asylum there (Community of St Egidio 2022). The existence of humanitarian corridors with Lebanon reflects the fact that the country hosts the highest number of refugees per capita at the global level (UNHCR n.d.).

Political dialogue between Italy and Lebanon has often focused on the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, its economy and social cohesion. Given the continuing civil conflict in Syria, such aspects were addressed

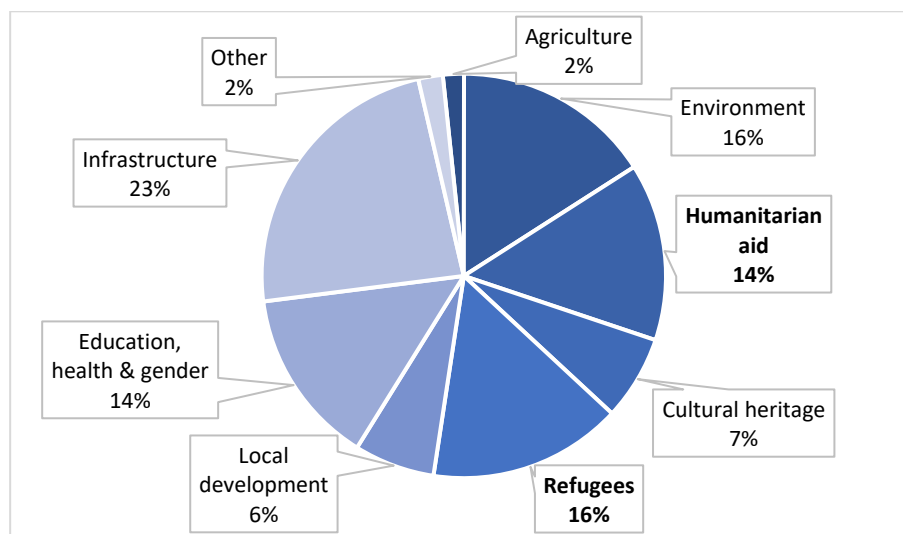
repeatedly over the last decade, including at meetings between ministers,¹⁰⁸ at consultations with religious authorities,¹⁰⁹ and during visits of refugee camps by Italian politicians.¹¹⁰

Bilateral development cooperation

Lebanon is the 4th top recipient of Italian development funds, having received €22.8 million in 2019 (MAECI 2020: 230). In turn, as of 2011, Italy was the second largest European donor for Lebanon (after France) (Italian Senate 2011: 169).

As of 2014, Italian development cooperation in Lebanon largely focused on environmental protection (16%), education, health, and gender aspects (14%), and infrastructure improvement (23%) (Fig. 8). Supporting refugees and providing humanitarian aid were also key priorities, each accounting for roughly **15%** of the overall funds.

Figure 34 Italian development cooperation in Lebanon as of September 2014 (Source: Author's elaboration on Italian Senate 2014: 177)



As a matter of fact, Lebanon has hosted **large refugee populations** over the last decades: Palestinian first, Syrian then (since 2012). As of 2011, 270,000 Palestinian refugees were in Lebanon, of whom 62% in 12 refugee camps managed by UNRWA (Italian Senate 2011: 169). By 2014, over 1.5m Syrian refugees were

¹⁰⁸ Such as the one between Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Terzi and the Lebanese Prime Minister Mikati in 2012, and between Foreign Affairs Minister Di Maio and his Lebanese correspondent Bassil in 2019 ([MAECI 2012](#), [2019](#)).

¹⁰⁹ Including when Foreign Affairs Minister Gentiloni met Cardinal Rai, Patriarch of the Maronite Church in 2015 (MAECI 2015).

¹¹⁰ Such as in the occasion of the visit of Foreign Affairs Minister Mogherini to Palestinian and Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon in 2014 (MAECI 2014).

estimated to have arrived in the country, representing over a fourth of the country's residents (Italian Senate 2014: 175).¹¹¹

In the 2000s, several large projects thus aimed to improve living conditions for **Palestine** refugees in Lebanon. These included projects to reconstruct refugee camps, reform the Lebanese healthcare system, and support the education and integration of Palestinian children.¹¹² Overall, in 2007-2013, Italian development cooperation provided Lebanon with over €20m to support Palestinian refugees (Italian Senate 2013: 313),

In 2013, the first projects for **Syrian refugees** were launched, rapidly increasing in number and scope. Such programs covered issues ranging from raising (skilled and unskilled) employment¹¹³ and enhancing education,¹¹⁴ to ensuring access to healthcare and food.¹¹⁵ A few projects targeted female migrants specifically.¹¹⁶ In 2012-2013, €11.2m were approved to help Lebanon address the repercussions of the Syrian emergency (Italian Senate 2013: 313).

Interestingly, most Italian projects addressing the humanitarian emergency in Lebanon did not only target refugees, but Lebanese **hosting communities** too. This was the case in the 2000s, when Palestinians were the refugee population of greatest concern, but also in the 2010s, when these were mainly Syrians. Aiming to limit the repercussions of the refugee inflows on the Lebanese economy and to reduce local tensions, the approach was praised by the international community (Italian Senate 2014: 175-6; 2010: 174; 2012: 211).

EU-Lebanon cooperation as an additional framework to DEPMI

The EU, just like Italy, does not have a return agreement with Lebanon, nor a visa facilitation mechanism. Looking at data, ordered and actual expulsions of Lebanese by EU member states are slightly higher than those by Italy, though still limited (Fig. 9). Enforced expulsions stood between roughly 200 and 600 per year in 2008-2020, with the only exception of 2016, when they reached 1,135. The average effective return rate was 29%, in 2008-2020.

¹¹¹ To this, we must add the roughly 60,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria (Italian Senate 2014: 175).

¹¹² Respectively: a €5m seven-year project to reconstruct the Nahr el Bared refugee camp (2008-2014), a €1m and a €860,000 project to strengthen the education and integration of Palestinian children in camps (2010-17).

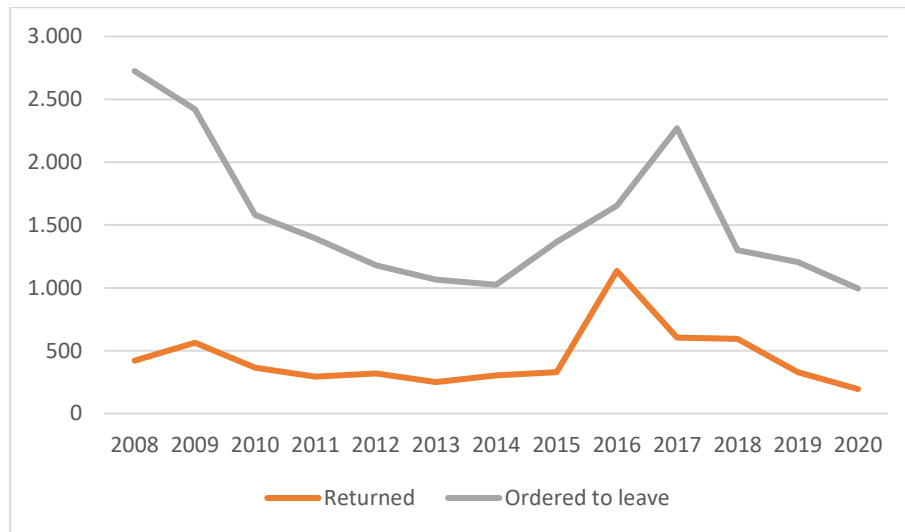
¹¹³ See for instance the 'Resilience and social stability: creating employment opportunities' project, with Phase I targeting unskilled refugees and Lebanese (€2.5m, 2017), and Phase II targeting skilled populations (€4m, 2019-2022).

¹¹⁴ Such as through the School Food Program in 2019 and 2020 (€2m each), and a €8.9m project to educate and protect Syrian refugees and hosting communities (divided into two phases: 2018, and 2019-2022).

¹¹⁵ Including through the €5.7m program 'HoPE - Health, Protection and Education for vulnerable refugees and hosting communities in Lebanon' (2019-2022), the €3.5m 'Supporting refugees through secondary healthcare in Lebanon (Phase 4)' (2021), a €2m project to ensure water access to refugees in informal settlements (2019), and a €1.5m program to enhance refugees' resilience by strengthening access to services (2017).

¹¹⁶ For instance, the €1.8m project 'Securing Women Migration Cycle' to assist, protect and return migrant women in Lebanon, with a focus on Ethiopia (2018-21), and the €450,000 project WOMen Rights in Lebanon for Development WORLD (2014-17).

Figure 35 Lebanese ordered to leave and returned by EU27, 2008-2020 (Source: author's elaboration on Eurostat 2022)



Overview of DEPMI in Lebanon

	Italy-Lebanon (2000-2020)		EU-Lebanon
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	/	/	/
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	/	/	/
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	/	/	/
Fight against Root Causes	/	/	
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	Humanitarian corridors: 2,330 resettlements in 2016-2022	Projects to support Palestinian and Syrian refugee in Lebanon, as well as hosting communities.	
Legal Mobility	/	Scholarships	/
Visa	/	/	/
Political Dialogue	Focused on the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, its economy and social cohesion		

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DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Libya



Matilde Rosina¹¹⁷

Migration outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	Low
Relevance as a country of transit	High
Safe country of origin list ¹¹⁸	No
Schengen Visa Exemption ¹¹⁹	No

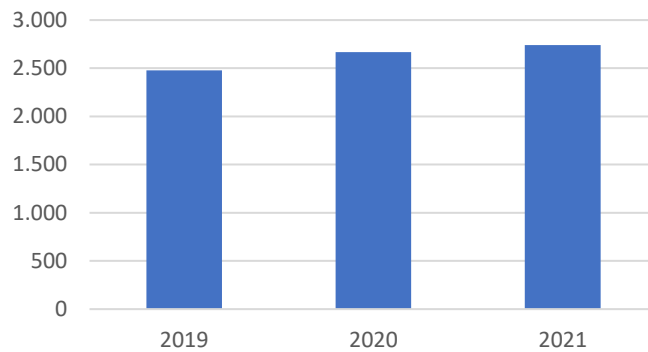
Libya is a key transit country for migration to Italy. Its relevance as a country of origin is however contained. Indeed, although data on entry permits granted to Libyans is not publicly available, ISTAT figures show that, in 2019-2021, only roughly 2,500 Libyans **resided** in Italy (Fig. 1).

¹¹⁷ DEPMI Researcher, Lecturer, London School of Economics and Political Sciences

¹¹⁸ Decreto 4 ottobre 2019, Art 1, <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/10/07/19A06239/sg>.

¹¹⁹ Regulation 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02018R1806-20210101>.

Figure 36 Libyans residing in Italy, 2019-2021 (Source: author's elaboration on ISTAT data)

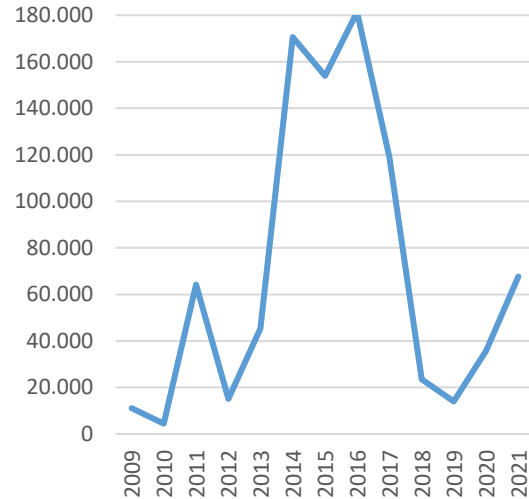


When it comes to **irregular migration**, however, Libya is a key gateway for sub-Saharan African migrants on the way to Italy and Europe, travelling along the so-called 'Central Mediterranean Route' (Fig. 2, 3).

Figure 37 The Central Mediterranean Route (UNHCR 2017: 1)



Figure 38 Sea arrivals via the Central Mediterranean Route, all nationalities (Source: author's elaboration on Frontex data)



As a matter of fact, vast part of the people who landed in Italy over the last few years passed through Libya. At the height of the migratory flows to Italy (2016-2017), for instance, over 90% of departures were from Libya (Figs. 4, 5). Although the proportion fell somewhat in later years (reaching 47% in 2021), it is still of key significance, as Libya was consistently the **main point of departure** for migrants crossing the Central Mediterranean Route in 2016-2021 (with the sole exception of 2020) (UNHCR 2016-2021).

Figure 39 Sea arrivals to Italy via the Central Mediterranean route, and via Libya (Source: author's elaboration on Frontex and UNHCR data)

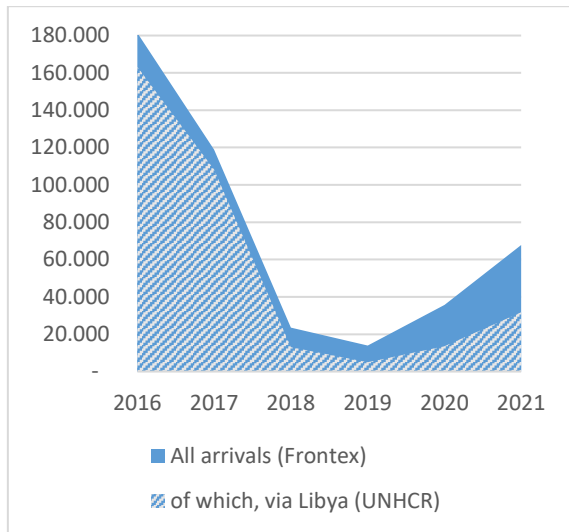
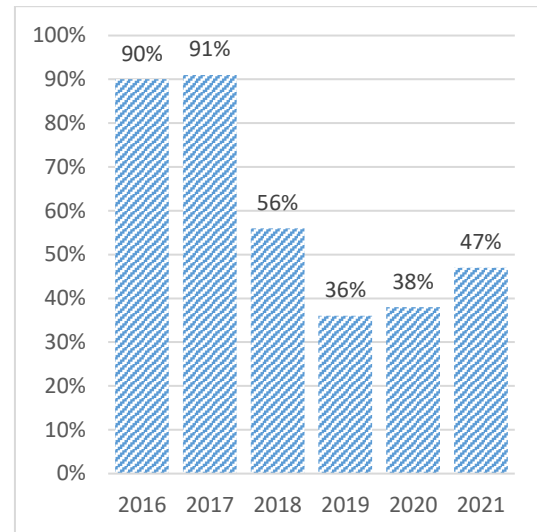
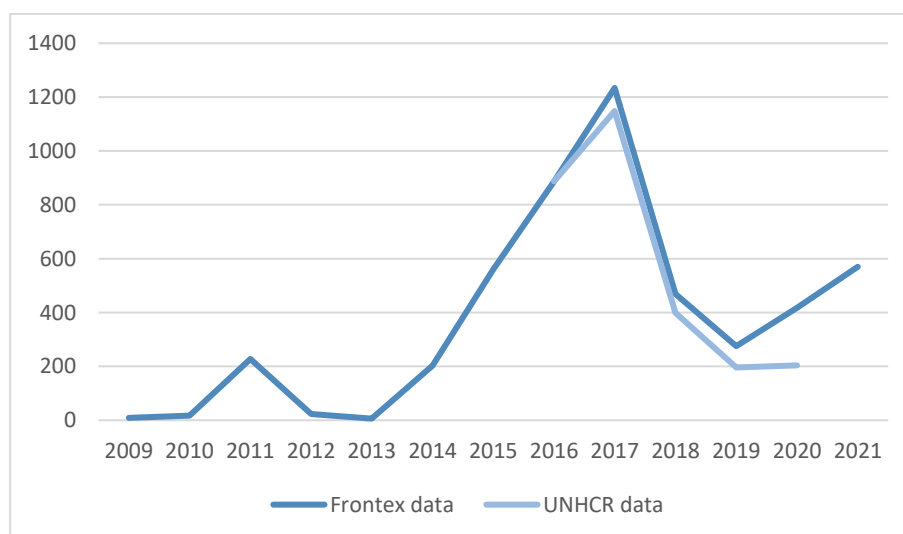


Figure 40 Proportion of sea arrivals in Italy, who departed from Libya (Source: author's elaboration on UNHCR data)



While Libya has been a key transit country for irregular migration to Italy, **Libyans** themselves have made up only small numbers of arrivals (Fig. 6). Libyan nationals indeed reached the maximum number of arrivals in 2017, when they were 1,234. After that year, their number dropped (likely due to the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding, and of **Covid-19** lockdown in spring 2020), reaching 570 in 2021.

Figure 41 Libyan irregular arrivals to Italy via the Central Mediterranean Route, 2009-2021 (Source: author's elaboration on Frontex and UNHCR data)



In parallel to figures on sea landings, **asylum** requests by Libyans saw a spike in 2011, and then again after 2014 (Fig. 7). In both 2011 and 2017, applications for international protection thus amounted to over 400. This is a high number for Libyan standards, but rather low when compared to other nationalities - such as the almost 25,000 asylum requests lodged by Nigerian citizens in Italy in 2017 (Eurostat 2022). The two spikes in applications parallel Libya’s growing instability in 2011 and post-2014, as confirmed by the growing number of positive decisions (Fig. 8).

Figure 42 Libyan asylum applications in Italy (1st time applicants), 2008-2020 (Source: author’s elaboration on Eurostat data)

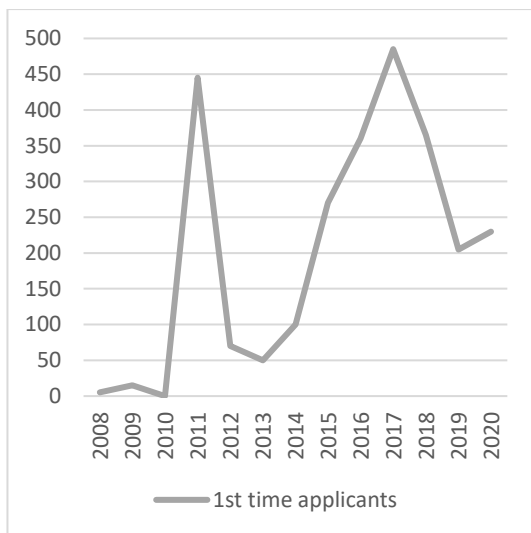
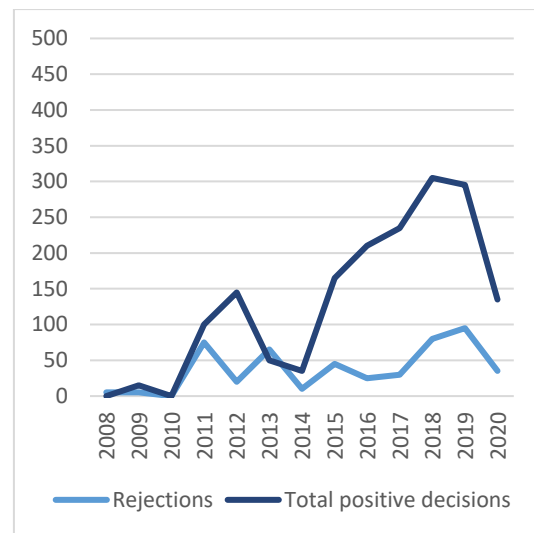


Figure 43 Outcome of Libyan asylum applications in Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author’s elaboration on Eurostat data)



Overall, migration from and through Libya is related primarily to the **instability** of the country in recent years. Indeed, before 2011, Libya was the main destination country for migrants in North Africa.¹²⁰ Following the 2011 Arab Spring and post-2014 civil conflict, however, not only did migrants in the country find themselves forced to leave, due to the increasing insecurity and the frequent abuses by local militias, but foreigners who would have moved to Libya also had to look for an alternative destination (Rosina 2022: 145-6). The increasing instability of the country also facilitated the emergence of smuggling routes through its territory.

If we focus on the drop in landings post-2017, we can see that it parallels the signing of the Italy-Libya Memorandum of Understanding of February 2017, after which, arrivals from Libya dropped to just over 5,000

¹²⁰ Libya had a welcoming stance towards African immigration for years, until at least late 2006, when it started requiring residence permits (Italian Senate 2007: 72).

in 2019 (Fig. 4). Of note, however, is that migration from Libya has gone up again since then, reaching almost 32,000 in 2021, despite the Memorandum still being in place. Once again, this signals how conditions in countries of origin and transit significantly shape migration, regardless of restrictive measures in place.

Italy-Libya cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Italy-Libya cooperation on migration began in 2000, and has since then incorporated a wide range of agreements and tools. The two most significant agreements are the **2008 Friendship Treaty** (a wide-ranging deal signed by Berlusconi and Gaddafi, including border control provisions), and the **2017 Memorandum of Understanding** (a migration-centred agreement signed by Minniti and Serraj, targeted at reducing undocumented migration to Italy).¹²¹

Through the above and other agreements, the toolkit of the External Dimension of Italian Migration Policy (DEPMI- Italian acronym) in Libya includes several instruments. To begin with, several agreements focused on enhancing **border control**, reducing irregular migration, and fighting against smuggling and trafficking, particularly along Libyan maritime borders. To that end, starting from an exchange of information on smuggling and undocumented migration (2000 Agreement on Terrorism, Drugs and Migration), cooperation has evolved to include the **training** of Libyan officers (2007 Additional Protocol, 2017 Memorandum of Understanding), the provision of **equipment** (2003 Migration Cooperation Agreement, 2017 Memorandum of Understanding), the transfer of **vessels** (2007 Protocol and Additional Protocol, 2009 Protocol, 2019-2021-2022 Notes on the transfer of vessels), and the organisation of **joint patrols** of Libyan waters (2007 Protocol, 2008 Friendship Treaty). Concerning the joint patrols, following the 2008 Friendship Treaty, Italy in fact returned migrants and refugees intercepted at sea back to Libya (conducting so-called ‘**pushbacks**’), an action for which it was condemned and sanctioned by the European Court of Human Rights (2012). On top of measures to control Libya’s maritime borders, agreement was reached to strengthen control along the country’s **Southern land borders** (including through an EU-funded satellite detection mechanism - 2007 Protocol, 2008 Friendship Treaty, 2017 Memorandum of Understanding), and to enhance its **reception centres**, through Italian and EU funds (2003 Migration Cooperation Agreement, 2017 Memorandum of Understanding).

¹²¹ Agreements, in chronological order: 2000 Agreement on Terrorism, drugs and migration; 2003 Migration cooperation agreement (unpublished); 2006 Memorandum of understanding on irregular migration (unpublished); 2007 Protocol and Additional protocol (operationalising the 2000 Agreement); 2008 Friendship Treaty; 2009 Executive protocol (unpublished); 2017 Memorandum of Understanding.

Although no formal Italian (or EU) **return agreement** was signed with Libya, it seems that this was agreed **informally** (verbally) in the early 2000s, and there is evidence of Italy returning migrants to Libya in 2004-2006 (Paoletti 2010). Today, repatriations remain a key part of the cooperation between the two countries, being enshrined in the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding, which aims to enhance migrants’ return to countries of origin (art. 2:5). When it comes to Libyan nationals specifically, the numbers of those ordered to leave and returned are quite low, amounting to a yearly average of 151 and 15, respectively, in 2008-2020, with an (average) **effective return rate** of 10% (Fig. 9).

Figure 44 Libyans ordered to leave and returned by Italy, 2008-2020 (Source: author’s elaboration on Eurostat data)



Adding to the above, Italy is and has been involved in a range of military **missions** in Libya, many of which include migration control as a (direct or indirect) objective. At the national level, Italy launched in 2015 Mare Sicuro Operation (OMS). The operation’s goal is to ensure the monitoring and security of the Central Mediterranean Sea and, since 2018, it has included tasks of support and training to the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy, to fight irregular migration and migrant smuggling (MoD 2018).¹²² Italy has also been involved in EU and NATO missions in the country (more on this below).

While most agreements focus on irregular migration, some efforts were made to support **legal migration** pathways. Indeed, several scholarship schemes for Libyans were launched (see below), and in two instances

¹²² Italy has also been involved in Operation Ippocrate (2017-2018) and MIASIT (2018-) to provide sanitary and humanitarian support to Libya. See https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/op_ippocrate/Pagine/default.aspx and https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/Libia_Missione_bilaterale_di_supporto_e_assistenza/Pagine/default.aspx.

