



1st Diaspora Conference on African Migration in Europe

«The Mediterranean Drama and the impact on European Migration policies»

12 September 2015, Universal Postal Union UPU, (Weltpost), Weltpostrasse 4, 3015 Bern, 13h30 till 18h

History and Context

Recently, the influx of African migration to Europe mainly through the Mediterranean is growing. Despite the risk and danger associated to it, many more Africans are looking for ways to get to Europe. While the great majority of irregular African migrants end as asylum applicants in Europe, there are other groups who become victims of human trafficking. Behind this determination and desperate will to migrate to Europe lies a huge lucrative smuggling and trafficking of migrants as well as human slavery.

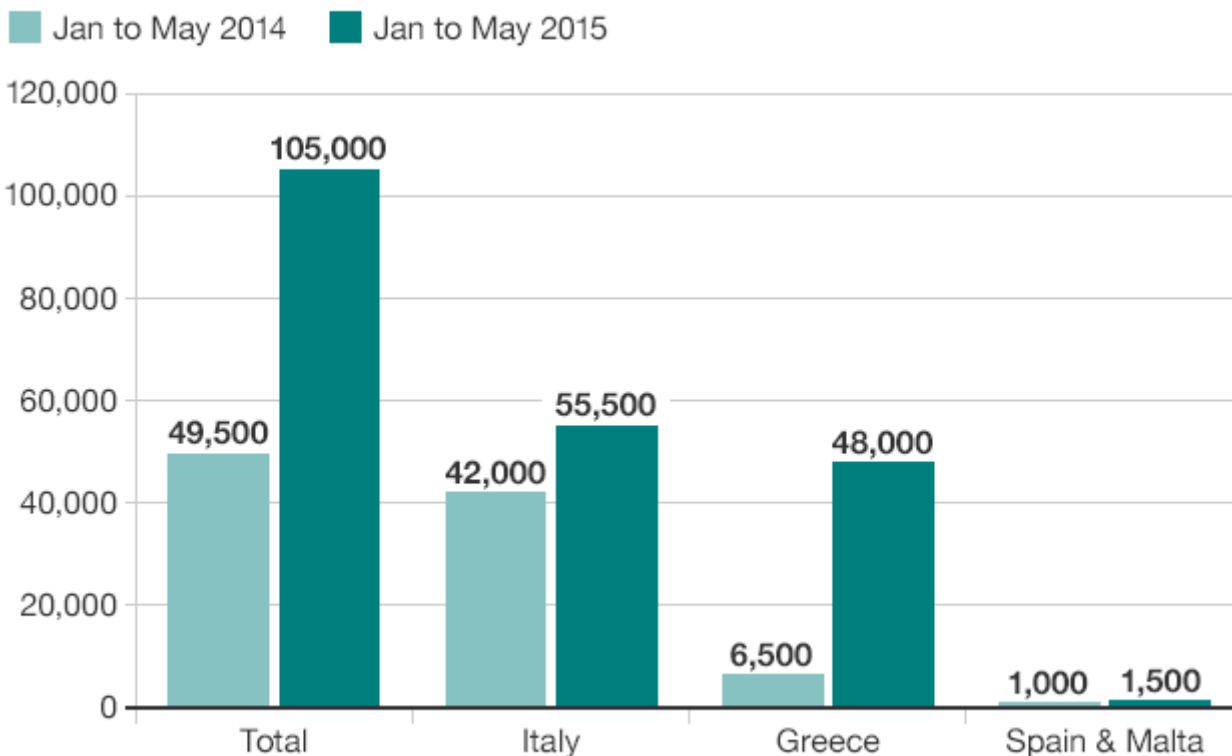
How does the Swiss law handle this matter? "The prescription on migrant trafficking were supplemented and strengthened in the new federal law on foreigners (FNA; RS 142.20), in force since 1st of January 2008. The qualified forms of incitement for smuggling, with intent for profit, to the entry or illegal stay stipulated under art 116, para. 3 LEtr are now carry a custodial sentence of up to five years (as against three years under the old law) and therefore constitute a crime now (while it was an offense under the old content of the law). "

Consultations with asylum seekers in Switzerland show that more and more Africans living in Europe and Switzerland are involved in this criminal activity. Many victims live in perpetual fear and under the threat and the influence of their traffickers and "masters". Some victims intentionally engaged in criminal activities such as prostitution and drug trafficking in order to pay the spoils of their "masters". Thus, victims of crime become themselves criminals by necessity.