Italy and Libya agreed to facilitate **visa** procedures (2000 and 2009 MoU on Visa). Furthermore, in 2017-2020, 967 asylum seekers were **resettled** from Libya to Italy (UNHCR 2021). Evacuations were suspended in 2020 but resumed in late 2021, when 93 asylum seekers were brought to Italy (ibid). This is part of a new scheme in the context of Italy's 'humanitarian corridors', under which 500 asylum seekers will be resettled from Libya to Italy in 2022 (ibid; Community of St Egidio 2022; MoI 2021).

Finally, in terms of **political dialogue**, this has continued throughout the 2000s and 2010s, spanning political parties (in Italy) and regimes (in Libya), and being often centred on migration issues. During the Arab Spring, cooperation was suspended, but it was soon resumed in 2012 following the Tripoli Declaration with the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC), and the meeting between the respective interior ministers. Political dialogue has continued since then, including through the 2013 meetings between the Italian Minister of the Interior and the Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs, and between the respective Military Heads of Defence, the 2014 discussion between the Italian and Libyan interior ministers, and 2020 phone calls between the Italian and Libyan Government of National Accord ministers of foreign affairs (UFTDU, n.d.; XVIII L. 2020 n. 6: 9-10).

Overall, Italy's DEPMI toolkit in Libya involves a variety of instruments targeted at enhancing border control, reducing irregular migration, and fighting against smuggling and trafficking. These include training the Coast Guard and providing vessels and equipment, funding detection systems and reception centres in Libya, and cooperating on returns. Italy is also actively engaged in Libya through several military missions, and has continuous political dialogue with the Libyan counterparts. More recently, some resettlement schemes have been launched, though numbers are still limited.

Bilateral development cooperation

Receiving the first development funds from Italy in 2000, Libya is today among the top-20 beneficiaries of such schemes: In 2019, the country ranked 16th by allocated funds, having been assigned €6.7million (although only €3.3million were eventually provided, as further discussed below) (Italian Senate 2001: 154; MAECI 2020: 229).

In the early 2000s, Italian support in Libya was targeted at enhancing agriculture and medical services (Italian Senate 2008: 110) and, until 2010, very few development projects mentioned migration-related goals. The 2011 Arab Spring re-oriented Italian development cooperation resources, to respond to the humanitarian needs and adapt to the new context (Italian Senate 2011: 132). Initiatives in Libya thus focused on addressing the emergency, including by providing healthcare and psycho-social support.¹²³ Yet, the country's **instability**

¹²³ E.g., through a €1.3m initiative to address the socio-sanitary emergency in Libya (2012-2013), and a €1.5m program to support minors affected by conflict-driven traumas (2011-2014).

often made initiatives hard to implement (Italian Senate 2018: 25), and several projects were either delayed or never started (based on Italian Senate reports, esp. 2010-2012). In 2014-2015, reports by the Italian Senate on development cooperation dedicated only little space to the country.

Substantial attention to Libya, particularly as related to migration issues, emerged however soon thereafter. In 2017, the €200m **Fondo Africa** was created, targeting 13 African countries of key importance for migratory routes to Italy (Legge di Bilancio 2017, art. 1 comma 621; ActionAid 2017: 5). Libya was identified as a country of crucial concern, and received 30% of the funds (as the 2nd largest receiver after Niger) (ActionAid 2017: 9). The Fund contributed to three large-scale projects on **migrant support** and **migration management** in Libya: (1) an €18m program to support the IOM in conducting assisted voluntary returns from Libya, providing information and assistance to migrants in need, and supporting local communities; (2) a €10m initiative to help Libyan authorities improve border and migration management; and (3) a €10m project to expand the UNHCR's role in Libya, including by improving detention centres' conditions.

As the above well-exemplifies, migration-related development cooperation in Libya included both projects meant to support migrants, and initiatives to enhance migration management. To provide some further examples, on one hand, projects to aid migrants included initiatives to support them in detention centres,¹²⁴ and to enhance access to food and services.¹²⁵ Programs to enhance migration management, on the other hand, included training for Libyan officials,¹²⁶ as well as funds to support assisted voluntary returns.¹²⁷

Funding also targeted the **education** sector. In 2002-2007, for instance, a €4m project was implemented to support Libyan students. In 2019, Libya was the first Middle Eastern country by number of scholarships assigned by the Italian government (with 450 scholarships for academic year 2019/2020) (MAECI 2020: 157).

Overall, in 2017-19, Italian development cooperation in Libya amounted to roughly €42m (Italian Senate 2019: 27). Targeted areas included both migrant support, and migration management.

¹²⁴ E.g., a €2m *Emergency program to improve the living conditions of migrant populations in the centres of Tarek al Sika, Tarek al Matr and Tajoura in Libya* (2017-2020), an €8m *Emergency initiative aimed at improving the living conditions of migrants and refugees gathered in Libyan centres and host communities* by supporting NGO-run projects (2018).

¹²⁵ E.g., a €3.5m initiative to support the World Food Programme in Libya for children, IDPs and migrants (2020-21).

¹²⁶ E.g., the €36,663 project SEA DEMM ("see them") - SEA and DEsert Migration Management for Libyan authorities to rescue migrants (2017), and €7,227 training for Libyan officials (2017).

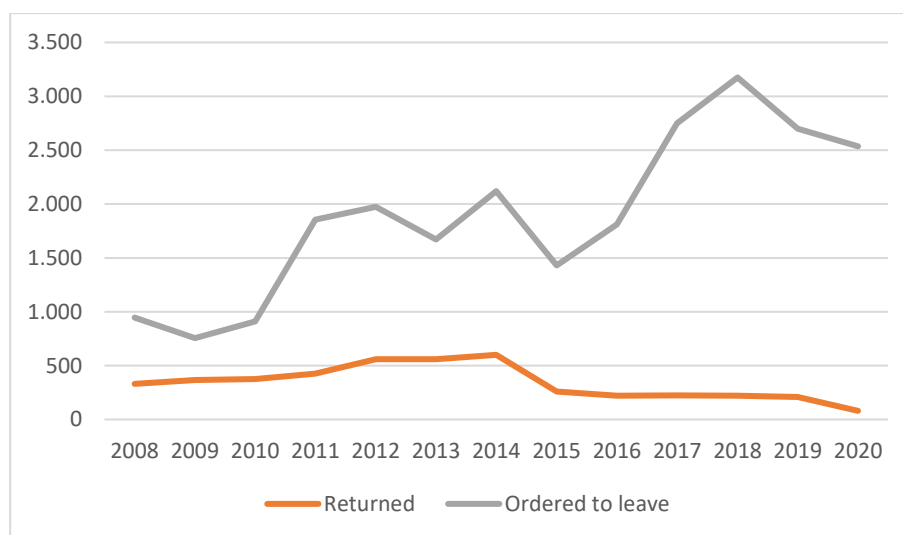
¹²⁷ E.g., in the context of a €3m program to support the EU-IOM partnership and conduct assisted voluntary returns from Libya to third countries (2016-2019).

EU-Libya Cooperation as an additional framework for DEPMI

Libya’s engagement with supranational institutions such as the EU has fluctuated through time.

First, it is worth recalling that no EU **readmission** agreement was signed with Libya. Although some returns are carried out, the average EU effective return rate for Libyan nationals has dropped overtime, in parallel to the worsening security situation in the country: Starting from 41% in 2008-2010, the effective return rate decreased to 26% in 2011-2015, and further dropped to 8% in 2016-2020 (Fig. 10).

Figure 45 Libyans ordered to leave and returned by EU27, 2008-2020 (Source: author’s elaboration on Eurostat 2022)



EU agencies (and particularly Frontex) have been involved in cooperation with Libya. Frontex was for instance involved in the training of Libyan Border Guards (e.g., in a 3-week course in SAR and law enforcement for Libyan officers in Ostia, Italy, in 2019).¹²⁸ Back in 2006, Frontex was also authorised to negotiate a Working Arrangement with Libya,¹²⁹ which however does not seem to have been agreed upon.

Several multilateral **missions** have targeted Libya. At the EU level, these include EU NAVFOR MED Sophia and Irini, and EUBAM. EU NAVFOR MED Sophia (2015-2020) was specifically targeted at disrupting migrant smuggling and trafficking in the Central Mediterranean Sea.¹³⁰ Since 2016, it also contributed to the training

¹²⁸ See: <https://prd.frontex.europa.eu/document/law-enforcement-and-sar-training-in-ostia/>

¹²⁹ See: <https://prd.frontex.europa.eu/wp-content/themes/template/templates/cards/1/dialog.php?card-post-id=2722&document-post-id=7987>

¹³⁰ See: <https://www.operationsophia.eu/>

of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy, and to the UN arms embargo off Libyan coasts. Its successor EU NAVFOR MED IRINI (2020-) was established to enforce the arms embargo and to control oil exports from Libya, as well as to continue the training of the Libyan Coast Guard and the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking.¹³¹ Finally, the EU Border Assistance Mission in Lybia (EUBAM Lybia) (2013-2023) has been aimed at enhancing border management and security in Libya (EEAS 2021). At the international level, NATO Unified Protector mission in Libya back in 2011 aimed to enforce the arms embargo and the no-fly zone (MoD 2015). According to NATO (2011), the mission's maritime assets contributed to rescuing over 600 migrants at sea (see also Smith-Windsor 2013).¹³²

Finally, **EU-Libyan political dialogue** aimed at supporting a resolution of the Libyan civil conflict has been ongoing. When it comes to migration, the first Berlin Conference on Libya of January 2020 (involving Italy, the EU, and 14 other states/international organisations) included a section calling on parties to protect migrants and refugees, gradually close detention centres, align their legislation to the international law on refugees, and hold smugglers and traffickers accountable. The second Berlin Conference of June 2021 (involving Italy, the EU, and other 19 states/international organisations) did not mention migration explicitly, but called on parties to address human rights violations.

Overall, in 2015-2022, the EU has provided €700m to Libya - of which, €455m through the EU Trust Fund for Africa (European Council 2022). Specifically, EU involvement in the country focused on training local authorities (primarily the coast guard), helping migrants and local communities, and enhancing border control.

¹³¹ See: <https://www.operationirini.eu>; MoD (n.d.).

¹³² Italy is also part of the United Nations Support Mission for Libya (UNSMIL) (2011-). See: <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/mandate>

Overview of DEPMI in Libya

	Italy-Libya (2000-2020)		EU-Libya
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	Informal agreement in early 2000s	Projects targeting assisted voluntary returns from Libya to third countries.	/
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	2000 Agreement on Terrorism, drugs and migration; 2003 Migration cooperation agreement; 2006 Memorandum of understanding on irregular migration; 2007 Protocol and Additional protocol; 2008 Friendship Treaty; 2009 Executive protocol; 2017 Memorandum of Understanding.	Large-scale projects targeting border management.	EUNAVFOR Med Sophia & Irini, EUBAM Libya
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking			
Fight against Root Causes	/		Trust Fund for Africa
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	Humanitarian corridors	Projects offering support to migrants and refugees in Libya, including through the UNHCR.	
Legal Mobility	/	Scholarships.	/
Visa	2000 and 2009 MoU on Visa	/	/
Political Dialogue	Ongoing and often focused on migration control.	/	

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DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Moldova



Sahizer Samuk Carignani¹³³ and Iole Fontana¹³⁴

Migration Outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	LOW between 2014-2020 in terms of both regular and irregular migration
Relevance as a country of transit	LOW
Safe country of origin list ¹³⁵	NO
Schengen Visa Exemption	YES

First migratory flows from Moldova to Italy goes back to the end of the 1990s. The country's economic crisis, as well as the dramatic rise in youth unemployment and levels of poverty, pushed many Moldovan citizens to leave for Europe and Italy, which became the second most popular destination after Russia (Stemmer 2011). Since then, Moldovan migration to Italy has been mainly characterised by a predominant presence of female migrants, mainly working in the home, health, and domestic care sector. When, in 2002, a *sanatoria* of the Italian government regularised the status of a high number of migrants in unregular position,¹³⁶ the Moldovans emerged as a relevant presence in Italy.¹³⁷ Labour, circular and seasonal migration have traditionally been the main features of Moldovan migration to Italy (ibid.). However, human trafficking of Moldovan women for sexual exploitation,¹³⁸ as well as irregular migration through tourist visa overstay,¹³⁹ were increasingly detected.

¹³³ Researcher, DEPMI Program; Post-Doc Research Fellow, IMT Institute of Advanced Studies, Lucca.

¹³⁴ Scientific coordinator, DEPMI Program; Assistant Professor, University of Catania.

¹³⁵ According to the list of safe countries of origin as indicated by the Italian Decree 4 October 2019.

¹³⁶ In the context of the Law 189/2002

¹³⁷ Over 31,000 requests for regularisation were presented by Moldovan immigrants. See: L'immigrazione moldava in Italia Roma, Palazzo Firenze - 5 novembre 2009, <http://www.qualificare.info/upload/moldavia5nov2009.pdf>

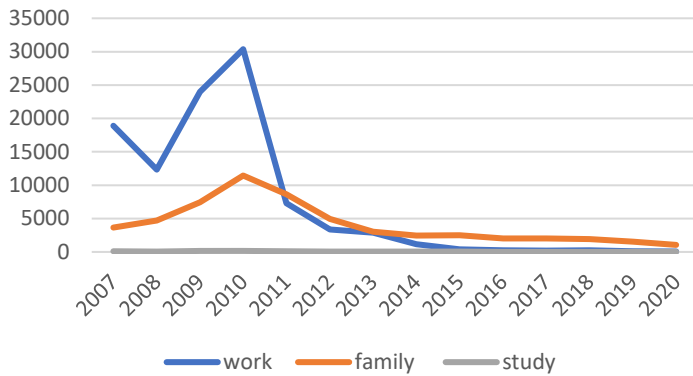
¹³⁸ Senato della Repubblica, Disegno di Legge, 1325, 11 Aprile 2002.

https://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/frame.jsp?tipodoc=Ddlpres&leg=14&id=17763&part=doc_dc-relpres_r

¹³⁹ Gli Immigrati Moldavi in Italia e in Veneto. 2006.

http://bancadati.italialavoro.it/bdds/download?fileName=C_21_Strumento_5436_documenti_itemName_0_documento.pdf&uid=cf30ef79-c82f-4c33-b9e1-15c0267febac

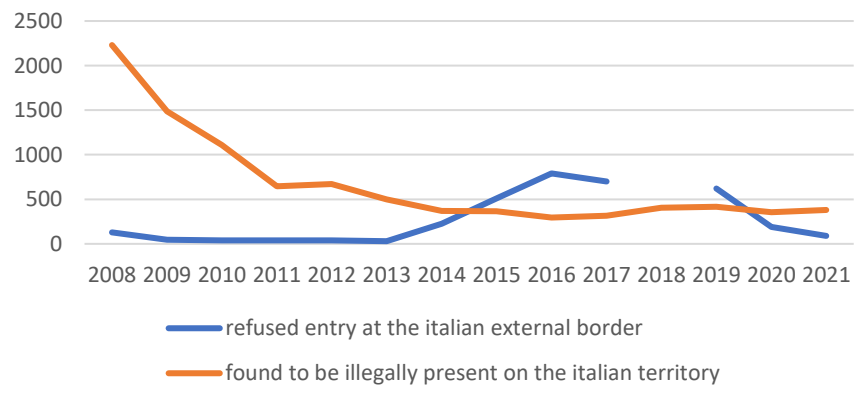
Fig. 1 Moldovan regular entries by reason of entry (2007-2020). Source: Authors' elaboration from ISTAT



In terms of **regular migration**, as of 2021, 122,667 Moldovans were regularly present on the Italian territory, against the 118,516 of 2020 and the 122,762 of 2019,¹⁴⁰ representing the 10th biggest community of non-EU citizens in Italy. In terms of yearly regular entries, most significant legal entries are via work permits, especially in between 2007 and 2010 (Fig. 1). However, due to a general closure of immigration entry channels in Italy (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2018), after the peak recorded in 2010 the number of work permits was more than halved: from the over 30,000 in 2010 to just below 5,000 in 2012.¹⁴¹ In 2010, there is also a slight decline in family permits. The study permits are not significant at all in comparison with other types of permits.

In terms of **irregular migration**, the most common source is through visa overstay (Frontex 2020). While there are currently no official statistics on the phenomenon of Schengen visa overstay, EUROSTAT data on third country nationals found to be illegally present on the territory of the EU Member States can still provide some indicator.¹⁴² Overall, over 2,000 Moldovans were found to be illegally present in Italy in 2008 (Fig. 2), representing 3% of all third country nationals detected as irregularly present on the Italian territory for that year. The number decreased and remained steady in the following years.

Fig. 2 Moldovans found to be illegally present in Italy and refused entry at the Italian external border (2008-2021). Source: Authors' elaboration from EUROSTAT



At the external border, the most common cause for entry refusal is the lack of a valid visa or resident permit. The number of Moldovans' entry refusals increased in 2016,¹⁴³ when it represented 7% of total entry refusals

¹⁴⁰ ISTAT, data on foreign residents.

¹⁴¹ Moreover, between 2010-2013 a high return rate of Moldovans was recorded. See Drbohlav et al. (2017).

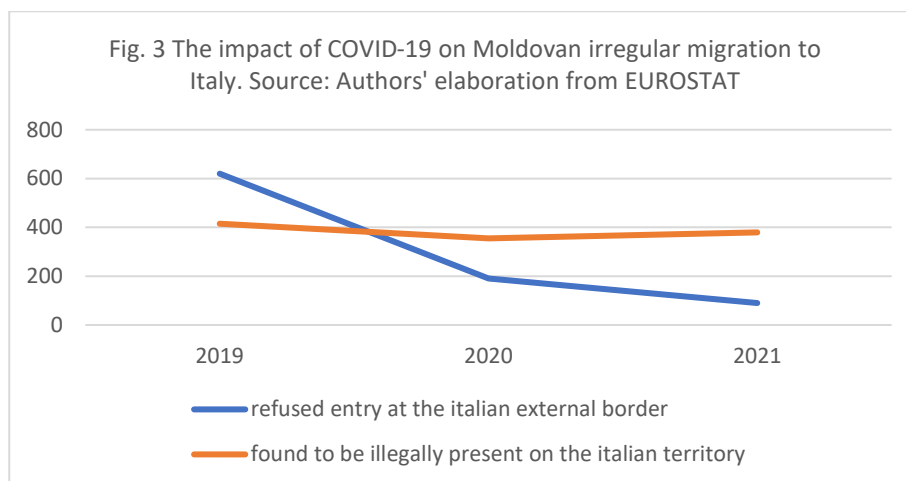
¹⁴² This category relates to persons who have been found to have entered illegally (for example by avoiding immigration controls or by employing a fraudulent document) and those who may have entered legitimately but have subsequently remained on an illegal basis (for example by overstaying their permission to remain or by taking unauthorised employment).

¹⁴³ Data for 2018 no available.

at the Italian external border. Moreover, most entry refusals happen at the air border, rather than at the sea or land border.

In this sense, two considerations deserve attention. First, the fact that the number of refused entries at the external border is much lower than the number of Moldovans found to be illegally present on the Italian territory confirms that most irregular migration does not happen through attempted irregular border crossing, but by visas or permits overstay. Second, and similarly, most attempted irregular migration is via air, and through documents' fraud, manipulation and use beyond periods permitted by law. This means that Moldovans do not figure among the main nationalities in terms of irregular border crossing along sea or land geographical routes to the EU and to Italy. For obvious geographical reasons, they are not moving along the Central Mediterranean route,¹⁴⁴ and low numbers were detected along the Eastern Border route.¹⁴⁵

For these reasons, **COVID-19** did have a different impact on the two different components of Moldovan irregular migration. Whereas the number of Moldovan citizens who were refused entry at the external border decreased significantly during the pandemic due to border closures and air-travel restrictions, the number of Moldovans found irregularly present on the Italian territory remained stable between 2019-2021 (Fig.3).



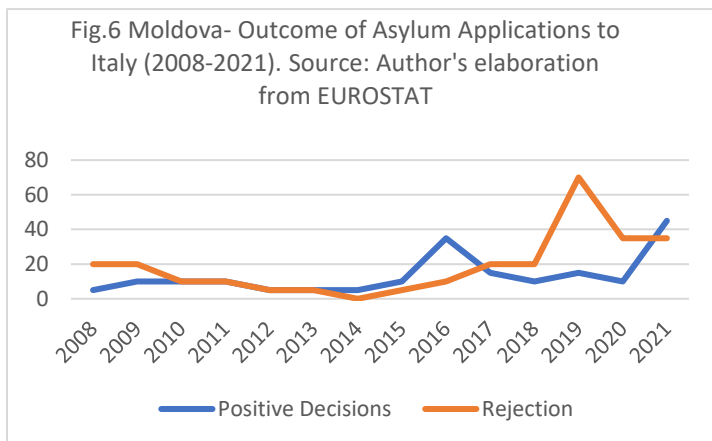
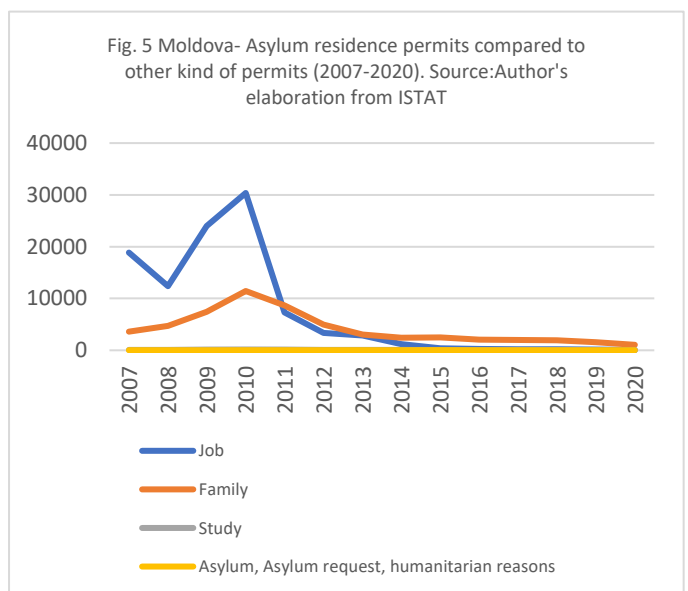
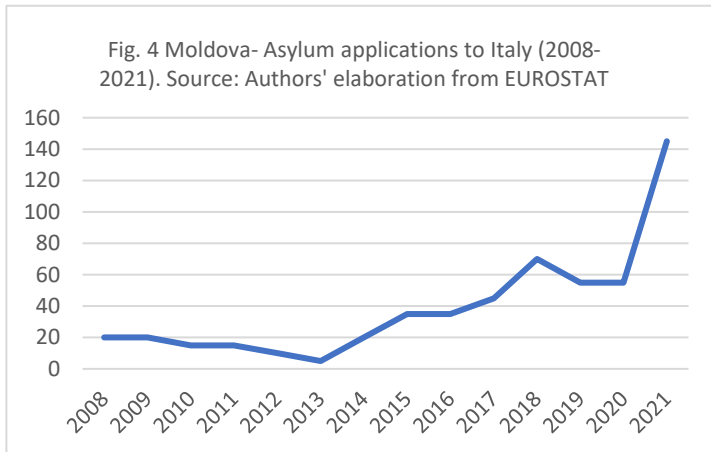
Normally, Moldova is not a relevant **transit country** of flows to Italy. However, in the last months, it became a potential transit country of asylum-seekers fleeing from Ukraine.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ According to FRONTEX data, only 29 Moldovans were detected along the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy between 2009 and 2021.

¹⁴⁵ According to FRONTEX data, between 2009 and 2021 only 1564 Moldovans were detected along the land border between Belarus, Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the eastern EU.

¹⁴⁶ According to the latest data, until September 2022, 618,738 border crossings were recorded from Ukraine to Moldova. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

In terms of **asylum**, even if the number of asylum applications from Moldovans to Italy increased in 2021, numbers remain very low (Fig.4) if compared to other nationalities. Similarly, granted asylum resident permits for Moldovans is quite negligible compared to work and family permits (Fig.5). In terms of outcome of asylum applications, even if Moldova is not included in the list of ‘safe countries’ approved by the Italian government in 2019, recognition rates were generally lower than rejection in the last years (Fig.6).



Italy-Moldova cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Italy and Moldova political and economic relations are framed in the context of the 26 agreements, conventions, declarations, and protocols that have been concluded between the two countries since the late 1980s, in a variety of sectors.¹⁴⁷ Diplomatic relations were strengthened in 2008, when Italian Foreign Minister Frattini officially inaugurated Italian Embassy in Chisinau along with the opening of consular services. The

¹⁴⁷ For the full list, check 'Archivio Trattati Internazionali Online', Ministero degli Esteri.

External Dimension of Italian Migration Policy (DEPMI- Italian acronym) in Moldova is characterised by the following tools.

In terms of **fight against irregular migration**, in 2002 the two countries signed a **Cooperation Agreement for the Fight against Organised Crime**,¹⁴⁸ with the goal to exchange information on criminal activities including human trafficking and irregular migration. In the same year, the Italian Parliament approved a dedicated budget for the participation of the Italian police to the activities of the EU border assistance mission 'EUBAM' to support border management in Moldova and Ukraine.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, in 2016, a '**Technical Arrangement of bilateral cooperation**' was signed in Rome between Italian Carabinieri and Moldovan police with the goal to cooperate in terms of exchange of experiences, training, equipment donation and participation in meetings and seminars.¹⁵⁰

In terms of **return and readmission**, a **Readmission Agreement** was signed in 2002 and entered into force in 2004.¹⁵¹ As done for other countries, readmission and legal mobility were framed as a single package within Italy's DEPMI in Moldova, offering preferential treatment for Moldovan citizens after the signature of the readmission agreement. Indeed, while until 2001 Moldova did not enjoy reserved quotas as established by the annual Flow Decrees, in 2002 Moldovan citizens were granted 500 entry quotas, that were increased up to 6,500 in 2008.

In 2007, following the signature of the EU-Moldova Readmission Agreement, a **new bilateral Protocol**¹⁵² between Italy and Moldova was approved **for the implementation of the EU Readmission Agreement**. The Protocol/Agreement was immediately implemented, with over 500 Moldovan irregular migrants being returned from Italy in 2008 (Fig.7). The number of returned people has then remained stable across the years. Moreover, as shown in fig.8, the gap between the number of people actually returned and the number of people ordered to leave is quite low, suggesting that the rate of return of Moldovans from Italy is quite high - especially if compared to readmission cooperation between Italy and other countries.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ *Accordo di Cooperazione in Materia di Lotta alla Criminalità Organizzata*. <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/48358>

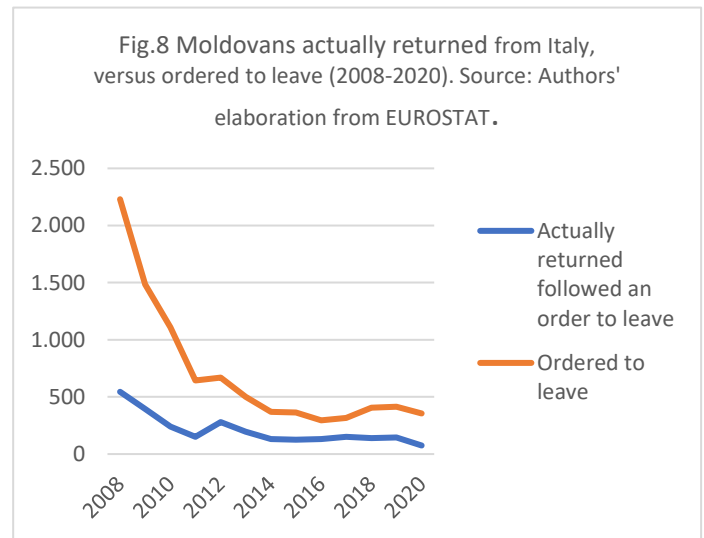
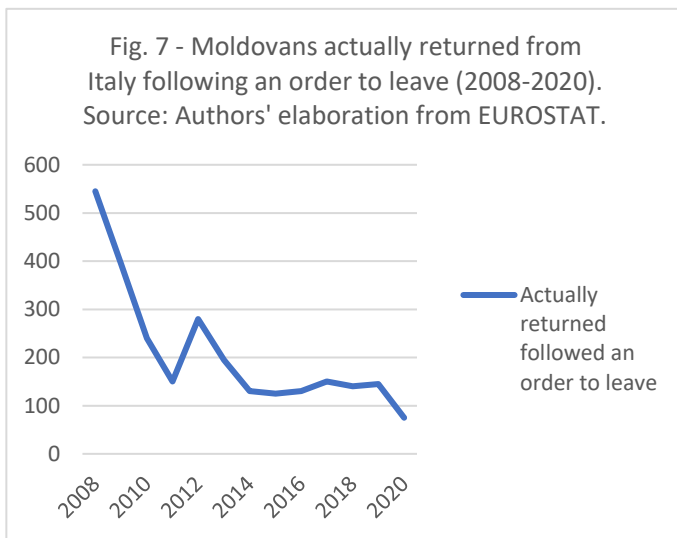
¹⁴⁹ <https://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/frame.jsp?tipodoc=Emend&leg=14&id=174415&idoggetto=283215>

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.carabinieri.it/in-vostro-aiuto/informazioni/eventi/firmato-un-accordo-tecnico-di-cooperazione-tra-l-arma-e-le-truppe-dei-carabinieri-moldavi>

¹⁵¹ *Accordo di Cooperazione in Materia di Riammissione*, <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/48359>

¹⁵² Protocollo dell'Accordo di Riammissione, ai fini dell'Attuazione dell'Accordo tra la Comunità Europea e la Repubblica di Moldova sulla riammissione. <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/50692>

¹⁵³ For instance, between 2012-2017, the return rate of Moldovans was on average 40%; against the mere 11% of Nigerians and the 14% of Moroccans.



In terms of **legal mobility**, in 2003 the two countries signed a **Bilateral Agreement on Labour Migration** with a related **Executive Protocol**.¹⁵⁴ The goal was to manage regular labour flows, in terms of favouring the encounter of demand and offer in the job market and of offering entry quotas in Italy for Moldovan seasonal and non-seasonal workers. According to the articles 1-2 of the Protocol, Moldovan citizens willing to work in the Italian market would be included by the government of Moldova in special lists to be submitted to the Italian Ministry of Employment. Vocational training would also be provided in terms of Italian Language and Civic Education Training Programs for Moldovan citizens.¹⁵⁵ The **Agreement was renewed in 2011**.¹⁵⁶ In order to reduce the potential negative impact of Moldovan emigration on the country's economic development,¹⁵⁷ the Agreement committed to promote mechanisms of circular migration.¹⁵⁸

In terms of visas, the opening of the Italian Embassy and consular services in 2008 in Chisinau was a turning point. Until that moment, in order to apply for visas, Moldovans had to go to Romania and face high costs. The opening of consular services in Chisinau facilitated the process. Finally, in terms of scholarships, in 1997, in the context of the **Agreement for cultural, technical and scientific cooperation**, Italy agreed to provide scholarships

¹⁵⁴ Accordo bilaterale in materia di lavoro e Protocollo Esecutivo, <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/48601>

¹⁵⁵ <https://old.msmps.gov.md/en/content/republic-moldova-and-italy-discussed-importance-signing-social-security-agreement>

¹⁵⁶ https://sitiarcheologici.lavoro.gov.it/AreaSociale/Immigrazione/flussi_migratori/Documents/MOL_Accordo_bilaterale_IT_MOLD_5_luglio_2011.pdf

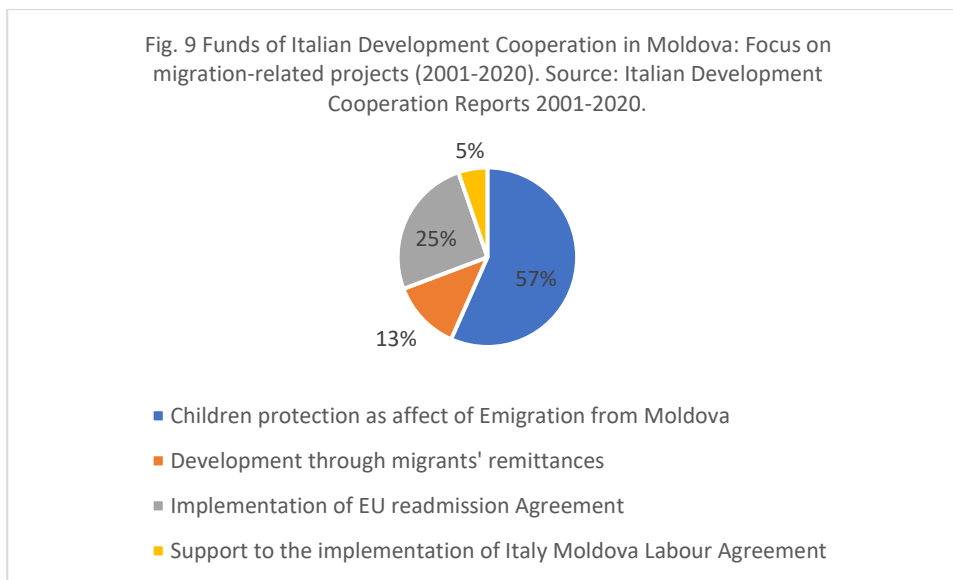
¹⁵⁷ Canali Migratori. Visti e Flussi Irregolari. Quarto Rapporto EMN, 2012.

¹⁵⁸ This would be promoted through programs of 9-months seasonal work in Italy and return to Moldova. Those returning would then be prioritized to get back to Italy the following year.

for Moldovan citizens.¹⁵⁹ Yet, permits for study reasons are negligible if compared to other types of residence permits.

Bilateral Development Cooperation

Italian Development Cooperation has been officially present in Moldova since 2006. An analysis of Italian Cooperation Reports between 2001-2020, reveals that most of funds were targeted to deal with migratory issues in terms of protecting children abandoned as an effect of emigration from Moldova;¹⁶⁰ implementation of the EU Readmission Agreement and support to migrants' remittances and their potential use for the development of the country (Fig.9). In 2022, Italy agreed to provide € 10 Mil. to Moldova in terms of shelter supplies and assistance, to support the Moldovan authorities in helping the Ukrainian refugees fleeing their country.¹⁶¹



EU-Moldova cooperation as an additional framework for DEPMI

¹⁵⁹ Accordo di collaborazione culturale, tecnica e scientifica <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/41833>

¹⁶⁰ For instance, the two following programs: 'Addressing the negative effects of migration on minors and families left behind' (2011); Creation of an integrated network of childhood centers (2007).

¹⁶¹ https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2022/03/moldova-fornitura-di-beni-umanitari-della-cooperazione-italiana-in-favore-dei-rifugiati-provenienti-dallucraina-e-intervento-del-fondo-migrazioni-per-assistenza-a-minori/

EU-Moldova political and economic relations are framed in the context of the Association Agreement, which was signed in 2014 and replaced the previous Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (1994). Cooperation between the EU and Moldova on migratory issues unfolds at different levels.

In terms of visa and mobility, in 2007, the EU and Moldova signed a Visa Facilitation Agreement which entered into force in January 2008. In the same year, the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership was launched. Italy is among the 15 Member States part of the partnership. The Visa Facilitation Agreement was amended in 2013, with the goal to simplify visa requirements to the benefit of specific categories of Moldovans.¹⁶² In 2010, a dialogue of visa liberalization was launched. Italy was at the forefront, with Prime Minister Berlusconi and Foreign Minister Frattini strongly supporting the negotiation over a visa-free regime for Moldovan citizens.¹⁶³ In 2014, after a four-year dialogue, visa liberalization was eventually implemented, and Moldova was granted visa-free travel regime to the Schengen area up to 90 days in any 180-days period (Council of the EU 2022). In line with the advancement of visa cooperation, a Readmission Agreement entered into force in January 2008.

In the domain of border management, in 2005 the EU and Moldova signed a Memorandum of Understanding which provided the legal basis for the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM).¹⁶⁴ The mission, whose mandate is valid until November 2023, promotes border control and the harmonisation of customs and trade standards with those of the EU. A FRONTEX-Moldova working arrangement was signed in 2008, with the goal to counter irregular migration and cross-border crime. Moreover, in 2014, Moldova joined the Eastern Partnership Integrated Border Management Capacity Building Project, with the goal to train and enhance the professionalism of the agencies involved in border management.¹⁶⁵

In the domain of asylum, an EU 'Regional Protection Program' (RPP) for Moldova-Ukraine-Belarus was implemented between 2009-2010 and further renewed for 2011-2013 (Phase II). The RPP was designed to ensure the efficient management of refugee flows and enhance Moldova's protection 'capacities through monitoring of border regions and placement facilities; technical assistance and infrastructure support; training of responsible authorities and supporting refugee self-reliance'.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Parliament approves EU visa facilitation agreements with Ukraine and Moldova, Press Releases, 18-04-2013. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20130412IPR07192/parliament-approves-eu-visa-facilitation-agreements-with-ukraine-and-moldova>

¹⁶³ https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/cronologia_2010.pdf

¹⁶⁴ <https://eubam.org/who-we-are/>

¹⁶⁵ <https://frontex.europa.eu/we-build/other-partners-and-projects/non-eu-countries/>

¹⁶⁶ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/536469/IPOL_STU\(2015\)536469_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/536469/IPOL_STU(2015)536469_EN.pdf)

Overview of DEPMI in Moldova

	Italy-Moldova (2001-2021)		EU-Moldova broader cooperation framework
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	2002: <i>Readmission Agreement</i>	Technical Cooperation for the implementation of the readmission Agreement with the EU (€ 400,000)	Readmission Agreement (2007)
	2007: <i>Bilateral Protocol for the implementation of the EU Readmission Agreement</i>		
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	2003: <i>Cooperation Agreement on the Fight against Organised Crime</i> , clause on info exchange on human trafficking and irregular migration 2005: Italy's participation to EUBAM Mission 2016: <i>Technical Arrangement of bilateral cooperation – Police cooperation</i>		EUBAM Mission (2005-2023) Frontex-Moldova Working Arrangement (2008) Participation to the Eastern Partnership Border Management Capacity Building Project (2014)
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	2003: <i>Cooperation Agreement on the Fight against Organised Crime</i>		
Fight against Root Causes		Support to the use of migrants' remittances for Moldova Development (€ 198,000) Support to children abandoned due to emigration (various programs)	
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection		Support to Ukraine refugees in Moldova (€ 10 Mil.)	Regional Protection Program for Moldova-Ukraine-Belarus (until 2013)
Legal Mobility	2003 & 2011: <i>Agreement on Labour Migration and related protocols</i> Reserved quotas non seasonal work between 2002-2011 Admitted to competition for seasonal work (2003-2020)	Support to the implementation of the Labour Agreement in the context of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership (€ 82,000)	
Visa	Visa free regime		2007: Visa Facilitation Agreement 2013: Amendment 2014: Visa Liberalization
Political Dialogue	Labour and visas as the prevailing issues		Visas, compliance to EU standards in terms of border management/customs

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DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Morocco



Iole Fontana¹⁶⁷

Migration Outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	Low between 2011-2013	High between 2014-2017	Medium-Low 2020-2021
Relevance as a country of transit	NO		
Safe country of origin list ¹⁶⁸	YES		
Schengen Visa Exemption	NO		

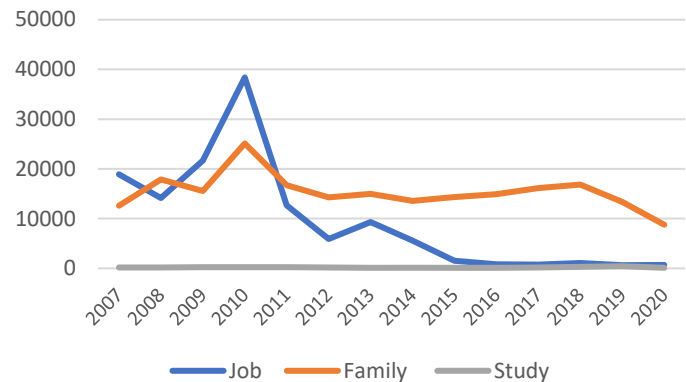
Migratory flows from Morocco to Italy goes back to the 1960s, when economic opportunities and request for labour in the European job market pushed many workers to move from North Africa. The economic crisis of the 1980s and the immediate growth of unemployment in Morocco pushed both young graduates and low skilled migrants to go abroad, mainly to Italy and Spain (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2018). A stream of irregular migration was observed in the second part of the 2010s. Morocco was one of the few countries that ‘survived’ the Arab Spring, with relatively limited street protests that resulted in little political change. As a consequence, looking at the trend of irregular arrivals before and after 2011, no particular break was observed in irregular movements from Morocco to Italy (Fargues and Fandrich 2012). The relevance of Morocco as a country of origin has anyway significantly increased from 2015 onward, due to a new wave of protests, political and economic crises.

¹⁶⁷ Scientific Coordinator, DEPMI Program; Assistant Professor, University of Catania.

¹⁶⁸ According to the list of safe countries of origin as indicated by the Italian Decree 4 October 2019.

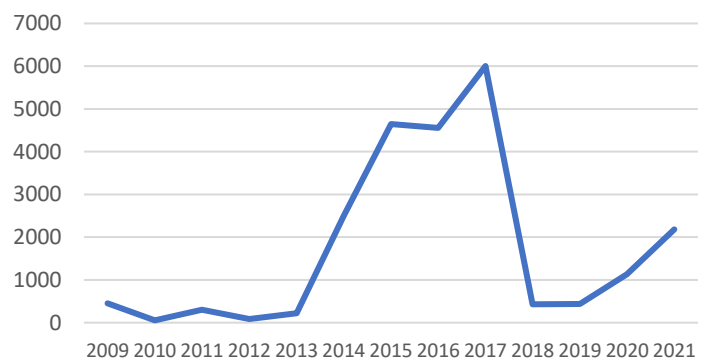
In terms of **regular migration**, 428,947 Moroccans were regularly present on the Italian territory in 2021, compared to 414,249 in 2020 and 406,112 in 2019,¹⁶⁹ representing the 2nd biggest community of non-EU citizens in Italy. In terms of yearly regular entries, in 2007-2020, job and family reunification permits were the most common compared to mobility for study reasons (Fig.1). While entries for family reunification remained stable after the peak recorded in 2010, regular entries for job and seasonal work drastically decreased 2010. This is partly related to a general closure of immigration entry channels for employment in Italy, also due to the general reduction of annual entry quotas established by governmental Flows Decree (the so-called Decreto Flussi) (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2018).

Fig. 1 Moroccans- Regular Entries to Italy by reason of entry (2007-2020). Source: Author's elaboration from EUROSTAT



In terms of **irregular flows**, unlike Tunisia, Morocco did not emerge as a crucial country of origin in 2011. Irregular arrivals of Moroccans to Italy across the Central Mediterranean route were only 299 in 2011, compared to 456 detected in 2009. However, irregular flows recorded a significant surge between 2014 and 2017 (Fig.2), in line with the critical political and economic developments of the country. In 2014, Morocco experienced a wave of social and political protests and popular mobilization, due to a return to pre-2011 monarchic authoritarianism (Monjib 2015), growing inequalities, youth unemployment and slow growth.¹⁷⁰ Tensions escalated even more in late 2016 and 2017, with the highest rate of protests ever recorded¹⁷¹ over economic and social problems in the Northern Rif region.¹⁷² Whereas Moroccans migrants mainly move across the Western Mediterranean Route to Spain, in 2017 they

Fig. 2 FRONTEX Detected border crossings of Moroccans across the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy. Source: Author's Elaboration from FRONTEX.



¹⁶⁹ ISTAT, data on foreign residents.

¹⁷⁰ International Monetary Fund. *Morocco*. February 2015. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2015/cr1543.pdf>

¹⁷¹ ACLED. *Morocco – May 2017 Update*. <https://acleddata.com/2017/06/20/morocco-may-2017-update/>

¹⁷² Thousands protest in Morocco demanding release of jailed activists, Reuters, 21/04/2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-morocco-protests-idUSKCN1RXOID>

represented 5% of all arrivals to Italy (UNCHR 2017), with a peak of over 6,000 irregular arrivals and with departures from Libya (Malakooti & Fall 2020). Numbers decreased between 2018-2019 but raised again in 2020 and 2021, representing 3% of all arrivals to Italy (UNCHR 2020, 2021).

In this regard, and as shown in Fig. 3 and Fig.4, **COVID-19 pandemic** did not impact flows from Morocco. Already in January 2020, before Italy’s first lockdown, irregular migration from the Morocco was quite low, and the trend continued until November 2020. Movements increased during summer 2021, also due to a further exacerbation of critical existing socio-economic conditions and authoritarian turns in the context of the pandemic.

Fig. 3 FRONTEX Detected border crossings of Moroccans across the Central Mediterranean Route before and after COVID-19. Source: Elaboration from FRONTEX

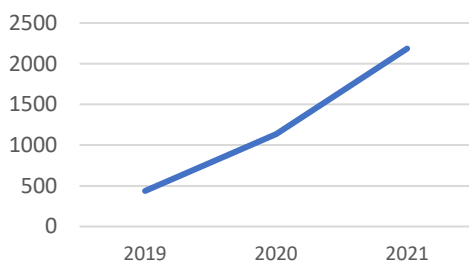
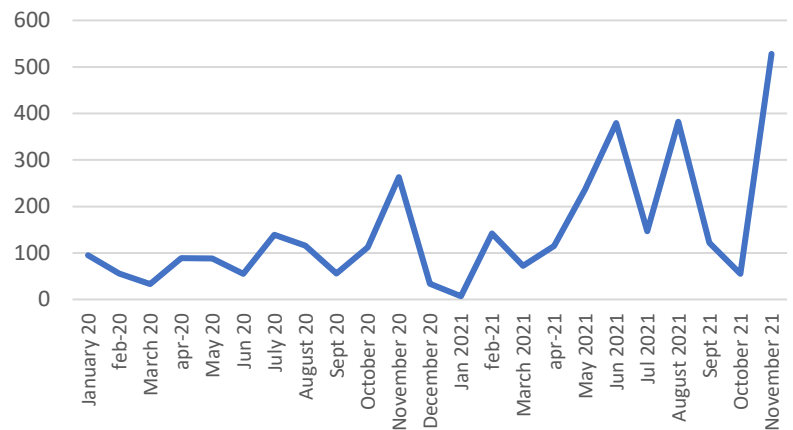


Fig. 4 Impact of Covid on irregular arrivals of Moroccans to Italy across the Central Mediterranean. Source: Elaboration from FRONTEX



Due to its geographical position as a gateway to Western Europe, Morocco does play a crucial role as a **transit country** to Spain¹⁷³ but it is not having the same relevance as to what concerns the Central Mediterranean route to Italy.

In terms of **asylum**, and in line with irregular arrivals, applications from Moroccan asylum seekers to Italy have increased in recent years with high figures in 2017 (Fig. 5). Whereas asylum applications from Morocco decreased in the following years in absolute terms, in 2021 they still represented the 5th nationality in terms of asylum applications to Italy. In line with these trends, residence permits for asylum request, asylum or humanitarian reasons for Moroccan citizens saw a significant increase between 2017-2018 (Fig.6). However, permits for asylum or humanitarian reasons are very low compared to other types of residence permits (work, family reunification or study reasons) (Fig.7).