According to UNHCR, 219'000 refugees and other migrants have taken the route of the Mediterranean in 2014 and at least 3,500 lost their lives. According to BBC News, the number of refugees seeking to migrate to Europe this year has more than doubled compared to the number during the same period in 2014.



Refugees and migrants in the Mediterranean entering Europe

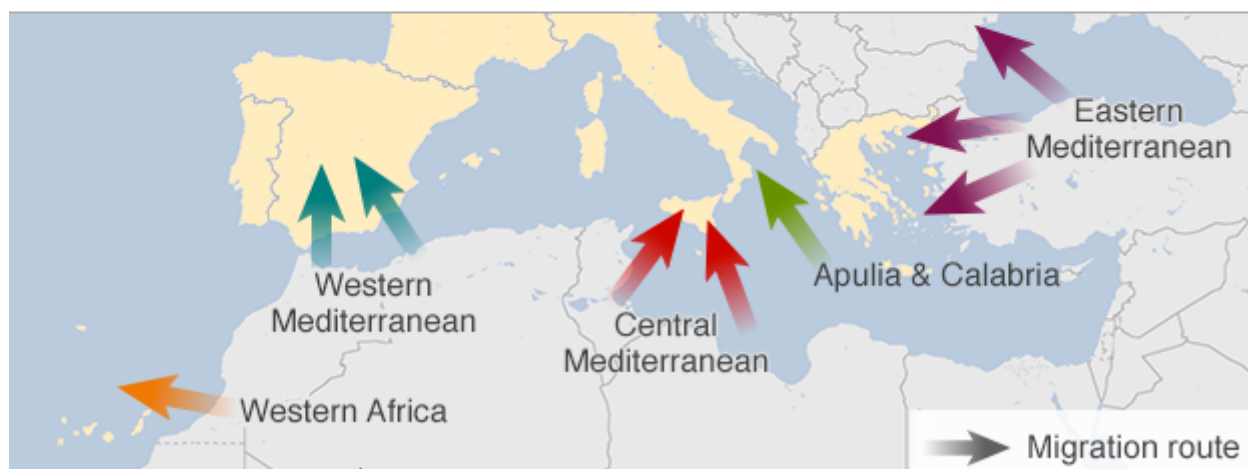
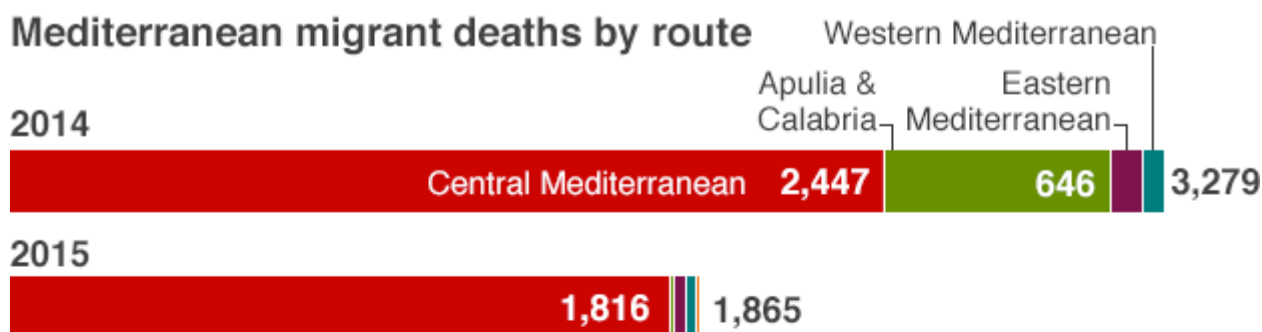


Source: UNHCR

The figure advanced on June 24, 2015 by Carlotta Sami of the UNHCR shows that the surge is increasing sharply. 63'000 refugees arrived in Europe by Greece this year and around 62,000 in Italy. Already this year, 1'865 refugees have already died on the way. Of this number, 1'816 got drowned trying to reach Italy. In 2014, 3'279 migrants' lives were lost in the Mediterranean during the same period.



Mediterranean migrant deaths by route



Source: Frontex, IOM

BBC

Since the beginning of this year, around 153,000 migrants were detected at Europe's external borders by FRONTEX. This represents 149% of increase compared to the same period last year when the total was 61'500.

Another well frequented route is the Hungarian-Serbian border. From January through May of this year, 50,000 migrants were detected at the border of Serbia trying to cross Hungarian boarder. This represents over 880% increase compared to the same period in 2014. Now Hungary is planning to build immense boarder walls to prevent migrants from crossing into its territory.