Fig. 5 Morocco- Asylum applications to Italy (2008-2021). Source: Author's elaboration from EUROSTAT

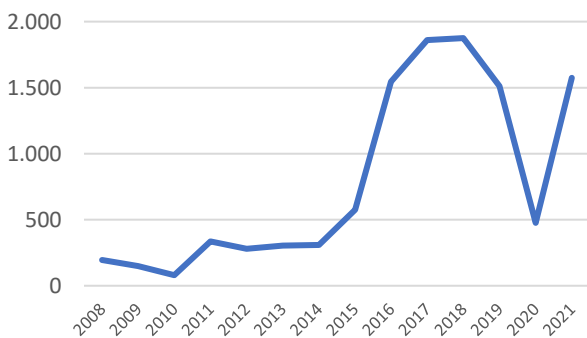


Fig. 6 Moroccans- Permits for Asylum, Asylum request, humanitarian reasons (2007-2020). Source: Author's own elaboration from ISTAT

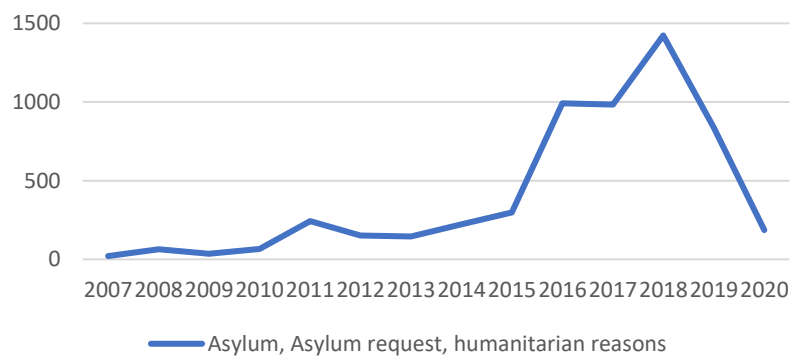
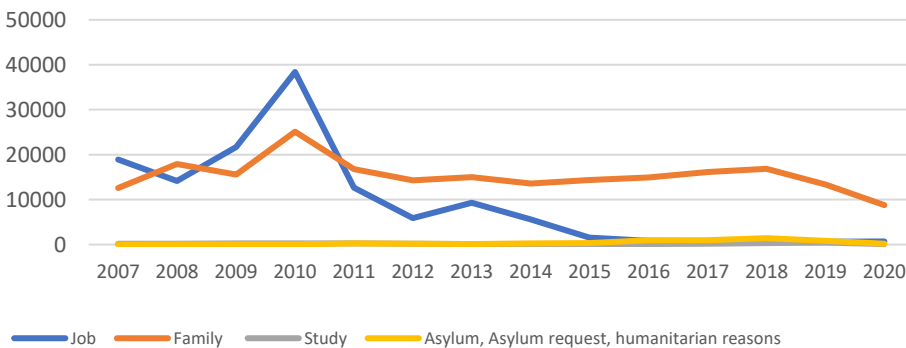
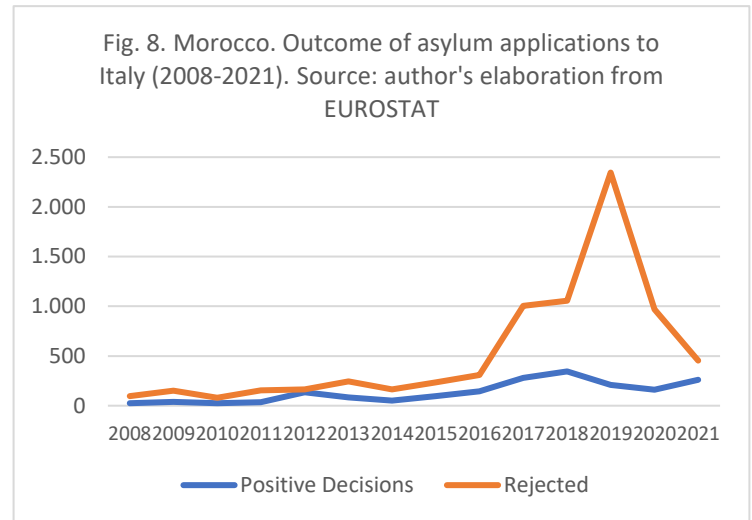


Fig. 7 Morocco- Asylum residence permits compared to other kind of permits (2007-2020). Source: Author's elaboration from ISTAT



¹⁷³ Especially after Libya became an increasingly dangerous route, it seems that flows traditionally oriented from Niger to Libya came to be re-directed to Algeria and Morocco, with Spain as a final destination. See: <https://www.aics.gov.it/oltremare/articoli/pace/mediterraneo-le-rotte-della-disperazione-e-del-profitto/>

In terms of asylum decisions, rejection is the most common outcome for asylum applications of Moroccan asylum-seekers to Italy between 2007-2020, especially in 2017-2018 when the highest number of asylum applications was recorded (Fig.8). This is mainly due to a combination of factors, including Moroccan applicants being mostly considered as economic migrants, as well as the Italian government's decision to include Morocco in the list of countries of safe origin.¹⁷⁴ In this case, asylum applications from a country that is designated as safe, i.e., a place where there is apparently no persecution, torture, or degrading treatment, can be rejected as being manifestly unfounded.



Italy-Morocco cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Political and economic relations between Italy and Morocco are defined by the over 59 agreements, protocols, exchange of letters and memorandum of understandings concluded since 1960s in a variety of sectors.¹⁷⁵ The country has recently been defined by the Italian Foreign Minister Di Maio as a 'Strategic Partner' and a crucial interlocutor for Italy in the Mediterranean region.¹⁷⁶ Cooperation on migration has entered the bilateral political agenda since the late 1990s. The following tools and agreements make up the External Dimension of Italian Migration Policy (DEPMI – Italian acronym) in Morocco.

In terms of **political dialogue**, according to **art.2 of the Protocol on Strengthened Political Consultations between the two Foreign Ministries**¹⁷⁷ (2000), the two parts commits to promote dialogue on all the crucial aspects of bilateral relations, including migration, legal mobility, and fights against irregular migration. Dialogue over these issues was intensified in the early 2000s, when, following Spain's tightened border controls which lead to the partial closure of the Western Mediterranean route, irregular arrivals of Moroccans

¹⁷⁴ See note 2.

¹⁷⁵ For the full list, check 'Archivio Trattati Internazionali Online', Ministero degli Esteri.

¹⁷⁶ <https://www.notiziegeopolitiche.net/marocco-di-maio-per-litalia-partner-strategico-e-interlocutore-chiave-della-regione/>

¹⁷⁷ Protocollo sulle consultazioni politiche rafforzate tra i ministeri degli Esteri, <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/47973>

to Sicily by Libya increased -with a peak of over 8,000 arrivals in 2006.¹⁷⁸ Discussions with Moroccan ambassador in Rome put the issue high on the agenda to address growing worries by the Italian government over the sudden migratory wave.¹⁷⁹ At the same time, shared desire to enhance cooperation in the fight against irregular migration was at the centre of several high-level meetings in Rabat by the then Italian Deputy Foreign Minister Ugo Intini.¹⁸⁰ Eventually, the foreign Ministers of the two countries agreed to develop an approach that would see the containment of illegal migration as part of a broader strategy of political, social and economic cooperation (Balfur & Cugusi 2007). Whereas migration remained a central issue of bilateral collaboration and high-level discussions also in the following years,¹⁸¹ a new era of diplomatic relations was inaugurated with the signature of a **Strategic Partnership in November 2019**.¹⁸² Among the other things (economic, energetic, commercial relations), the multidimensional cooperation agreement aims to deepen dialogue and cooperation in combating terrorism, international crime, irregular migration, and in implementing the existing readmission agreement.¹⁸³

In the field of **return and readmission**, a **Readmission Agreement** signed in July 1998¹⁸⁴, and its additional protocol signed in 1999, are currently in place. The protocol was the result of a long and complex negotiation with Moroccan authorities, necessary to implement the Agreement itself. On that occasion, Italy provided means, tools, and equipment to support Moroccan police in the fight against irregular migration.¹⁸⁵ Even if the

¹⁷⁸ As declared by the former Italian Interior Minister Pisano: 'there has been a sharp increase in the arrival of illegal immigrants by sea in Italy. It actually happened that after the bloody events in Ceuta and Mellilla, conspicuous currents of Moroccan migrants who went from Morocco to Spain, spontaneously orientated themselves in a different way and by different paths, they arrived in Libya and then from Libya they poured by sea on Italy'. Conferenza Stampa sul fenomeno dell'immigrazione clandestina. Ministro dell'Interno On. Giuseppe Pisano, Viminale, 19 Gennaio 2006. https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/interventi/Interventi_sottosegretarioprecedenti/intervista_420.html

¹⁷⁹ Il Ministro dell'Interno Giuliano Amato ha ricevuto l'Ambasciatore del Marocco Tajeddine Baddou. https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/notizie/ministro/notizia_22729.html 316978_182.html

¹⁸⁰ Italia-Marocco. Visita di Intini per promuovere cooperazione sull'immigrazione https://immigrazione.aduc.it/notizia/marocco+visita+intini+promuovere+cooperazione+sull_83271.php

¹⁸¹ Incontro bilaterale del Ministro Terzi con l'omologo marocchino, Saad-Eddine El Othmani, https://www.esteri.it/it/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2012/02/20120221_marocchino/; Incontro al Viminale del ministro Cancellieri con il ministro per i marocchini residenti all'estero, Abdellatif Maazouz, https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/notizie/sottosegretarioprecedenti/2099_500_ministro/00000021_2012_05_02_ministro_marocco.html 307599914.html; Marocco: Bonino, Italia pronta a offrire sostegno per favorire attuazione iniziativa Re Mohammed VI https://www.esteri.it/it/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2013/09/20130912_boninizremohamm/; Senato della Repubblica, Legislatura 17^a - Dossier n. 4, https://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/17/DOSSIER/0/940332/index.html?part=dossier_dossier1-sezione_sezione6-h1_h118&spart=sj

¹⁸² *Dichiarazione Congiunta sul Partenariato Strategico Multidimensionale*;

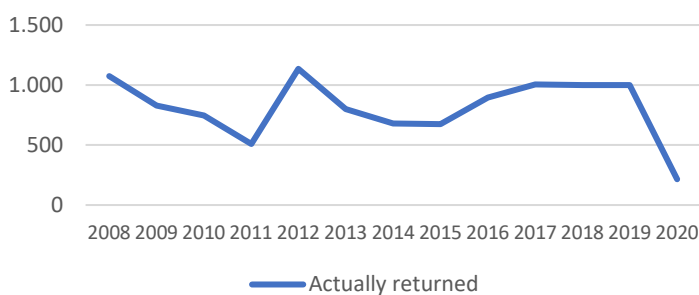
¹⁸³ <https://www.ambasciatamarocco.it/marocco-italia-partenariato-strategico-2/>

¹⁸⁴ According to the website of Moroccan Embassy in Italy, the Agreement signed in Rabat on July 27, 1998 is titled 'Agreement on expulsion of citizens and transit for removal' (Accordo sull'espulsione dei cittadini e sul transito per allontanamento).

¹⁸⁵ Relazione del Ministero dell'Interno al Parlamento del 2000 sui risultati raggiunti in tema di contrasto all'immigrazione clandestina, <http://briguglio.asgi.it/immigrazione-e-asilo/2000/luglio/relazione-parlamento.html>

Agreement has never been formally ratified by Moroccan Parliament,¹⁸⁶ it has been implemented regularly and was assessed as a deal that ‘works well’.¹⁸⁷ An analysis of press releases of the Italian Minister Interior, between 2005 and 2013, reveals that out of 61 return operations, 51 of them involved Moroccans irregular migrants -with many returns occurring once or twice a week. Overall, between 2011-2020, over 800 Moroccan irregular migrants were returned on average every year (Fig. 9). Cooperation on returns recorded historic lows in 2020, when, due to the pandemic, return operations were stopped. Operations have slowly resumed in 2022, with 50 migrants returned between January-August.

Fig. 9 Number of Moroccans nationals actually returned following an order to leave (2008-2020). Source: author's own elaboration from EUROSTAT



As for other countries, cooperation on readmission was linked to opportunities for **legal mobility** and preferential treatment over entry quotas as established by the Italian annual Flows Decrees. After the signature of the 1998 Readmission Agreement, Morocco was rewarded 1,500 entry quotas for its own nationals and the number was increased up to 4,500 in 2010. Moreover, in order to ‘manage flows of migrant workers between the two countries in a coordinated and effective way’, a **Bilateral Agreement in the field of Employment** and its related **Executive Protocol** were formally signed in 2005.¹⁸⁸ The documents aim to facilitate the encounter of demand and offer on the job market, promote vocational training and facilitate job permits for Moroccan citizens through entry quot. Moreover, within the **Agreement for Scientific, Cultural and Technological Cooperation** (1998), Italy committed to provide scholarships for study and professional

¹⁸⁶ Pansa A., comitato Parlamentare Schengen, Europol e Immigrazione, 3 dicembre 2003, <http://documenti.camera.it/dati/leg14/lavori/stenbic/30/2003/1203/s020.htm#Pansa%20Alessandro%203%202;> <https://www.cespi.it/sites/default/files/documenti/wp13-it.pdf>

¹⁸⁷ Senato della Repubblica, Resoconto Stenografico, 536ª seduta pubblica (antimeridiana) giovedì 7 aprile 2011 <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/530158.pdf>

¹⁸⁸ *Accordo bilaterale in materia di lavoro*. 2005. <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/48837>; *Protocollo Esecutivo*, <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/49052>

training.¹⁸⁹ According to ISTAT, 204 visas were released on average every year to Moroccan citizens for study reasons between 2007-2020.

Bilateral Development Cooperation

Morocco is a key partner of Italian Development Cooperation, even if not a priority country.¹⁹⁰ A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2009. An analysis of the programs listed by the Italian Cooperation Reports (2001-2020) reveals that more than € 4 Mil. were tailored to bilateral projects and programs focused on migration. Of these, most of funds are related to projects/programs implemented in cooperation with IOM, to prevent irregular migration, human trafficking and launch awareness campaigns on the risks of irregular movements (48%) (Fig.10). Others address circular mobility of Moroccan workers (23%) whereas 29% is focused on assisting voluntary return and integration of sub-Saharan irregular migrants stranded in Morocco. At regional level, Italian Development cooperation is contributing to the project 'AMEM: Appuì è la migration equitable pour le Maghreb', with the goal to improve protection of migrant workers in Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia (€ 24 Mil.).¹⁹¹

Finally, if we look at the general sectoral distribution of bilateral programs financed by Italian Cooperation for the period 2020-2021,¹⁹² these are mainly addressed to infrastructures (64%), fight against poverty, boost small and medium enterprises and employability (Fig.11). In this sense, while 'migration' represents only 2% of all programs, a relevant percentage contributes to the 'root causes' dimension in terms of reducing push factors among Moroccan migrants.

¹⁸⁹ *Accordo di cooperazione scientifica, culturale e tecnologica* 1998 –<https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/41816>

¹⁹⁰ AICS, Tunisi. Rapporto Annuale di Cooperazione 2021.

¹⁹¹ https://www.ilo.org/africa/technical-cooperation/WCMS_710413/lang--fr/index.htm

¹⁹² The analysis is based on the programs/projects listed in the Italian Cooperation Reports (2001-2020). However, in most cases, cooperation reports mention only the most relevant programs/projects. This means that the analysis here presented might not necessarily be exhausting, as there might be programs that were not listed in the reports and therefore excluded from this analysis.

Figure 10. Italian Bilateral Development Cooperation in Morocco - Funds addressing migration issues per sub-sector (2000-2021). Source: Author's own from Italian Development Cooperation Reports 2000-2021.

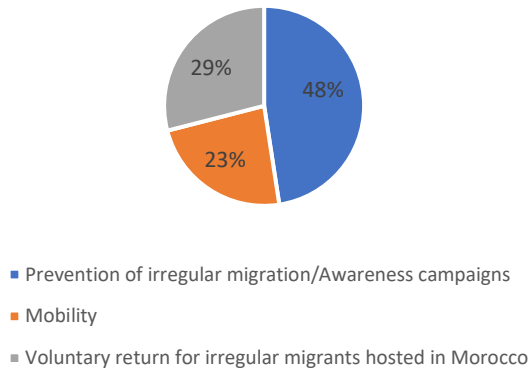
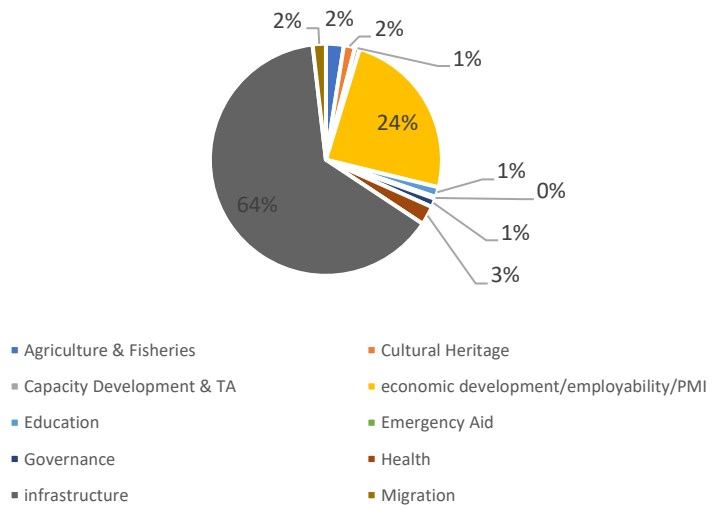


Fig. 11 Italian Development Cooperation in Morocco - General Distribution of Funds by Sector (2000-2021). Source: Author's own elaboration from Italian Development Cooperation Report 2000-2021.



EU-Morocco cooperation as an additional framework for DEPMI

Since 2000, relations between the EU and Morocco have been governed by an **Association Agreement**, which also provides the main framework for dialogue on migration, return and visas. Dialogue on migration mobility and security was launched in 2011 and in 2013, Morocco was the first Mediterranean country to sign a **Mobility Partnership** with the EU and nine Member States, Italy included. In 2000, the European Commission received a mandate to negotiate a Visa Facilitation Agreement and a Readmission Agreement. However, all negotiation rounds on both agreements were unsuccessful and *de facto* stalled from 2010 (Council of the EU 2013). Restarted only in January 2015 (Council of the EU 2022), they were suspended again for four years until 2019 due to a general freeze of EU-Morocco relations (Corte dei Conti Europea 2021). Readmission of Moroccan nationals from Italy is therefore only framed in the context of bilateral relations.

Dialogue was formally relaunched with the Association Council of June 2019¹⁹³, which produced a Joint Declaration where the parties agreed to enhance cooperation on mobility and migration, root causes of irregular migration, management of land and sea borders, return and visa facilitation.¹⁹⁴ The new impetus to dialogue resulted in new high-level meetings, including the visit of Commissioner Johansson and Commissione Varhelyi to Rabat in December 2020 (Council of the EU 2022).

¹⁹³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-ministerial-meetings/2019/06/27/morocco/>

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/06/27/joint-declaration-by-the-european-union-and-the-kingdom-of-morocco-for-the-fourteenth-meeting-of-the-association-council/>

Among the countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy, Morocco is the second one receiving the largest cooperation portfolio on migration with a total of € 346 Mil. Financed under the EU Trust Fund for Africa.¹⁹⁵ There are currently 7 projects ongoing in the country under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, but Italy is not joining any of them.

Finally, Morocco cooperates with many EU agencies. In 2019, EASO has implemented a dialogue on asylum with Morocco while in June 2020, the high-level dialogue Morocco EUROPOL was launched. Moreover, always in 2019, FRONTEX launched the bilateral Frontex-Morocco Comité Mixte dedicated to discussing possibility of cooperation including risk analysis and coast guard cooperation, as well as define a road map (Frontex 2019).

Overview of DEPMI in Morocco

	Italy-Morocco (2001-2021)		EU-Morocco broader cooperation framework
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	Readmission Agreement (1998) and relative Protocol (1999)		Negotiations on Readmission Agreement have been stalling
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration			FRONTEX- Morocco Comité Mixte (2019)
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking			
Fight against Root Causes		Projects/Programs on awareness raisings and risks of irregular migration	
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection		Projects/Program assisting voluntary return and integration of sub-Saharan irregular migrants stranded in Morocco	EASO-Morocco Dialogue (2019)
Legal Mobility	Agreement on Employment Migration and relative Protocol (2005) Reserved quotas non seasonal work between 2002-2011 Admitted to competition for seasonal work (2003-2020)		
Visa			Negotiations on Visa Facilitation have been stalling
Political Dialogue	art.2 of the Protocol on Strengthened Political Consultations between the two Foreign Ministries (2000) includes migration and mobility as matters of political dialogue New impetus provided in this sense by the Multidimensional Strategic Partnership (2019)		Mobility Partnership (2013)

¹⁹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/eutf_morocco_2.pdf

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DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Nigeria



Iole Fontana

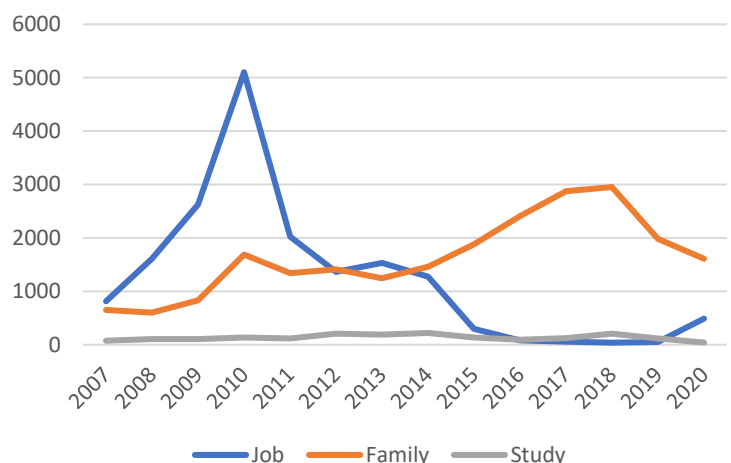
Migration Outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	High between 2014-2017	Low between 2018-2021
Relevance as a country of transit	Low	
Safe country of origin list ¹⁹⁶	NO	
Schengen Visa Exemption	NO	

Nigeria is a very relevant country in terms of migratory flows to Italy. Migratory links between the two countries go back to the late 1960s, when many Italians moved to Nigeria while a community of Nigerians started to grow in Italy. In the last two decades, migration has become even more important and both regular and irregular migratory flows from Nigeria to Italy have increased.

In terms of **regular migration**, 119,089 Nigerians were regularly present on the Italian territory in 2021, compared to 113,049 in 2020 and 114,096 in 2019,¹⁹⁷ representing the 11th biggest community of non-EU citizens in Italy. In terms of yearly regular entries, between 2007 and 2020 job and family reunification permits were the most common compared to legal mobility for study reasons (Fig.1). While entries for family reunification remained stable and slightly increased between 2016 and 2018, regular entrances for job and seasonal work drastically decreased after the peak recorded between 2009 and 2010. This is also linked to a general reduction of the annual entry quotas for

Fig. 1 Nigerians Regular Yearly Entries to Italy by reason of entry (2007-2020). Source: ISTAT.



¹⁹⁶ According to the list of safe countries of origin as indicated by the Italian Decree 4 October 2019.

¹⁹⁷ ISTAT, data on foreign residents.

seasonal work established by the so-called *Decreto Flusso*.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, if until 2010 annual flows decrees reserved some national entry quotas for Nigeria,¹⁹⁹ from 2011 onward, Flows Decrees started to set only general entry quotas for seasonal work, thereby reducing chances for regular entry for Nigerians who now had to compete with other nationalities.

In terms of **irregular flows**, during the years of the so-called ‘migration crisis’, Nigeria emerged as key country of origin for irregular movements to Italy. In 2011, it already stood as the second country in terms of sea arrivals, while a peak was recorded in 2015-2017 (Fig.2). In 2016 and 2017 Nigerians became the first nationality in terms of arrivals to Italy across the Central Mediterranean route (accounting respectively for 21% and 15% of total arrivals) (IDOS 2018).

Interestingly, if we combine the data available on Nigerians’ irregular arrivals to Italy with the data on regular entries for job or seasonal work, irregular arrivals increase as regular entries for economic migration decrease (Fig.3).

Root causes for movements mainly include economic reasons and poverty especially in rural areas; as well as internal conflicts and political instability linked to the presence of Boko Haram in the Northern part of the country (ISPI & Caritas 2020). Gender violence, prostitution and migratory movements linked to human trafficking of women to Italy and Europe are also key push factors (AICS 2020; Ceccorulli 2017). For these reasons, according to IOM,²⁰⁰ Nigerian women account for the largest share of arrivals to Italy. The greatest part of Nigerian migrants gets to Italy across the Central Mediterranean Route, via Niger and Libya (IOM 2018).

Fig. 2 Nigerians irregular arrivals to Italy via Central Mediterranean Route (2009-2020). Source: own elaboration from FRONTEX and UNHCR data.

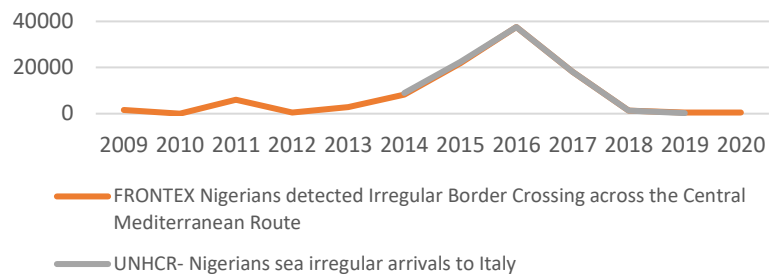
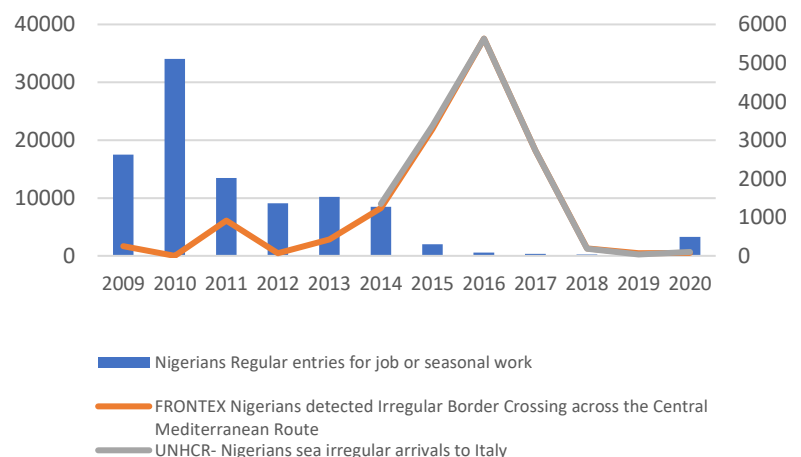


Fig. 3 Nigerians irregular flows to Italy versus regular entries with job/seasonal work permit (2009-2020). Source: own elaboration from FRONTEX and UNHCR data.



¹⁹⁸ Namely the governmental Flow Decree setting entry quotas for employment and seasonal work for non-EU citizens.

¹⁹⁹ 500 in 2002; 200 in 2003; 2000 in 2004; 2000 in 2005; 1500 in 2006; 1500 in 2007; 1500 in 2008; 1500 in 2010.

²⁰⁰ IOM. 2017. Rapporto OIM: sempre più giovani e sempre più vulnerabili le potenziali vittime di tratta in arrivo via mare in Italia <<https://italy.iom.int/it/news/rapporto-oim-sempre-piu-giovani-e-sempre-piu-vulnerabili-le-potenziali-vittime-di-tratta-arrivo-mare-italia>>. Last accessed March 2022.

In latest years, irregular migratory flows from Nigeria have drastically reduced, in line with a general decrease of flows to Italy after 2018. In absolute terms, **COVID-19** does not seem to have affected Nigerian irregular flows to Italy, insofar as flows were already low even before the pandemic (fig.4). While arrivals further decreased during Italy’s first lockdown (March- May 2020), they raised again during summer due to the lightening of Covid-19 restrictions and to good weather conditions. They then followed an up-down trend to eventually rise after September 2021, even if numbers continued to remain quite low in absolute terms (Fig.5).

Source: Own’s elaboration from Frontex irregular border crossings across Central Mediterranean route.

Fig. 4 FRONTEX Nigerians detected Irregular Border Crossing across the Central Mediterranean Route before and after Covid-19.

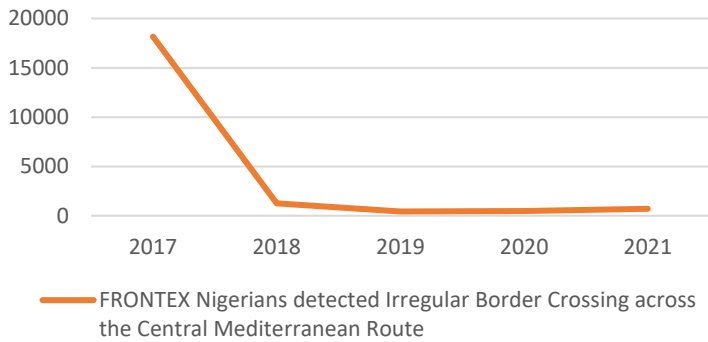
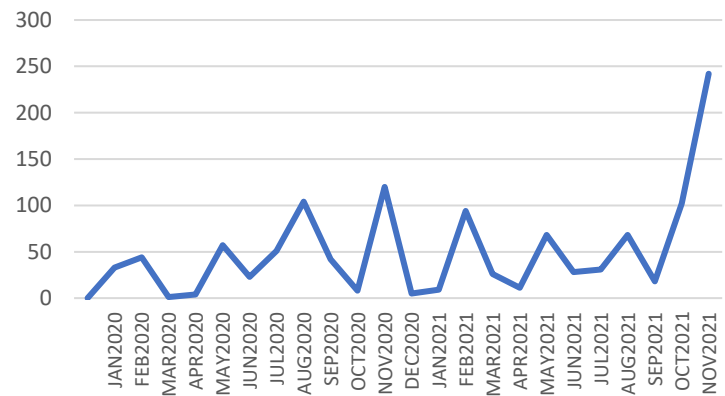


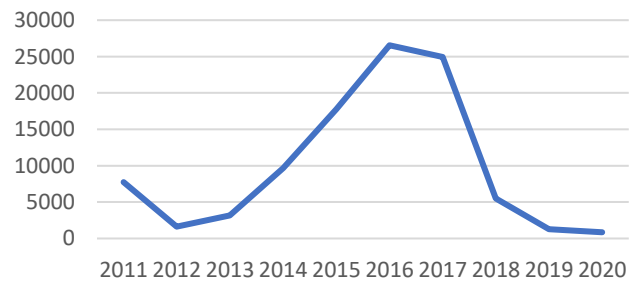
Fig. 5 Impact of Covid-19 on irregular arrivals of Nigerians to Italy via Central Mediterranean Route.

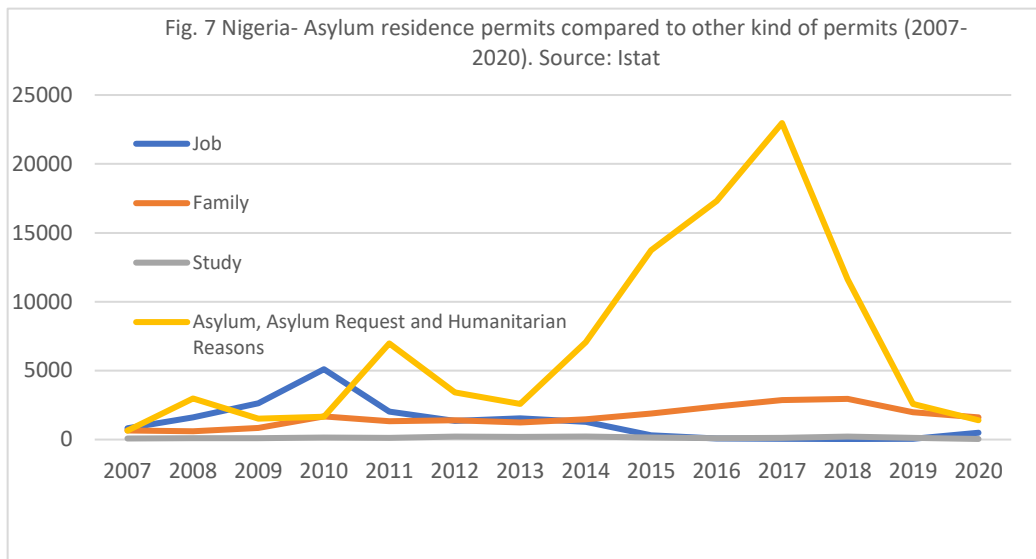


At the end of 2021, Nigeria is no longer among the first countries of origin in terms of sea irregular arrivals to Italy. Moreover, it does not seem to play a relevant role as a transit country to Italy of flows of people of other nationality.

Finally, **in terms of asylum**, and in line with the above-mentioned migratory trends, Nigerians were the first nationality in terms of asylum applications to Italy during the ‘migration crisis’, between 2016 and 2017 (Fig. 6). In this regard, residence permits for asylum request, asylum or humanitarian reasons accounted for the most during those years, compared to other types of residence permits (work, family reunification or study reasons) (Fig.7).

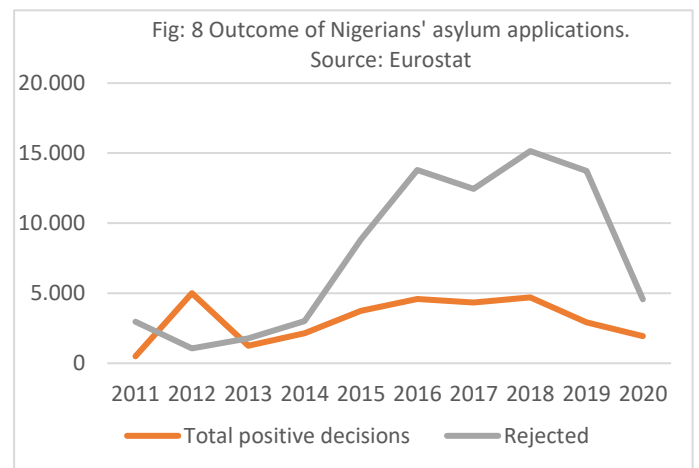
Fig. 6 Nigerians' Asylum applications to Italy (2011-2020). Source: Own Elaboration from EUROSTAT.





However, Nigerians were also recording the highest rejection rate in terms of asylum decisions (fig.8). This is mainly due to the fact that most asylum-seekers come from the South of the country, rather than from the Northern Boko Haram’s region, and are therefore mainly considered as economic migrants (Fontana 2019).

In this regard and due to the high rejection rate, we can say that out of the number of permits for asylum, asylum request and humanitarian recognition as shown in Fig 7., most permits were merely for asylum request, rather than for asylum or humanitarian recognition.



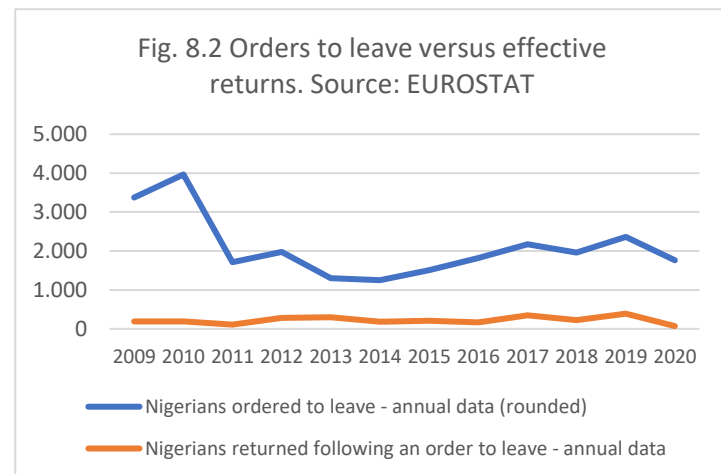
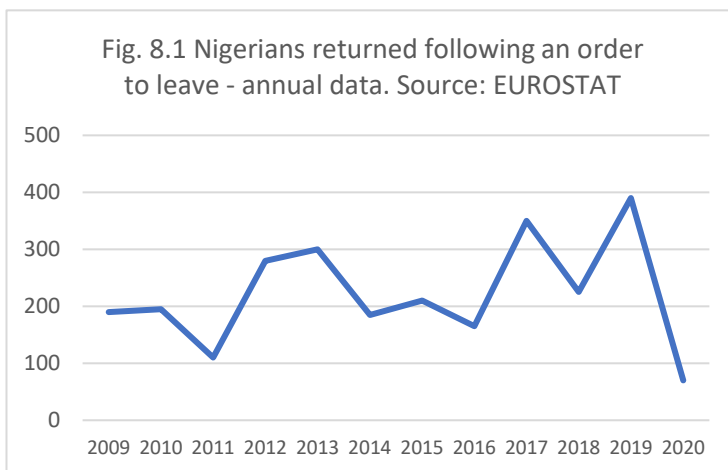
Italy-Nigeria cooperation on migration

Bilateral Political Cooperation

Italian political cooperation on migration with Nigeria is rooted in a broader and well-established political and economic cooperation framework. Nigeria is one of Italy’s key economic partners in Africa, and diplomatic and economic relations go back to the early 2000s when the two countries signed an agreement for the promotion of investments (2005) and for the cancellation of Nigerian debit (2005). Relations were further strengthened in terms of juridical cooperation, with three agreements being signed in 2016 on mutual assistance in criminal matters, extradition and transfer of sentenced persons.

Looking at cooperation on migration matters, the toolkit of the External Dimension of Italian Migration Policy (DEPMI – Italian Acronym) in Nigeria is based on the following tools.

In terms of **readmission and return**, a **Readmission and Return Agreement**, otherwise called ‘Migration Agreement’, was concluded in 2000 and entered into force in 2011.²⁰¹ While the agreement has been operative for many years already, effective return rate remains low (Fig. 8.1; Fig.8.2).



Source: Author’s own elaboration from EUROSTAT and CESPI 2005.

Moreover, following the massive arrivals in 2016, a **Working Arrangement between the Italian Department of Public Security and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS)** was signed on March 1st 2017,²⁰² in order to establish an operative cooperation for readmission and return identification procedures.

Bilateral political dialogue on migration and security issues has been reinforced since 2016 onward with many high-level visits (e.g. Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni in 2016; the President of the Italian House of Deputies Laura Boldrini in 2017; the head of cabinet of the Italian Ministry of Interior in 2018 and the Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs in 2019).

In terms of **border control**, cooperation priorities focused on the fight against human trafficking, border management and training of border guards. In this regard, in February 2009, the two countries and Interpol signed a **joint agreement/Memorandum of Understanding** (Memorandum d’Intesa) to intensify the fight against trafficking and irregular migration²⁰³. The Agreement launched a two-year pilot project with the goal to provide technical assistance and train Nigerian border guards, also through secondment to Italian ports and

²⁰¹ Text of the Agreement available on atrio.esteri.it

²⁰² <https://www.jeanpierrecassarino.com/datasets/ra/it/>

²⁰³ Accordo per intensificare la lotta contro il traffico di esseri umani e l’immigrazione clandestina
<https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg17/lavori/documentiparlamentari/indiceetesti/038/002v03/00000002.pdf>

airports. Between 2009 and 2012, 16 Nigerian officials were trained and seconded in Italian ports and airports.²⁰⁴ Between 2016 and 2017, other ‘Law enforcement’ trainings were organized by the Italian Financial Police.

In terms of **legal channels of mobility**, whereas the topic has been addressed in recent high-level meetings²⁰⁵, there are currently no key frameworks to regulate legal mobility from Nigeria to Italy. After the signature of the Readmission Agreement in 2001, Nigeria was reserved for the first time 500 entry quotas for non-seasonal employment by the *Decreto Flussi* 2002. Quotas went up to 1,500 in 2010. After the general suspension by the Italian government of entry quotas for non-seasonal employment in 2010, Nigeria continued to be included among the nationalities admitted for competition over quotas on seasonal jobs. Yet, as shown in Fig. 1, only a very limited number of Nigerian workers manage to exploit this regular channel.

One of the few other channels, is the provision of scholarships by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IMFA), by Italian Regions and by Italian universities. Between 2016 and 2018, around 20,000 € were allocated by the IMFA to provide scholarships to Nigerian students. Yet, this legal channel remains quite limited in terms of funds and number of Nigerian citizens involved. Moreover, visa issuance rate by Italian consulates for Nigerian citizens is very low and between 2014 and 2020 average denial rate was over 46%.²⁰⁶

Bilateral Development Cooperation on migratory issues

In terms of development cooperation, between 2001 and 2020, fight against human trafficking has been a key cooperation priority since 2001, with several projects being organized in cooperation with UNICRI²⁰⁷, IOM²⁰⁸ and UNICEF²⁰⁹ to prevent human trafficking and assist victims. From 2016 onwards, projects have also increasingly focused on addressing root causes, with the purpose to promote socio-economic development and job opportunities in Nigeria to stop irregular migration.²¹⁰ Overall, out of the funds allocated between 2001 and 2020,²¹¹ the greatest part targets the fight against human trafficking (37%), the fight against root causes (21%), and support to internally displaced people (15%) as shown in Fig.9. A smaller percentage is devoted to legal mobility in terms of scholarships.

²⁰⁴ Rapporto sull’implementazione della cooperazione italiana allo sviluppo (2012).

²⁰⁵ https://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/frame.jsp?tipodoc=SommComm&leg=18&id=1117932&part=doc_dc-sedetit_sldc

²⁰⁶ Schengen Visa Statistics

²⁰⁷ Fight against the sexual exploitation and trafficking of Nigerian women and kids in Italy (847.744,00 € between 2001 and 2005; 1.954.000,00 € for the second phase of the project after 2007)

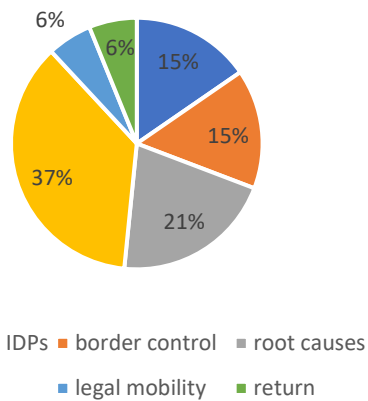
²⁰⁸ Fight against women trafficking, 1.037.800,00 € for the period 2008-2011,

²⁰⁹ 749000€ starting in 2018

²¹⁰ In cooperation with ActionAID, 160.545,00 €

²¹¹ Author’s calculations based on the analysis of the following sources: Rapporto sull’implementazione della cooperazione allo sviluppo (several years, 2001-2020).

Fig. 9 Italian development cooperation: Funds addressing migration-related issues in Nigeria (2001-2020). Source: Author's own elaboration from Italian Reports on the Implementation of Development Cooperation



Multilateral Cooperation: EU-Nigeria cooperation as an additional framework for Italy's DEPMI

Dialogue on migration between EU and Nigeria goes back to 2008, when the 'EU-Nigerian Dialogue on Migration and Development' was formally established. The EU-Nigeria Joint Way Forward (2009) further reinforced bilateral commitment on migration issues which were identified as key priorities and, in 2012, Nigeria became the first sub-Saharan country to sign a Working Arrangement with FRONTEX. In 2015, the EU-Nigeria Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility was formally launched as a broader framework for cooperation and dialogue, with the goal to better organize legal migration, fight irregular movements, promote international protection and maximize the development impact of migration and mobility. In this context and following the peak of irregular arrivals of Nigerian citizens to the EU in 2016, Nigeria was identified by the European Commission as a 'priority country' in its Communication on Partnership Framework with Third Countries.²¹² Italian government was very supportive of this approach, and in the European Council it strongly promoted the conclusion of migration compacts and of *ad hoc* agreements with key priority countries including Nigeria.²¹³ In terms of readmission, while the EU has received a mandate to negotiate a readmission agreement with Nigeria in 2016, negotiations are still ongoing. Italy's agreement with Nigeria provides therefore the only relevant framework in terms of readmission and return.

²¹² https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:763f0d11-2d86-11e6-b497-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

²¹³ <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/983593.pdf>

Overview of Italy's DEPMI in Nigeria

	Italy-Nigeria (2000-2020)		EU-Nigeria broader cooperation framework
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	<i>Migration Agreement</i> (signed in 2001 and entered into force in 2011)	Reintegration programs promoted in cooperation with IOM (€ 0,7 Mil)	
	<i>Working Arrangement between the Italian Department of Public Security and the Nigeria Immigration Service</i> (NIS) (2017)		
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	Memorandum of understanding Italy-Nigeria-Interpol (2009)		Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (2015)
			Frontex Working Arrangement (2012)
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	Memorandum of understanding Italy-Nigeria-Interpol (2009)	Projects implemented in cooperation with UNICRI, IOM, UNICEF and UN Women for a total of € 5 Mil.	
Fight against Root Causes	\	Projects implemented in cooperation with ActionAid and Purimac (€ 2,7 Mil.) to provide socio-economic alternatives to migration	
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	\	Support to IDPs in cooperation with UNHCR, WFP, and IOM (€ 2 Mil.)	
Legal Mobility	\		Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (2015)
Visa	\		\
Political Dialogue	Migration as a key issue of high-level political dialogue		EU-Nigerian Dialogue on migration and development (2008); EU Nigeria Joint Way Forward (2009)

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DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Pakistan



Iole Fontana²¹⁴

Migration Outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

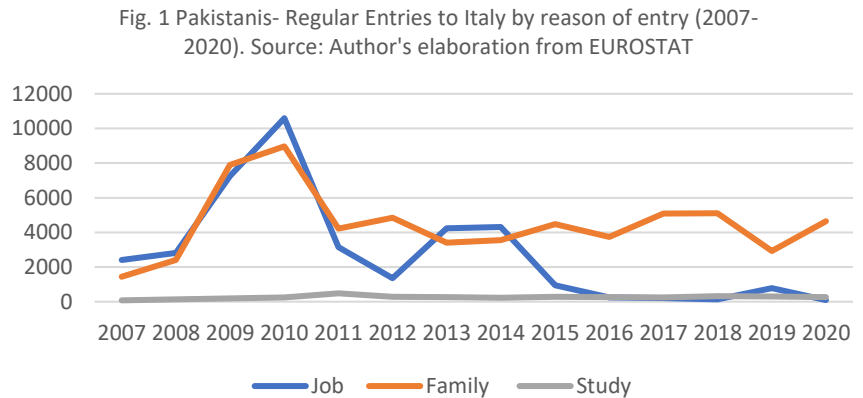
Relevance as a country of origin	MEDIUM-HIGH (especially in terms of asylum applications)
Relevance as a country of transit	NO
Safe country of origin list ²¹⁵	NO
Schengen Visa Exemption	NO

Migratory flows from Pakistan to Italy go back to the 1990s, when Italy became a common destination for young male migrants looking for economic opportunities (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2014). Even if the country has recorded a rapid industrial development in latest years, economic growth has not been able to keep the pace with huge demographic growth, thereby pushing massive flows of citizens abroad. Moreover, ethnic-national tensions, political violence embedded in a long story of military coups, permanent mobilisation, tensions at the border with India and Afghanistan, as well as terrorism, are key push factors that have contributed to emigration. According to a recent survey on Pakistanis in Italy, reasons for moving include situations of violence, conflict and insecurity (54%), lack of rights and failure to respect fundamental freedoms (36%), and economic reasons (33%) (Mixed Migration Center 2022). Moreover, increasingly frequent floods and environmental disasters in the country are gradually emerging as a further push factor. While migration movements have traditionally been oriented towards the Gulf countries, Italy is one of the preferred destinations in the European Union (EU), also due to a stable and consolidated community of Pakistanis in the country.

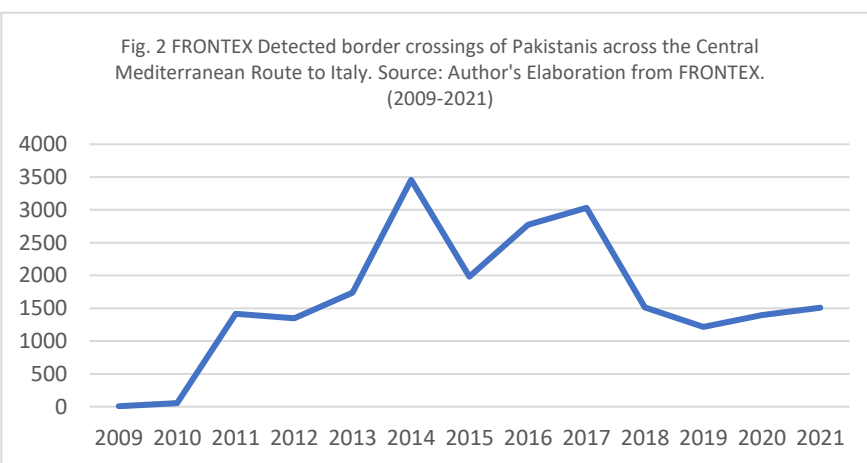
²¹⁴ Scientific Coordinator, DEPMI Program; Assistant Professor, University of Catania.

²¹⁵ According to the list of safe countries of origin as indicated by the Italian Decree 4 October 2019.

In terms of **regular migration**, 135,520 Pakistanis were regularly present on the Italian territory in 2021,²¹⁶ representing the 9th biggest community of non-EU citizens in Italy. In terms of yearly regular entries, between 2007 and 2020, job and family reunification permits were the most common, with a peak value recorded in 2010 (Fig.1).

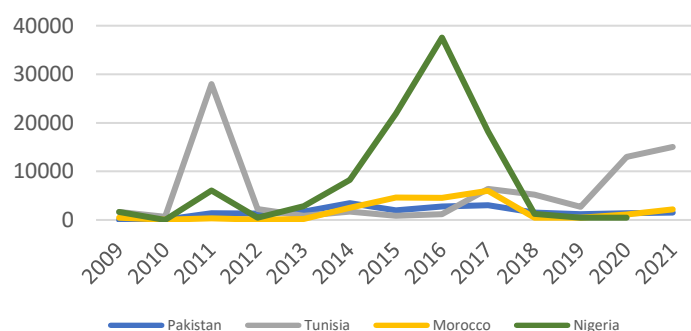


In terms of **irregular migration**, an increasing number of Pakistanis crossed the Central Mediterranean to Italy in the last ten years (Fig.2). Whereas absolute numbers along the route decreased in 2019 and 2020, in relative terms Pakistanis represented 10% and 12% respectively of all sea arrivals to Italy, with Izmir in Turkey as the most common embarkation site (UNHCR 2019; 2020).



However, sea journeys to Italy are not the most common route for irregular flows from Pakistan. Between 2009 and 2021, only 21,300 Pakistanis were detected along the Central Mediterranean according to Frontex data. This number is quite low, if compared to other nationalities normally taking this route - such as migrants from Nigeria or Tunisia (Fig.3).

Fig. 3 FRONTEX Detected border crossings along the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy. Comparison of nationalities. (2009-2021). Source: Author's own elaboration from FRONTEX data.

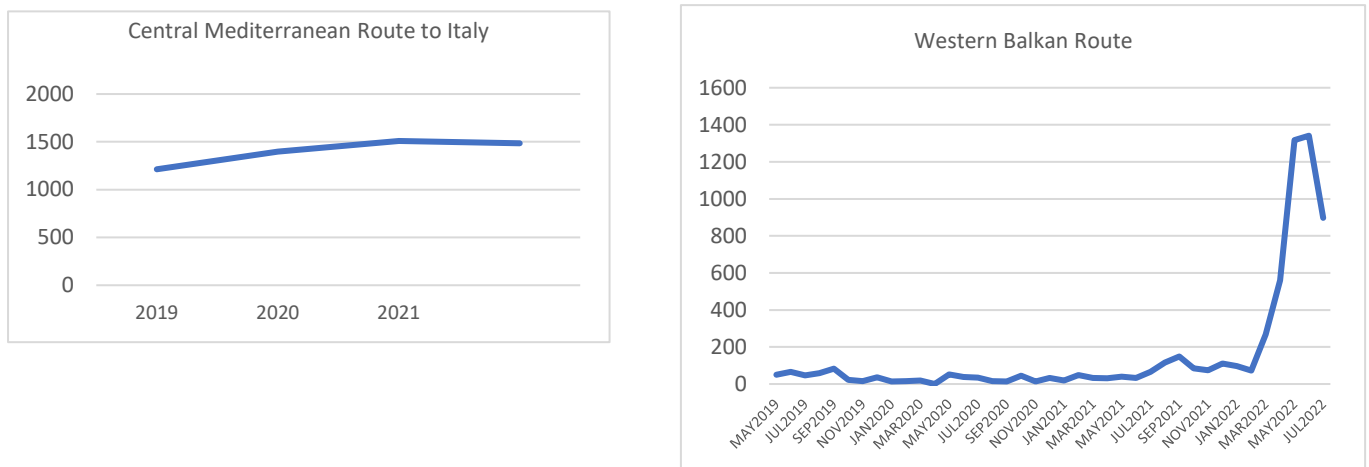


Most irregular flows from Pakistan to Italy mainly take the land route through the Western Balkans, across Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia. Between 2019 and 2020, 3,544 Pakistanis were detected at the Italian land Northern border with Austria and Slovenia (CeSPI 2021). In this sense, **COVID-19**

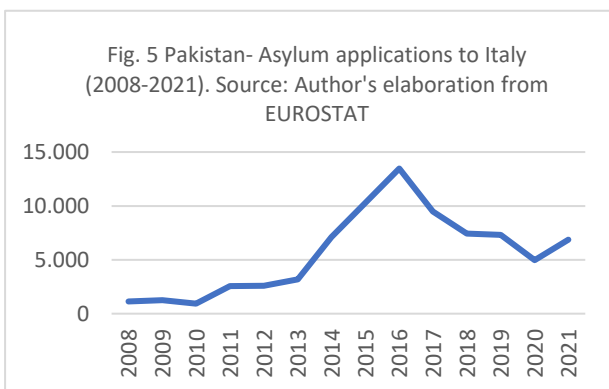
²¹⁶ ISTAT, data on foreign residents.

did not reduce irregular flows from Pakistan, both across sea and land routes. As shown in fig.4, figures went up from the pre-pandemic period, across the Central Mediterranean. Similarly, journeys across the Western Balkans recorded a spike: after a momentaneous drop during April 2020 due to widespread border closures, the number of Pakistanis moving along the route gradually increased, with a peak during summer 2022.

Fig.4 Comparison of Movements of Pakistan Irregular Migrants before and after the outbreak of the COVID-19, across the Central Mediterranean route to Italy and the Western Balkan Route. Source: Author's elaboration from FROTNET.



In terms of **asylum applications**, Pakistan is one of the most relevant countries of origin along with Nigeria. 2016 recorded the highest number, with over 13,000 Pakistani applications (Fig.5). While figures decreased in the following years, in 2021 applications from Pakistan asylum-seekers hit 6,680, representing over 15% of total requests. Interestingly, even if Pakistanis were the first nationality for asylum applications to Italy in 2021, they do not also figure among the first nationalities of sea arrivals in 2021 (Table 1, source EUROSTAT and Italian Ministry of Interior). This seems to confirm that most asylum-seekers are likely to take land routes and that land movements are more significant than sea journeys.



First 10 th Nationalities for Asylum Applications to Italy in 2021		First 10 th nationalities for sea arrivals to Italy in 2021	
Pakistan	6.880	Tunisia	15.671
Bangladesh	6.635	Egypt	8.352
Tunisia	6.360	Bangladesh	7.824
Afghanistan	5.235	Iran	3.915
Egypt	2.680	Ivory Coast	3,807
Morocco	1.575	Iraq	2,645
Georgia	1.335	Guinea	2,446
Nigeria	1.300	Eritrea	2.328
Somalia	1.170	Syria	2.266
Côte d'Ivoire	1.015	Morocco	2.193

Fig. 6: Pakistan- Outcome of asylum applications to Italy (2008-2021). Source: Author's elaboration from EUROSTAT

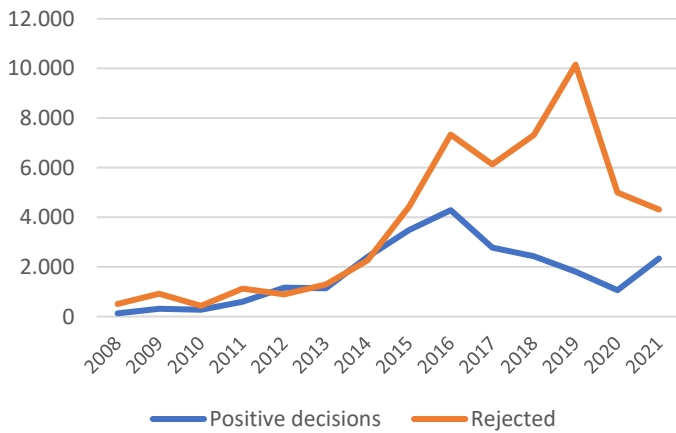
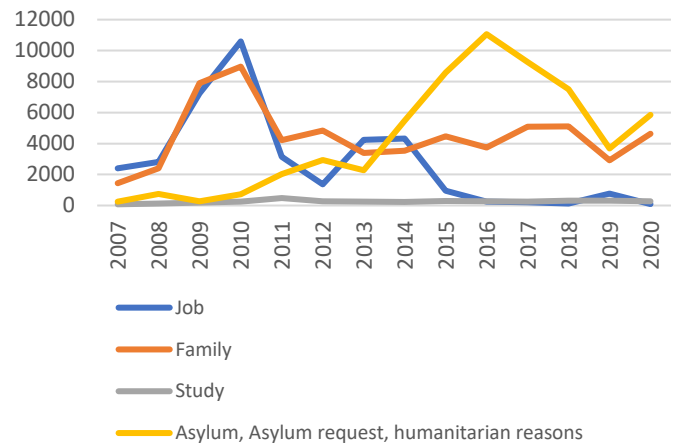


Fig. 7 Pakistan- Asylum residence permits compared to other kind of permits (2007-2020). Source: Author's elaboration from ISTAT



In terms of asylum decisions, rejection is the most common outcome for asylum applications of Pakistan asylum-seekers to Italy between 2008-2020 (Fig.6). Positive decisions slightly improved only between 2013 and 2017. In the same period, yearly permits for asylum and humanitarian protection outnumbered any other type of permits granted by Italy to Pakistanis migrants (Fig.7).

Italy-Pakistan cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Political and economic relations between Italy and Pakistan are defined by the over 36 agreements, protocols and memorandum of understandings concluded since 1950s in a variety of sectors.²¹⁷ Cooperation on migration intensified in the early 2000s and focused on two key dimensions: return and legal channels of mobility.

²¹⁷ For the full list, check 'Archivio Trattati Internazionali Online', Ministero degli Esteri.

In the field of **return and readmission**, in March 2000 Italy and Pakistan adopted an **Agreement for the Readmission of migrants in irregular position**,²¹⁸ along with an executive protocol. The Agreement was never formally signed by Pakistan authorities, due to reluctance over what could stand as an unpopular move to the eyes of Pakistan population.²¹⁹ Yet, even without a formal signature,²²⁰ cooperation over returns became operative and, as already done for other countries, it came to be linked to opportunities for **legal mobility**. Until 2003, Pakistan had never joined preferential treatment over regular migration channels to Italy. In 2004, the country was reserved 1000 entry quotas for non-seasonal workers in exchange for what was labelled as a 'good collaboration' on readmission.²²¹ The same number was confirmed until 2010, when the last Flow Decree on non-seasonal workers was approved. Furthermore, from 2007 onward and for the first time, Pakistani citizens were allowed to compete for seasonal work along with other nationalities as indicated in the annual Flow Decrees. Finally, in 2010, cooperation on returns was framed in the context of the Readmission Agreement signed by the European Union.

Overall, according to EUROSTAT data, between 2008-2020, over 700 irregular migrants from Pakistan were returned, with a peak in 2016 - when almost 29% of Pakistanis ordered to leave was actually returned (Fig.8). This percentage decreased to 6% in 2018. The issue was at the centre of the high-level visit of Undersecretary Manlio Di Stefano who, during a tight two-day schedule of meetings with Islamabad authorities, stressed the need to enhance bilateral collaboration on returns and fight against irregular migration.²²² Interestingly, in 2019, and for the first time since 2007, Pakistan was no longer included among the nationalities receiving a preferential treatment in terms of regular channels for seasonal work. It does seem, therefore, that entry quotas were entangled with cooperation on returns and, as the latter slightly improved in 2019, Pakistan came to figure again in the list of preferred nationalities for seasonal work in the Flow Decree 2020.²²³

²¹⁸ Accordo per la riammissione di immigrati in posizione irregolare e relativo Protocollo attuativo, 21.03.2000. https://ambislamabad.esteri.it/ambasciata_islamabad/it/i_rapporti_bilaterali/cooperazione_politica/accordi

²¹⁹ Camera dei deputati - XVI Legislatura - Dossier di documentazione, Pakistan. 11.06.2008. <http://documenti.camera.it/leg16/dossier/testi/SP019.htm>

²²⁰ https://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/frame.jsp?tipodoc=Resaula&leg=14&id=114356&part=doc_dc-allegatob_ab

²²¹ Ibid.; Camera dei deputati - XVI Legislatura - Dossier di documentazione, Pakistan, Relazioni Internazionali, 21 Giugno 2010.

²²² https://www.esteri.it/it/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2019/11/di-stefano-in-pakistan-ampia-collaborazione-bilaterale/

²²³ <https://mofa.gov.pk/5th-round-of-pakistan-italy-annual-bilateral-political-consultations/>

Fig. 8 Number of Pakistanis nationals actually returned from Italy following an order to leave (2008-2020). Source: author's own elaboration from EUROSTAT



Mobility is framed not only by seasonal entry quotas. In 2005, the two countries concluded an ‘**Agreement of Cultural, Scientific and Technological Cooperation**’ which foresees the possibility of scholarships for students and researchers.²²⁴ On average, between 2007-2020, 250 resident permits were released every year for study reasons to Pakistan citizens.²²⁵

Bilateral Development Cooperation

An analysis of the Italian Cooperation Reports (2001-2020)²²⁶ reveal that most of Italian aids to Pakistan were addressed to support the vulnerable areas of the country, in terms of health, food security, employability and emergency aid to natural disasters. In terms of migration-related programs, most funds are addressed to the protection of Afghan refugees in the country as shown in table 2. The other programs deal with economic development and employability, in terms of addressing potential root causes.

Table 2- Italian Development Cooperation Programs on Refugee Assistance in Pakistan

Name	Year	Amount	Implementer
Promotion of socio-cultural and economic conditions of Afghan refugees women in Pakistan	2002	562.892,00 €	Intersos
Support to IDPs in Nord-Overst	2009	1.000.000,00 €	UNHCR

²²⁴ Accordo di Cooperazione Culturale, Scientifica e Tecnologica.

<https://www.normattiva.it/do/atto/caricaPdf?cdimg=007G019800100010110001&num=0001&dgu=2007-11-03>

²²⁵ Pakistan is not among the eligible nationalities for the Scholarship Program for foreign students financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

²²⁶ The analysis was integrated by a study of programs and projects as indicated in the website openaid.aics.gov.it

Humanitarian support to crisis affected Afghan nationals	2022	4.000.000,00 €	IOM
Humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugee in Pakistan	2016	2.000.000,00 €	UNHCR

EU-Pakistan Cooperation as an additional framework to DEPMI in Pakistan.

The EU and Pakistan concluded a **Readmission Agreement in 2010**,²²⁷ which also provides the main regular platform for cooperation and dialogue through the meetings of the Joint Readmission Committee. In 2016, Pakistan was included as a ‘priority country’ in the European Commission’s Communication on Partnership Framework with Third Countries (2016)²²⁸ and in 2019 the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan was adopted. An entire chapter is dedicated to ‘Migration and Mobility’ with the goal to promote the effective implementation of the Readmission Agreement, stem irregular migration, address the root causes of irregular migration and work towards a comprehensive dialogue on migration.

In 2019, FRONTEX launched exploratory talks with Pakistan authorities over potential bilateral collaboration.²²⁹

Overview of DEPMI in Pakistan

	Italy-Pakistan (2000-2021)		EU-Pakistan broader cooperation framework
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	2000: <i>Readmission and Return Agreement</i>	\	Readmission Agreement (2010)
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration		\	EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan (2019)
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking		\	
Fight against Root Causes	\	Fight against poverty and promotion of employment in vulnerable areas	EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan (2019)
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection	\	Programs supporting humanitarian assistance and reception conditions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan	
Legal Mobility	2004-2010: Preferential Treatment and Entry quotas for non-seasonal employment 2007-2018, 2020: Allowed to compete for seasonal employment quotas		

²²⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:22010A1104%2802%29>

²²⁸ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:763f0d11-2d86-11e6-b497-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

²²⁹ Frontex. 2019. Risk Analysis 2019.

	2005: <i>Agreement of Cultural, Scientific and Technological Cooperation</i>		
Visa			\
Political Dialogue	Political dialogue is mainly focused on terrorism and Pakistan-Indian relations. However, readmission has been a key issue on the agenda in the recent years		Mainly in the domain of the Joint Readmission Committee

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<https://www.climate-refugees.org/spotlight/2021/7/30/pakistan>

DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Tunisia



*Iole Fontana*²³⁰

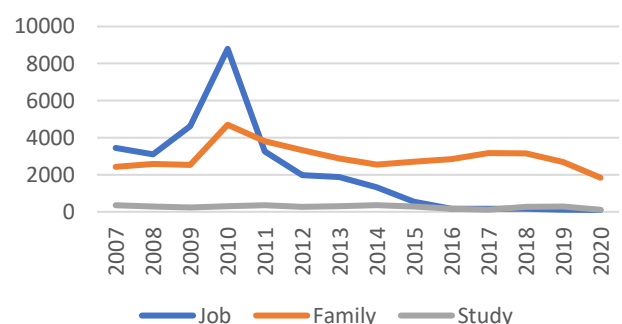
Migration Outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	HIGH between 2011-2013	HIGH between 2017-2022
Relevance as a country of transit	LOW	
Safe country of origin list ²³¹	YES	
Schengen Visa Exemption	NO	

Tunisia has always been a key country of origin of migratory flows to Italy, due to its difficult economic and political conditions, coupled with geographical proximity to Southern Italy and with opportunities in the Italian fisheries and agriculture. This combination of different push and pull factors has prompted various migratory waves between the early 1960s and 2000s, in terms of regular, irregular, and circular migration (IOM, 2020). In the 2010s, the Jasmine Revolution, the following Arab Spring Uprisings, and the crisis in Libya, as well as the country's convoluted transition amidst political and economic uncertainty, prompted a massive irregular migration of Tunisians to Italy, with a peak recorded in 2011. The events paved the way to what was later labelled as the 'North Africa Emergency', with Tunisia emerging - along with other North African countries- as a crucial country of origin.

In terms of **regular migration**, 97,407 Tunisians were regularly present in Italy in 2021, compared to 93,350 in 2020 and 90,615 in 2019,²³² representing the 14th biggest

Fig. 1 Tunisian Regular Yearly Entries to Italy by reason of entry (2007-2020). Source: Author's Elaboration from ISTAT.



²³⁰ Scientific Coordinator, DEPMI Program; Assistant Professor, University of Catania.

²³¹ According to the list of safe countries of origin as indicated by the Italian Decree 4 October 2019.

²³² ISTAT, data on foreign residents.

community of non-EU citizens in Italy. In terms of yearly regular entries, between 2007 and 2020 job and family reunification permits were the most common if compared to legal mobility for study reasons (Fig.1). Yet, while entries for family reunification remained stable and slightly increased after 2014, regular entries for job and seasonal work drastically decreased after the peak recorded in 2010. This is partly related a general reduction of the annual entry quotas for seasonal work established by the governmental Flows Decree (the so-called Decreto Flussi) after 2011.

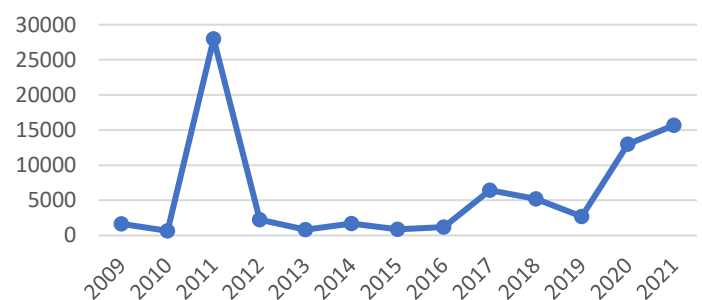
In terms of **irregular flows**, after the Arab Spring uprisings Tunisia emerged as a key country of origin of flows to Italy via the Central Mediterranean route (Fig.2). The wave of protests, the toppling of Ben Ali’s regime, the inherent political and economic instability during the political transition, as well as the crisis in Libya that obliged thousands of Tunisian workers to be repatriated, were all factors prompting massive flows. Overall, in 2011 Tunisians represented the first nationality and 43% of all sea arrivals to Italy,²³³ with 7,000 people arriving in one day only, during March 2011 (CeSPI 2012).

Whereas irregular flows subsided between 2013 and 2015, they have been increasing again since 2017. In 2018, Tunisians represented 22% of sea arrivals to Italy, compared to 5% of the previous year (UNHCR 2018). Then, in 2020, migration from Tunisia recorded a new high, accounting for 38% of migrants reaching Italian shores, with Sfax, Zarzi and Mahdia as main departure sites (UNHCR 2020). The same

trend was recorded in 2021, with over 15,600 arrivals by sea from Tunisia (+20% compared to the previous year).²³⁴ The data collected during the first six months of 2022 suggest Tunisia is continuing to represent a key country of origin, with already more than 4000 people having reached Italy by sea.²³⁵

In this regard, the **COVID-19 pandemic** has not reduced irregular flows of Tunisian citizens to Italy. As already mentioned, and as shown in Figure 3, irregular movements from Tunisia have rather increased by almost a factor of six in 2020, during the pandemic. Whereas arrivals dropped momentarily during the first lockdown in Italy (March-May 2020), they raised again in summer, with a peak in July 2020, due to the lightening of Covid-19 restrictions and to good weather conditions (Fig. 4). The same trend was recorded the following year.

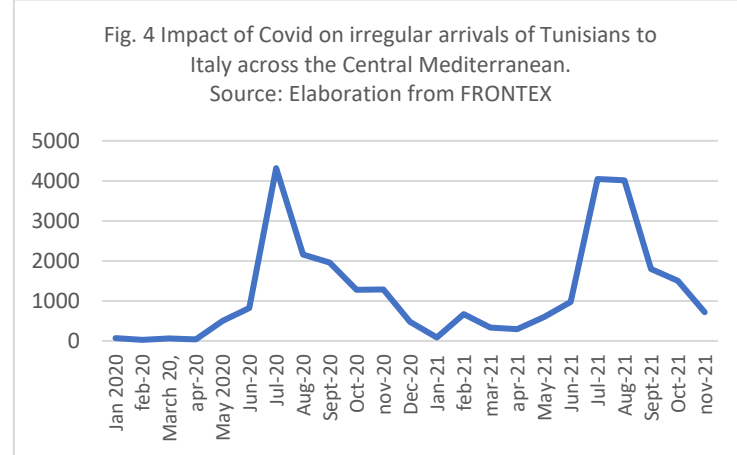
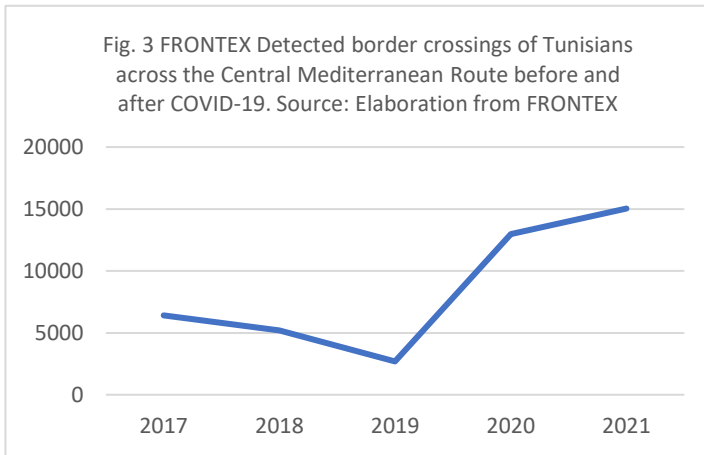
Fig. 2 FRONTEX Detected border crossings of Tunisians across the Central Mediterranean Route. Source: Author's Elaboration from FRONTEX.



²³³ Calculations based on FRONTEX data.

²³⁴ Calculations based on FRONTEX data.

²³⁵ Ibid.



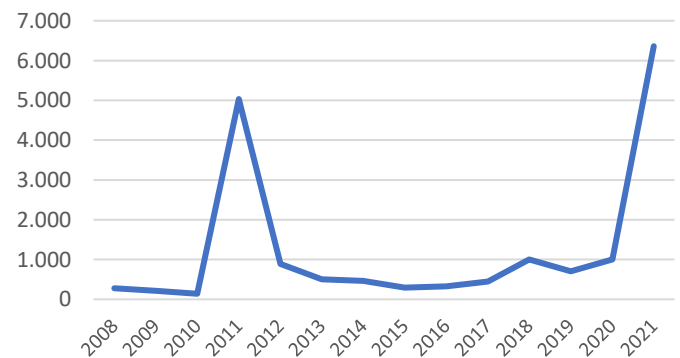
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One of the main reasons is related to Tunisia’s political instability, to its worsening economic crisis and fragile security conditions that, in the years after the Jasmine revolution, have prevented democratic consolidation and prompted more people to leave the country. The ongoing pandemic has in this sense further exacerbated existing problems, including corruption and unemployment. The 2022 constitutional crisis, President Kais Saied’s recent authoritarian turn, as well as Ukraine’s wheat shortage impinging on Tunisia’s already problematic food security, are all expected to foster more movements across the Mediterranean.

Finally, most people departing from Tunisia to Italy are mainly Tunisian nationals. Only a small percentage originates from other countries²³⁶ thereby suggesting that Tunisia is not playing a relevant role as a transit country of flows to Italy (UNHCR 2019, 2020, 2021; Herbert and Gallien 2018; European Commission 2017).

In terms of **asylum**, after the Arab uprisings Tunisians became the second nationality for asylum applications to Italy in 2011, recording unprecedented highs (Fig.5).

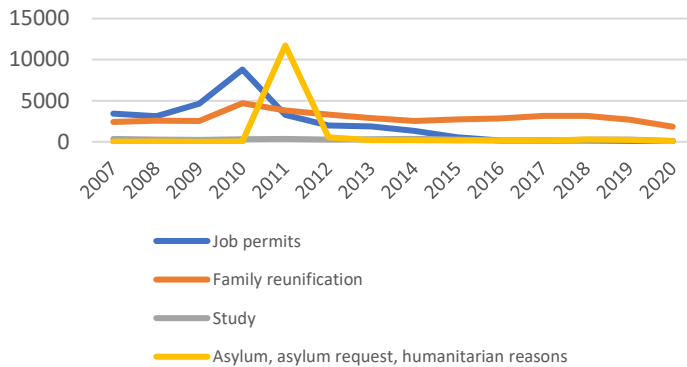
Fig. 5 Tunisia- Asylum applications to Italy (2000-2021). Source: Author’s elaboration from EUROSTAT



In this regard, residence permits for asylum request, asylum or humanitarian reasons accounted for the most in 2011, if compared to other types of residence permits (work, family reunification or study reasons) (Fig.6).

²³⁶ For instance, in 2020, 9% of migrants embarking from Tunisia were from Ivory Coast (UNCHR, 2020).

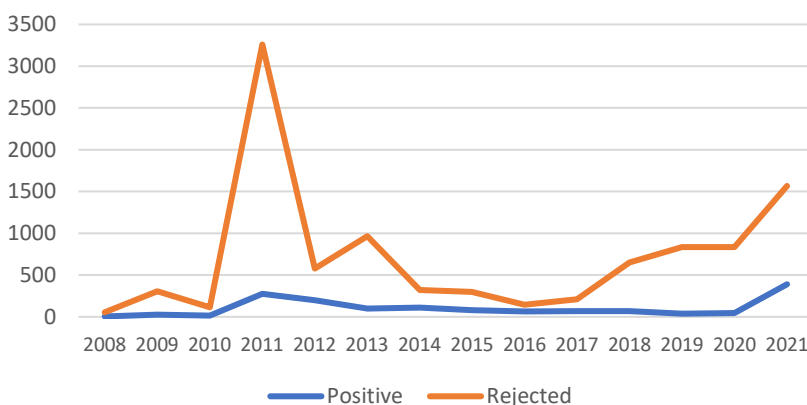
Fig. 6 Tunisia- Asylum residence permits compared to other kind of permits (2007-2020). Source: Author's elaboration from ISTAT



This is also related to the adoption by the Italian government of the decree ‘Measures of Temporary Protection for foreign citizens from North African countries’,²³⁷ which provided for the possibility to grant residence permits for humanitarian reasons to all those migrants arriving from North Africa between January 1st and April 5th, 2011.

Asylum applications from Tunisia dropped in the following years but raised again in 2021 when, due to the country’s worsening political and economic conditions, Tunisians became the third nationality in terms of asylum applications to Italy with over 6000 requests (Fig. 5). In terms of asylum decisions, Tunisians record a high rejection rate (Fig.7). This is mainly due to a combination of factors, including Tunisian applicants being mostly considered as economic migrants,²³⁸ as well as the Italian government’s decision to include Tunisia in the list of countries of safe origin.²³⁹ In this case, asylum applications from a country that is designated as safe, i.e., a place where there is apparently no persecution, torture, or degrading treatment, can be rejected as being manifestly unfounded.

Fig. 7. Tunisia. Outcome of asylum applications to Italy. Source: author's elaboration from EUROSTAT



²³⁷ DPCM 5 April 2011

²³⁸ <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/530158.pdf>; <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/procederemo-rimpatri-dei-migranti-economici-dalla-tunisia>

²³⁹ See note 2.

Italy-Tunisia cooperation on migration

Bilateral political cooperation

Italy and Tunisia have long-standing and well consolidated political and economic relations, as illustrated by the over 102 agreements, protocols, cooperation frameworks and memorandum of understandings that have been concluded between the two countries since the late 1960s, in a variety of sectors.²⁴⁰

In this dense web of relations, migration, human exchanges, joint management of migratory pressures and fight against irregular movements have emerged as crucial areas of cooperation. **Bilateral political dialogue on migration** has been a constant feature of diplomatic exchanges between the two countries. Art. 11 of the **Italian-Tunisian Treaty of Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation** (2003) provides a key framework in this regard by establishing migratory issues as a relevant sector of bilateral relations and future collaboration. Dialogue on migration has not only been maintained in the post-Ben Ali era but it has further stepped-up after 2011. Migration has since been at the centre of many high-level visits, such as Silvio Berlusconi flying to Tunis in 2011 to discuss migration and return; the visit of former Italian President of the Republic Napolitano during the launch of the Italian-Tunisian Strategic Partnership in 2012;²⁴¹ Tunisian Foreign Affairs Minister flying to Rome in 2012 to discuss opportunities to strengthen bilateral cooperation on migration;²⁴² Italian Interior Minister's visit in Tunisia in 2013;²⁴³ Tunisian Ministry of Defence in Rome, during the Italian-Tunisian military Committee in 2015²⁴⁴ or Prime Minister Gentiloni meeting the head of Tunisian government Chahed in 2017.²⁴⁵ Following the new spike in arrivals from Tunisia in 2020, meetings and dialogue on migration have intensified even more during summer 2020 with two ministerial visits led by the Italian Minister of the Interior Luciana Lamorgese along with European Commissioners for Neighbourhood Policy and Home Affairs. In this regard, Italy played a major role also in Tunisian-EU dialogue over migratory issues. New high-level meetings between Minister Lamorgese and Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs Othman Jerandi occurred in 2021, to discuss new priorities and enhance cooperation on migration management.²⁴⁶

Along with political dialogue, several bilateral agreements make up the External Dimension of Italian Migration Policy (DEPMI- Italian Acronym) in Tunisia.

²⁴⁰ For the full list, check 'Archivio Trattati Internazionali Online', Ministero degli Esteri.

²⁴¹ https://www.esteri.it/it/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2012/05/20120517_napolitano_partenariato_strategico/

²⁴² https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/site/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/comunicati/comunicati_2012/2012_09_13_incontro_Tunisi.html

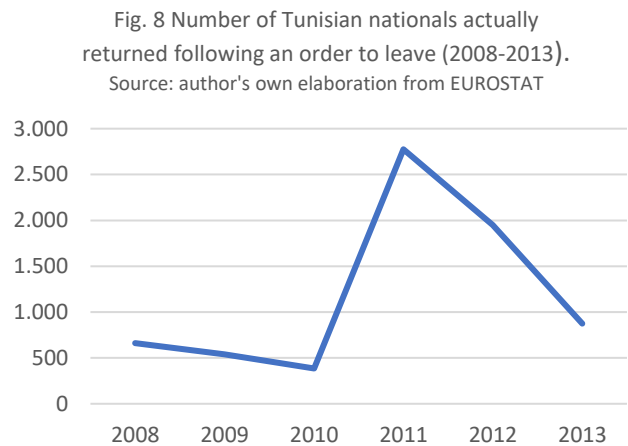
²⁴³ https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/interview/Interventi/sottosegretarioxprecdenti/2099_500_ministro/2013_04_23_intervento_tunisi.html_1084834514.html

²⁴⁴ https://www.difesa.it/Primo_Piano/Pagine/20150421Vertice_Italo_Tunisino.aspx

²⁴⁵ https://www.ilssole24ore.com/art/gentiloni-africa-tappe-tunisia-angola-ghana-e-costa-d-avorio--AEQQtiHD?refresh_ce=1

²⁴⁶ <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/stampa-e-comunicazione/comunicati-stampa/incontro-lamorgese-jerandi-lavoro-comune-rafforzare-cooperazione-italo-tunisina>

In terms of **readmission and return**, the first agreement goes back to **1998** when the two countries exchanged **Notes concerning the entry and readmission of people in an irregular position**,²⁴⁷ which established a framework to regulate entries and to implement return and readmission procedures for irregular migrants. In the context of the Agreement, Italy offered preferential treatment for Tunisian nationals in terms of annual entry quotas. ‘In view of the bilateral agreement in place’, 1500 Tunisians could benefit of preferential treatment for job reasons as established by the Flows Decree (Decreto Flussi, n.249, 24 October 1998). In 2000, this number was increased to 3000 entries.



The 1998 framework was reinforced ten years later, in **2009, with a new Memorandum** signed by the former Interior Minister Roberto Maroni to relaunch cooperation on readmission and speed up identification procedures.²⁴⁸ The Memorandum became immediately operative with a steady increase in the number of returned migrants, up to around 200 per month.²⁴⁹ However, in 2011, when a new transition government came to power following the toppling of former president Ben Ali’s regime, Tunisia was no longer able to implement previous readmission agreements. The country’s prevailing uncertainty and instability generated two parallel phenomena. On the one hand, massive flows of Tunisians started to cross irregularly the Mediterranean to Italy. On the other, the number of irregular migrants returned to Tunisia from Italy following an order to leave rapidly decreased (Fig.8).

In **April 2011**, therefore, Italy and Tunisian transition government concluded a **new Memorandum**,²⁵⁰ with the goal to implement swift identification, readmission and return of irregular migrants arrived in Italy after April 5th. Temporary humanitarian protection permits were instead granted to all Tunisian migrants who arrived irregularly between January and April 5th.²⁵¹

As irregular flows increased again from 2020 onwards, and as returns were blocked for months during the pandemic, in **July and August 2020** the Italian Ministry of Interior Lamorgese and the Italian Foreign Minister

²⁴⁷ *Scambio Di Note Concernente L'ingresso e la Riammissione Delle Persone in Posizione Irregolare*

²⁴⁸ <http://www.regioni.it/news/2011/04/06/immigrazione-siglato-laccordo-tra-italia-e-tunisia-48788/>

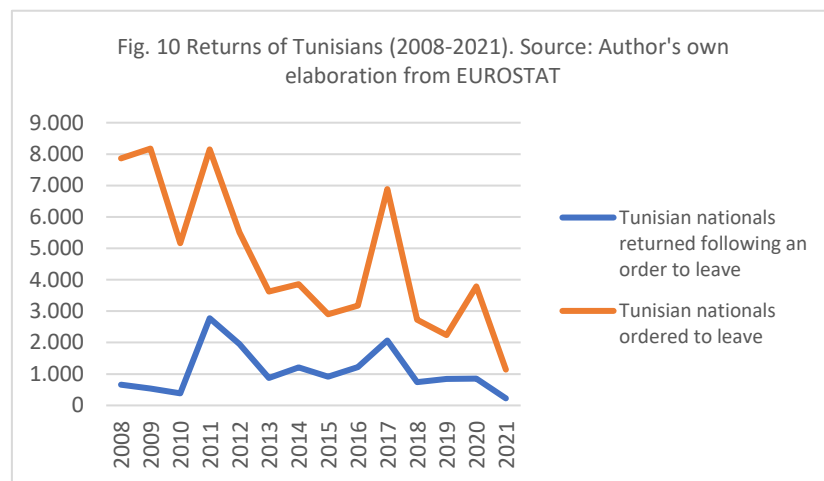
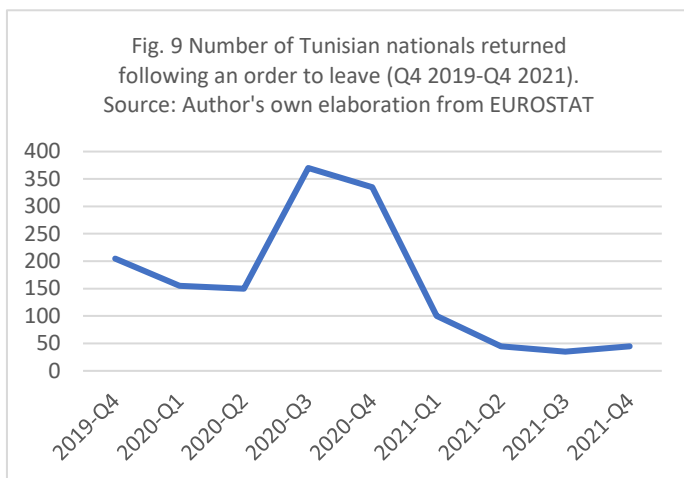
²⁴⁹ Senato della Repubblica, Resoconto Stenografico, 7 Aprile 2011; Prefetto Ronconi sugli Accordi Italia-Tunisia, <http://migreurop.org/article1418.html?lang=fr>

²⁵⁰ Procès verbal de la réunion entre le Ministre de l’Intérieure de la République Tunisienne et le Ministre de l’Intérieure de la République Italienne (Tunis, 4-5 Avril 2011).

²⁵¹ DPCM 5 Aprile 2011

Di Maio met new Tunisian President Saied in a number of institutional visits that paved the way to what looks like **a new informal collaboration deal** to restore and accelerate return practices.²⁵² With two additional flights per week agreed,²⁵³ returns for Tunisians ordered to leave have doubled since - from 150 during the first two quarters of 2020 to an average of 350 in the following two quarters of the same year according to EUROSTAT (Fig. 9). The data from the Ministry of Interior reveal even higher numbers, with the return of 1509 people between August-November 2020.²⁵⁴

Figure 10 shows the gap between the number of Tunisians ordered to leave, and the number of Tunisians actually returned for the period 2008-2021.



The dimension of readmission and return has been inextricably linked to the **fight against irregular migration and border control**. The above mentioned **1998 Exchange of Notes concerning the entry and readmission of people in an irregular position**,²⁵⁵ was not only an agreement on the implementation of return practices but it also included joint action to prevent irregular immigration as well as police cooperation for the patrolling of

²⁵² https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2020/08/17/news/immigrazione_lamorgese_e_di_maio_in_tunisia_con_loro_anche_l_ue-264809620/ ;

The Italian Ministry of Interior and Foreign Affairs have explicitly declared that ‘no bilateral agreement was signed during the meeting of August, 17th 2020’. Yet, according to the audition of Interior Minister Lamorgese before the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Affairs, it seems that the meeting of August 2020 paved the way to a ‘new partnership’, a ‘new understanding’ and ‘collaboration’ with Tunisia that permitted to increase charter flights and create a task force to the acceleration of readmission and return. See: <https://ftdes.net/quel-est-le-contenu-du-recent-accord-entre-la-tunisie-et-litalie-reponses-aux-demandes-daccess-introduit-par-asgi-ftdes-et-asf/> ; and note below.

²⁵³ Decreto legge 130/2020, audizione del ministro Lamorgese, 17.11.2020. <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/notizie/decreto-legge-1302020-audizione-ministro-lamorgese>

²⁵⁴ <https://inlimine.asgi.it/molti-rimpatri-poche-garanzie-unanalisi-dei-dati-sui-rimpatri-dei-cittadini-tunisini-degli-ultimi-mesi/> ; see also <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/notizie/rimpatri-tunisia-ripresi-i-voli-charter-bisettimanali-dal-10-agosto-40-tunisini-trasferimento> ; <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/stampa-e-comunicazione/interventi-e-interviste/piu-rimpatri-aerei-e-navi-chi-arriva-non-sara-regolarizzato>

²⁵⁵ *Scambio Di Note Concernente L'ingresso E La Riammissione Delle Persone In Posizione Irregolare*

Tunisian waters. In turn, along with preferential treatment for Tunisian nationals in terms of annual entry quotas as established by the Flows Decree, Italy offered financial, technical, and operative support.

The 1998 Memorandum was reinforced in December 2003,²⁵⁶ with a new ad hoc agreement on ‘Fight against crime’, which established maritime cooperation and training of Tunisian police, joint patrolling of sea borders and fight against criminal organizations involved in human smuggling. As already done in 1998, new entry quotas for Tunisians were offered after the signature of the Agreement, with an increase from 600 to the historic high of 3000 per year.²⁵⁷ In the meantime, the agreement paved the way to a change in Tunisian national legislation, with the adoption of Organic Law 2004-6 that tightened measures against human smuggling and facilitation of irregular migration.

When in 2011 the massive flows of irregular migrants fleeing Tunisia urged Italy to negotiate new measures with the transition government, the already mentioned **Memorandum of April 2011** prioritized the prevention of irregular migration, the patrolling of coastal areas, maritime training, and exchange of information on irregular migrants and human smugglers. As a follow up, in **December 2012**, during a high-level meeting of former Interior Minister Cancellieri with Tunisian Interior Minister Laarayedh, Italy formally handed over to Tunisian authorities two patrol boats for the control of migration flows (Paoletti 2012). Further twelve fast patrol vessels to strengthen control on territorial waters were provided in **2015**,²⁵⁸ when the two countries signed an ‘**Agreement for the security of the Mediterranean and the prevention of illicit trafficking**’.²⁵⁹

A further agreement was concluded in **February 2017**, when, during the visit of Tunisian President Essebsi, the two countries signed a ‘Joint Declaration’²⁶⁰ that included, among the other things, ‘concerted management of the migratory phenomenon’, with the aim of strengthening control of maritime borders, fight against human smuggling and irregular migration. These topics continued to be on the agenda during Tunis meetings of **July and August 2020**, when the two countries reaffirmed their common interest in dismantling migrant smuggling networks with Italy providing financial support up to €11 million for border controls²⁶¹ and

²⁵⁶ *Accordo in materia di lotta contro la Criminalità*, 13 Dicembre 2003.

²⁵⁷ Prefetto Ronconi sugli Accordi Italia-Tunisia, <http://migreurop.org/article1418.html?lang=fr>

²⁵⁸ https://www.difesa.it/Primo_Piano/Pagine/20150421Vertice_Italo_Tunisino.aspx

²⁵⁹ *Accordi per la sicurezza nel Mediterraneo e la prevenzione dei traffici illeciti*”.

²⁶⁰ <https://sciabacaoruka.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Tunisia-Dichiarazione-congiunta-09-02-2017.pdf>

²⁶¹

https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2020/08/17/news/immigrazione_lamorgese_e_di_mai_o_in_tunisia_con_loro_anch_e_l_ue-264809620/

interception of vessels in Tunisian territorial waters²⁶² (Euromedrights 2021). A ‘dedicated direct line’ for the exchange of information on vessels departing from Tunisia was also ensured.²⁶³

Overall, three considerations deserve attention. The first is that return and fight against irregular migration are two deeply entangled dimensions that stand as the most important feature of DEPMI in Tunisia, with 7 agreements concluded since the late 1990s. The second is that in most cases Italy implemented conditionality, either positive, by offering economic and operative support and using quotas for regular entry as a bargaining chip to secure cooperation on return and border control; or negative²⁶⁴ by reducing entry quotas in case of weak cooperation. The third that most of agreements are mainly soft informal tools, in terms of verbal agreements, memoranda of understanding, gentlemen’s agreements or operating protocols.

In terms of **legal channels of mobility**, Italy and Tunisia signed two main agreements in the domain of labour migration: an **Agreement on the conditions of Tunisian workers in Italy (1995)** and an **agreement for the employment of seasonal workers (2000)**²⁶⁵ with the goal to promote circular mobility while addressing the needs of the Italian job market. The **Joint Declaration of 2017** included also the goal to strengthen mobility for students with scholarships in the context of the Italian-Tunisian Partnership for Youth. According to EUROSTAT, 262 visas for study reasons were released on average every year to Tunisian students between 2007-2020.

Bilateral Development Cooperation on Migratory Issues

Tunisia is considered as a priority country of Italian development cooperation, also due to its relevance as a country of origin of migratory flows. Overall, in the period 2001-2020, Tunisia has received more than € 700 Mil. in terms of assistance across different sectors.²⁶⁶ Migration has increasingly featured as a key sector of cooperation. Almost 42% of programs are indirectly addressed to the prevention of migratory flows, by improving employability, local agriculture, and sustainable development. Others (9%) are instead explicitly

²⁶² <https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/26527/litalie-debute-le-rapatriement-de-migrants-tunisiens#:~:text=Le%20ministre%20des%20Affaires%20C3%A9trang%20C3%A8res,embarcations%20ill%20C3%A9gales,%20commenceront%20d%20C3%A8s%20ce>

²⁶³ <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/notizie/lamorgese-tunisi-piu-flessibilita-sui-rimpatri-scambi-informativi-sui-flussi-mare>

²⁶⁴ In some cases, positive conditionality turned into negative conditionality by reducing entry quotas. For instance, following the spike in irregular arrivals from Tunisia in the early 2000s, quotas reserved to Tunisians were reduced to 600 before being increased again after the agreement of 2003. See Prefetto Ronconi sugli Accordi Italia-Tunisia, <http://migreurop.org/article1418.html?lang=fr>

²⁶⁵ Occupazione di lavoratori stagionali, Tunisi, 15 Maggio 2000.

https://www2.immigrazione.regione.toscana.it/?q=norma&doc=/db/nir/DbPaesi/accordi/_accordo-5-07-2000.xml&datafine=20200730&css=4

²⁶⁶ Author’s calculations based on the analysis of the following sources: Rapporto sull’implementazione della cooperazione allo sviluppo (several years, 2001-2020).

focused on migration in terms of addressing root causes in cooperation with IOM, or improving migration management and asylum in Tunisia as a country of destination.²⁶⁷

Multilateral Cooperation: EU-Tunisia cooperation as an additional framework for DEPMI

The dialogue on migration, mobility and security between the EU and Tunisia was first launched in October 2011,²⁶⁸ following the boosting of bilateral relations after the country's political transition (Zardo and Abderrahim 2018). Since then, migration and mobility have been constantly on the agenda of the EU-Tunisia Association Council.²⁶⁹ A Mobility Partnership was signed in 2014 and in the same year the European Commission formally received a mandate to negotiate Readmission and Visa Facilitation Agreements with the country. Negotiations opened in 2016 but talks on return and visa have been very complex and slow, and at this stage no agreement has been reached. Readmission and return cooperation between Italy and Tunisia are therefore based only upon the framework of bilateral agreements between the two countries.

Interest from the EU in cooperation on migration was further revealed by the European Commission's decision to include Tunisia as a 'priority country' in the Communication on Partnership Framework with Third Countries (2016).²⁷⁰ Moreover, following the new increase in irregular flows from Tunisia to the EU in 2020, the EU has stepped up diplomatic exchanges. Migratory issues were at the centre of frequent institutional meetings, including Commissioner Johansson and Commissioner Várhelyi's visits in Tunisia (Summer 2020); Mission to Tunisia of Commissioner Johansson (May 2021); Visit of Tunisian President Saied to Brussels (June 2021); High Representative Borrell's mission to Tunis (September 2021).²⁷¹ Italy played a relevant political role in many of these meetings as demonstrated by the presence of the Italian Foreign and Interior Ministers during the visits of summer 2020 and 2021, and by Italian Interior Minister Lamorgese's role as a chair of the Ministerial Conference of the Ministers of Interior of EU Member States and Partner Countries on countering Migrant Smuggling (2020).²⁷²

²⁶⁷ For instance, 'Promozione dello sviluppo delle zone di emigrazione in Tunisia' (Migrazioni e microcredito) (€ 177.579,00) (2008); La migrazione come risorsa: mobilitazione della diaspora tunisina e stabilizzazione delle comunità svantaggiate in Tunisia (2,900,000€) (2017); Migliorare le condizioni di accoglienza per i richiedenti asilo nell'ambito dei flussi migratori misti in Tunisia (2,000,000 €) (2019).

²⁶⁸ EU Council of Ministers, High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration (HLWG), 21 January 2013.

²⁶⁹ See for instance, *Joint statement on the occasion of the EU-Tunisia Association Council of 11 May 2017*

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/05/11/eu-tunisia-association/>

²⁷⁰ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:763f0d11-2d86-11e6-b497-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

²⁷¹ EU Council of Ministers, Update on state of play of external cooperation in the field of migration policy, January 2022.

²⁷² Ibid.

The EU is currently supporting Tunisia in the implementation of the priorities of the National Strategy on Migration, including addressing root causes of migration,²⁷³ and the development of an Integrated Border Management system.²⁷⁴

Overview of DEPMI in Tunisia

	Italy-Tunisia (2000-2020)		EU-Tunisia broader cooperation framework
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	1998: <i>Notes concerning the entry and readmission of people in an irregular position</i>	\	Negotiations for a Readmission Agreement launched in 2016 and still ongoing
	2009: <i>New Memorandum on Readmission</i>		
	2011: <i>New Memorandum on identification, readmission and return</i>		
	2020: <i>New informal collaboration deal to restore and accelerate return practices</i>		
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	1998: <i>Notes concerning the entry and readmission of people in an irregular position</i> (police cooperation, patrolling of Tunisian waters)		EUTRUST FUND FOR AFRICA
	2003: <i>Agreement for cooperation against crime</i> (training of Tunisian police, joint patrolling of sea borders)		
	2011: <i>New Memorandum on identification, readmission and return</i> (prevention of irregular migration, patrolling of coastal areas)		
	2017: <i>Joint Declaration</i> (concerted management of the migratory phenomenon, control of maritime borders)		
	2020: New financial support		
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	2003: <i>Agreement for cooperation against crime</i> (fight against criminal		EU TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ For instance, in the framework of the EU Trust Fund for Africa, the Border Management Programme for the Maghreb region (€ 55 Mil.) is primarily implemented with a primary focus on Tunisia. <https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/t05-eutf-noa-reg-07.pdf>

	<p>organizations involved in human smuggling)</p> <p>2011: <i>New Memorandum on identification, readmission and return</i> (exchange of info on human smugglers)</p> <p>2015: <i>Agreement for the security of the Mediterranean and the prevention of illegal trafficking</i></p> <p>2017: <i>Joint Declaration</i> (fight against human smuggling and irregular migration).</p>		
Fight against Root Causes		Projects to address the root causes of migration in terms of improving the employability of young people, and local development	
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection		Projects implemented in cooperation with UNHCR to improve Tunisia's asylum and reception system	
Legal Mobility	<p>1995: <i>Agreement on the conditions of Tunisian workers in Italy</i></p> <p>2000: <i>Agreement for the employment of seasonal workers</i></p> <p>2017: <i>Joint Declaration</i> (Strengthening mobility for students).</p>		Mobility Partnership (2014): Chapter on mobility and regular migration
Visa			Negotiations on a Visa Facilitation Agreement started in 2016
Political Dialogue	<p>Migration as a key issue of high-level political dialogue</p> <p><i>Treaty of Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation (2003)</i>, providing a major framework for dialogue</p>		Migration as a key issue of high-level political dialogue in the context of the Association Council and of the Dialogue of migration, security and mobility

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DEPMI COUNTRY PROFILE

Turkey



Sahizer Samuk Carignani²⁷⁵

Migration Outlook: Relevance of flows to Italy and main data

Relevance as a country of origin	Low
Relevance as a country of transit	Medium (until 2017) to high (from 2018 until early 2022)
Safe country of origin list ²⁷⁶	NO
Schengen Visa Exemption	NO

Migration from Turkey to Italy goes back to the early 1990s (Ince-Beqo 2020) and its characteristics have evolved across time, shifting from movements of asylum-seekers, refugee resettlement and family reunification, to the migration of highly skilled people and students who now represent the main trends of immigration from Turkey to Italy (Sanchez et al. 2018).

In terms of **regular migration**, 20,999 Turkish citizens were regularly present in Italy in 2021, compared to 19,168 in 2020 and 18,780 in 2019.²⁷⁷ In terms of yearly regular entries, between 2007 and 2020, permits for study reasons were the most common, followed by family reunification and by job permits (Fig.1).

In terms of **irregular migration**, Turkey is not a relevant **country of origin** of flows to Italy. Whereas irregular flows of Turkish migrants to the European Union (EU) have increased from the end of 2016 onward after the worsening of the political situation in the country, absolute numbers of irregular Turkish migrants arriving in Italy via the Central Mediterranean route are very low (Fig.2). While it is not possible to have data on Turkish citizens irregularly getting to Italy across other routes (such as, for instance, the

Fig. 1 Turkish regular yearly entries to Italy by reason of entry (2007-2020). Source: ISTAT

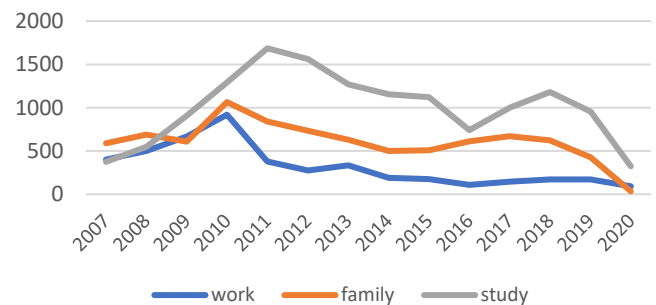
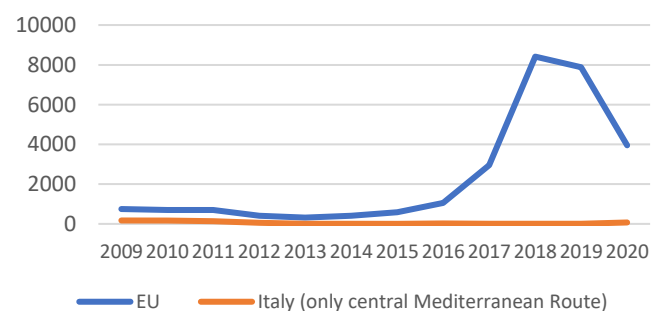


Fig.2 Turkish irregular arrivals to EU (all routes) and Italy (Central Mediterranean Route). Source: FRONTEX



²⁷⁵ DEPMI Researcher, Post doc Research fellow IMT LUCCA.

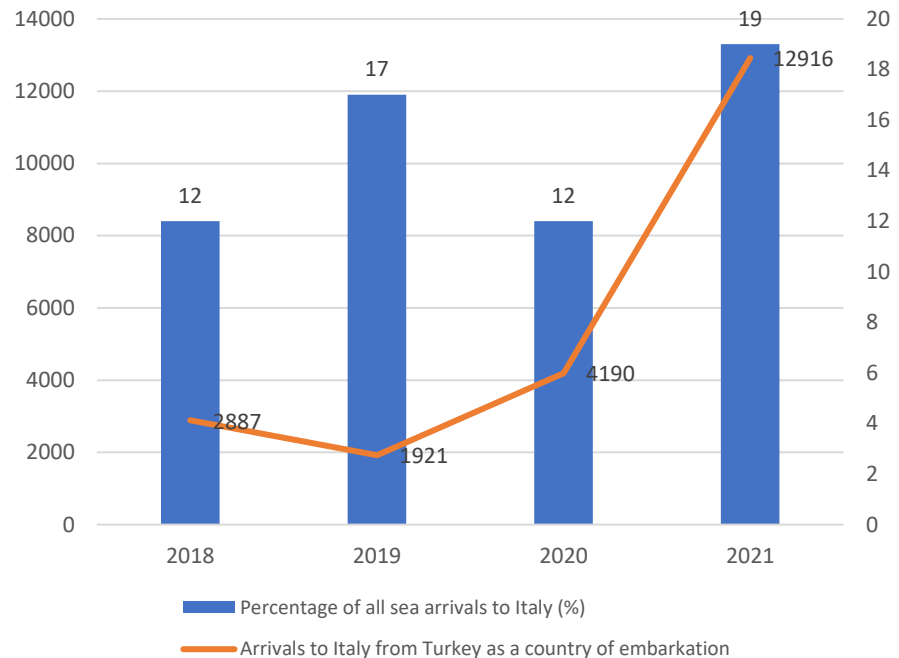
²⁷⁶ According to the list of safe countries of origin as indicated by the Italian Decree 4 October 2019.

²⁷⁷ ISTAT, Data on foreign residents.

Western Balkan Route), Turkish citizens do not figure among the main nationalities of origin for irregular migration to Italy.

By contrast, Turkey has increasingly played a role as a **transit country** of irregular flows to Italy. According to the data provided by the UNHCR,²⁷⁸ until the end of 2016 the role of Turkey as a country of embarkation was quite negligible. However, starting from 2017, some flows (including nationals from Somalia, Sri Lanka, Iran, Pakistan and Iraq) disembarked in southern Italy having departed from Turkey.²⁷⁹ This trend became increasingly significant in the following years, with arrivals to Italy from Turkey representing 12% of all sea arrivals to Italy in 2018 and 19% of all sea arrivals to Italy in 2021 (Fig.3).

Fig.3 Turkey as a transit country of irregular flows to Italy (2018-2021). Source: Own's elaboration from UNHCR Italy's dashboard



Refugees and migrants embarking in Turkey most commonly originated from the Islamic Republic of Iran, followed by Iraq and Afghanistan,²⁸⁰ with Antalya and Izmir as the main embarkation points.²⁸¹ In 2021 only, 98% of Iranians and 97% of Iraqis landing in Italy departed from Turkey.²⁸² Unlike journeys from Libya or Tunisia which happen mainly through small boats or dinghies, most of journeys from Turkey employ sail boats and specialized smugglers mainly from Eastern Europe.²⁸³

In term of **COVID-19**, the pandemic did not affect irregular migration from Turkey, both as a country of origin and as a country of transit. As irregular movements of Turkish citizens are quite negligible, COVID-19 did not have any impact on irregular flows. By contrast, due to general restrictions of mobility, it did impact on regular flows with permits for job and study reasons recording a significant decrease from 2019 to 2020 (Fig.4).

²⁷⁸ UNHCR, Italy sea dashboards, various years.

²⁷⁹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-007773_EN.html

²⁸⁰ UNHCR, Italy Sea Dashboard, December 2021.

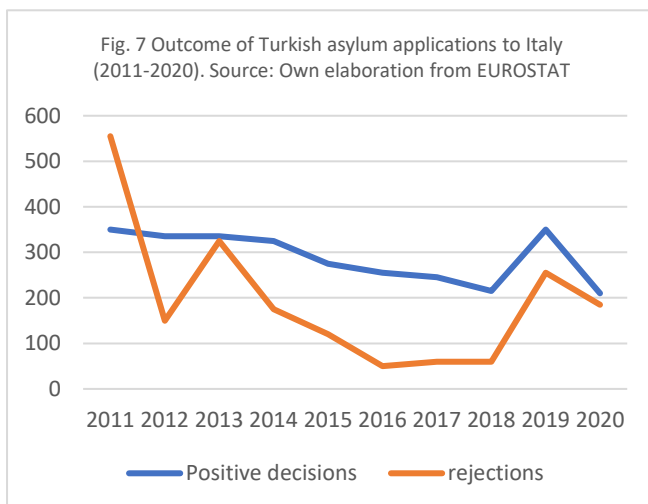
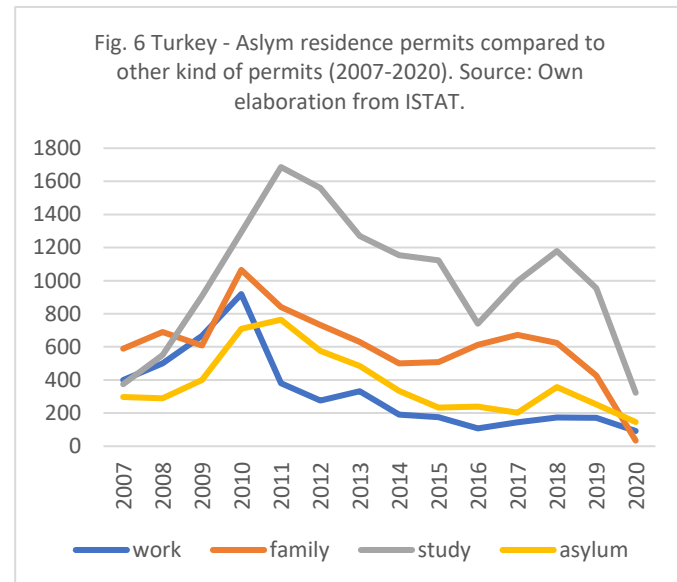
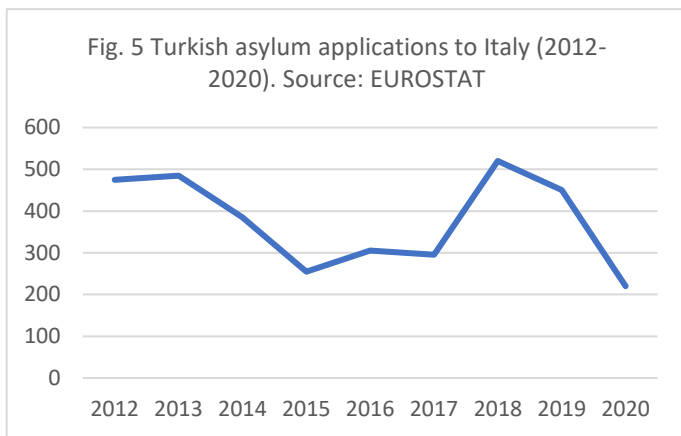
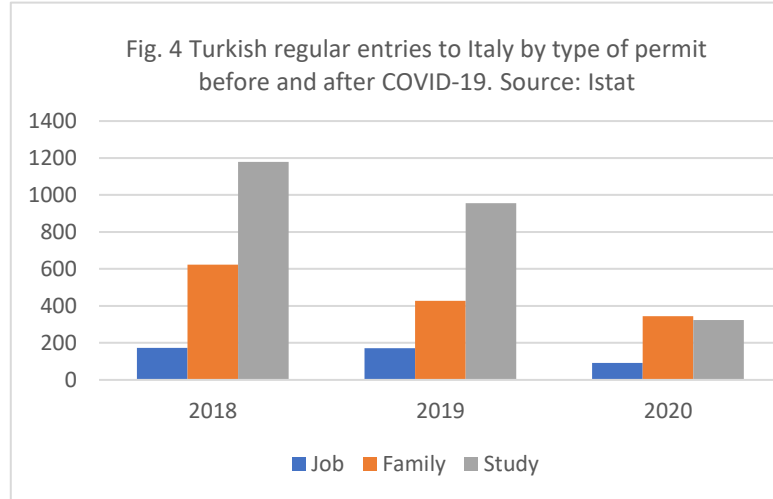
²⁸¹ UNHCR, Italy Sea Dashboard, December 2018.

²⁸² UNHCR, Italy Sea Dashboard, December 2021.

²⁸³ https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg18/lavori/documentiparlamentari/indiceceti/038/001v02/00000033.pdf

Moreover, the role of Turkey as a transit country was not affected by Covid-19 in terms of a reduction of flows. People embarking from Turkey increased by 118% from 2019 to 2020, and by more than 200% from 2020 to 2021 as shown in Fig.3.

Finally, in terms of **asylum**, the number of asylum applications from Turkey is very low (Fig.5) compared to other nationalities. In this regard, residence permits released for asylum, asylum requests or humanitarian reasons are only the third kind of permit released -well below study and family reunification reasons (Fig. 6). Out of the few decisions taken on Turkish asylum applications to Italy, from 2014 onward most have been accepted (Fig.7).



Italy-Turkey cooperation on migration

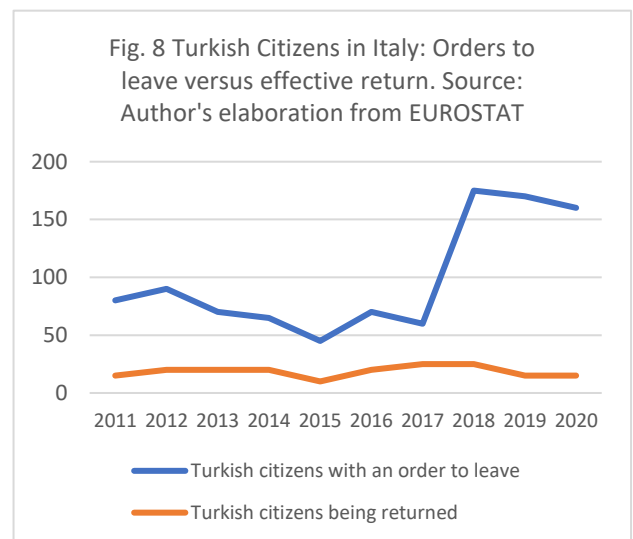
Bilateral political cooperation

Italy and Turkey have a long-standing cooperation in different areas (energy, defence, industry, tourism, infrastructure, automotive, chemicals etc.) and Italy is currently Turkey's fourth economic partner.²⁸⁴ Yet, migration does not feature as a key issue of Italy's external relations with Turkey. In this domain, cooperation is mainly based on the broader framework of EU-Turkey cooperation and its inherent migration deals (see below). Still, the following migration tools between Italy and Turkey can be identified.

In terms of **return and readmission**, there is no bilateral agreement between the two countries but only a **Police Cooperation Agreement** which includes the issue of return, and which was signed in 2001.²⁸⁵ Overall, the main framework for return remains the readmission agreement signed between the EU and Turkey in 2013. While the number of Turkish citizens receiving an order to leave from Italy is low if compared to other nationalities, only a few of them are actually returned (Fig.8).

In terms of **border control and fight against irregular migration**, in 2012 Italy and Turkey concluded an **agreement focused on**

the 'Fight against serious crimes, in particular against terrorism and organised crime'²⁸⁶ which also includes the fight against human smuggling and trafficking among its key goals. The agreement states that the two countries 'share info on ongoing migration policies and practices, as well as on the effects of these practices on irregular migration'.²⁸⁷ Moreover, they shall 'share data on irregular flows, their routes as well as main *modi operandi*'.²⁸⁸ Always in 2012, negotiations started over a potential Memorandum of Understanding for the secondment of Turkish policemen in Italy, in order to cooperate with the Italian police, provide training and equipment. However, negotiations were not finalised, and the draft document presented by Italy did not receive a proper follow up by Turkey.²⁸⁹



²⁸⁴ Cooperation between Turkey and Italy (2022). Access via <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-italy.en.mfa> accessed on 23rd of November 2021

²⁸⁵ Jean Pierre Cassarino, Dataset. Turkey's Bilateral Agreements Linked to Readmission. Available at <
<https://www.jeanpierrecassarino.com/datasets/ra/turquie/>>.

²⁸⁶ Accordo di Cooperazione sulla Lotta ai Reati Gravi, in particolare contro il Terrorismo e la Criminalità Organizzata, signed on May 2012. <https://atrio.esteri.it/Search/Allegati/50328>

²⁸⁷ Text of the Agreement, p.4

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ <https://www.camera.it/dati/leg17/lavori/documentiparlamentari/indiceetesti/038/002v03/00000002.pdf>

In terms of **legal channels of mobility**, there are no specific schemes but in 2007 the two countries concluded a **bilateral agreement for visa facilitation**²⁹⁰ which resulted in a facilitation of the visa process for Turkish citizens, with an issuance rate over 95% between 2014 and 2020.²⁹¹ Moreover, several scholarships are provided every year for students' mobility by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italian Regions and Italian Universities.

Finally, another area of cooperation is **resettlement** in the multilateral context of the 1:1 scheme which is part of the EU-Turkey deal. As a result of this instrument, Italy has resettled 396 Syrian refugees as of April 1, 2021.²⁹²

Bilateral Development cooperation

In terms of development cooperation, according to the reports on the implementation of the Italian development cooperation between 2015 and 2018,²⁹³ most of the funds from Italy to Turkey linked to migration issues are mainly devoted to co-finance the EU Facility to support refugees in Turkey (€146,393,423 between 2015 and 2018) and to support students' mobility (€ 591,102). There are no projects or programmes targeting border control, or root causes.

EU-Turkey migration cooperation as the main framework for DEPMI in Turkey

Dialogue on migration issues between the EU and Turkey goes back to the early 2000s, when the Turkish-Greece corridor was emerging as a major route for irregular migration and when, in 2003, the EU invited Turkey to enter into negotiations on a readmission agreement (EuromedRights 2005). The **EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement**²⁹⁴ was finally signed on 16 December 2013, with the goal "to establish, on the basis of reciprocity, procedures for the rapid and orderly readmission, by each side, of the persons who do not or no longer fulfil the conditions for entry to, presence in or residence on the territory of the other side."²⁹⁵ Since its coming into force in 2014, the Agreement has become the main framework for readmission and return between Turkey and the Member States. The agreement applies not only to Turkish and Member States'

²⁹⁰ Memorandum di Intesa per la Semplificazione Delle Procedure Di Rilascio dei Visti di Ingresso a Favore dei Rispettivi Cittadini Titolari di Passaporto Ordinario.

²⁹¹ <https://statistics.schengenvisa.info.com/>

²⁹² <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/content-temporary-protection/movement-and-mobility/resettlement-and-family-reunification-departures/>

²⁹³ All the reports between 2001 and 2019 were checked by the research team. But only those between 2015 and 2018 refers to Turkey.

²⁹⁴ Readmission Agreement (2014). Access via [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:22014A0507\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:22014A0507(01)&from=EN). Access date is 23rd of January 2022.

²⁹⁵ EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement. Access via <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/readmission-agreement-6895> on 23rd of January 2022.

citizens, but also to third country nationals who entered into, or stayed on the territory of either sides directly arriving from the territory of the other side.²⁹⁶

In parallel with the signature of the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement, a **Visa Liberalisation Dialogue** was launched in 2013 with the purpose to identify a roadmap towards a visa-free regime for Turkish citizens. While Turkey has fulfilled most of the requirements asked by the European Commission,²⁹⁷ the dialogue over the liberalisation of visas was not yet finalized.²⁹⁸ This has also impacted the full implementation of the Readmission Agreement as to what concerns the readmission and return of third-country nationals. Turkey has clearly stated that it will not implement third country nationals' provisions as long as visa liberalisation is not fully granted by the EU.²⁹⁹

In continuity with the readmission agreement and following the peak of migrants and asylum-seekers getting to the EU borders across the Eastern Mediterranean route in 2015, **the EU-Turkey Agreement**³⁰⁰ was signed in March 2016. In return for financial resources and for the speeding up of the visa liberalisation process, Turkey agreed to take all the necessary measures to prevent irregular migration from its territory into the EU, as well as accepted to take back all irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands. Moreover, a 1:1 resettlement scheme was established: for every Syrian being returned to Turkey from Greece, another Syrian would be resettled from Turkey to the EU. In this regard, "all EU member states have been made responsible for a greater commitment to the resettlement of Syrian citizens fleeing the war and already living in Turkey". (UNHCR 2020, p. 3). While the agreement has been criticised -among the other things- for its financial sustainability over time (Panebianco and Fontana 2018), as well as for the inherent political risks of migration being used as a leverage by Turkey, it continues to represent the main framework for cooperation on migration between the EU and Turkey. An EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey was also established in 2016 to provide a total of €6 billion in assistance to Syrian refugees.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Conditions that Turkey should meet for visa liberalisation. Access via https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/hu/MEMO_16_1625. Access date is 23rd of January 2022.

²⁹⁸ <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/turkey-eu-to-discuss-visa-liberalization-process-next-month/>

²⁹⁹ <https://www.statewatch.org/media/2297/eu-com-readmission-report-on-cooperation-restricted-com-2021-55-final.pdf>, p.88

³⁰⁰ EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016. Access via <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/>. Access date is 23rd of January 2022.

Overview of DEPMI in Turkey

	Italy-Turkey		EU-Turkey broader cooperation framework
	Political Cooperation	Development Cooperation	
Return & Readmission	\	\	Only in the framework of the EU-Turkey Readmission Deal (2013).
	Police Cooperation Agreement (2001)		
Border Control and Fight against irregular migration	Agreement on 'Fight against serious crimes, in particular against terrorism and organised crime' (2012)	\	EU-Turkey Deal (2016)
Fight against human smuggling and trafficking	Agreement on 'Fight against serious crimes, in particular against terrorism and organised crime' (2012)	\	EU-Turkey Deal (2016)
Fight against Root Causes	\	\	\
Resettlement, Asylum and International Protection		Support to the EU-Turkey Facility	Participation of Italy to the 1:1 Scheme in the context of the EU-Turkey Deal
Legal Mobility	\	Scholarship and funds to students' mobility	\
Visa	Visa Facilitation – Bilateral Agreement (2007)	\	\
Political Dialogue	Migration not an issue of political dialogue at bilateral level	\	

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The positions contained in this report are the sole expression of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation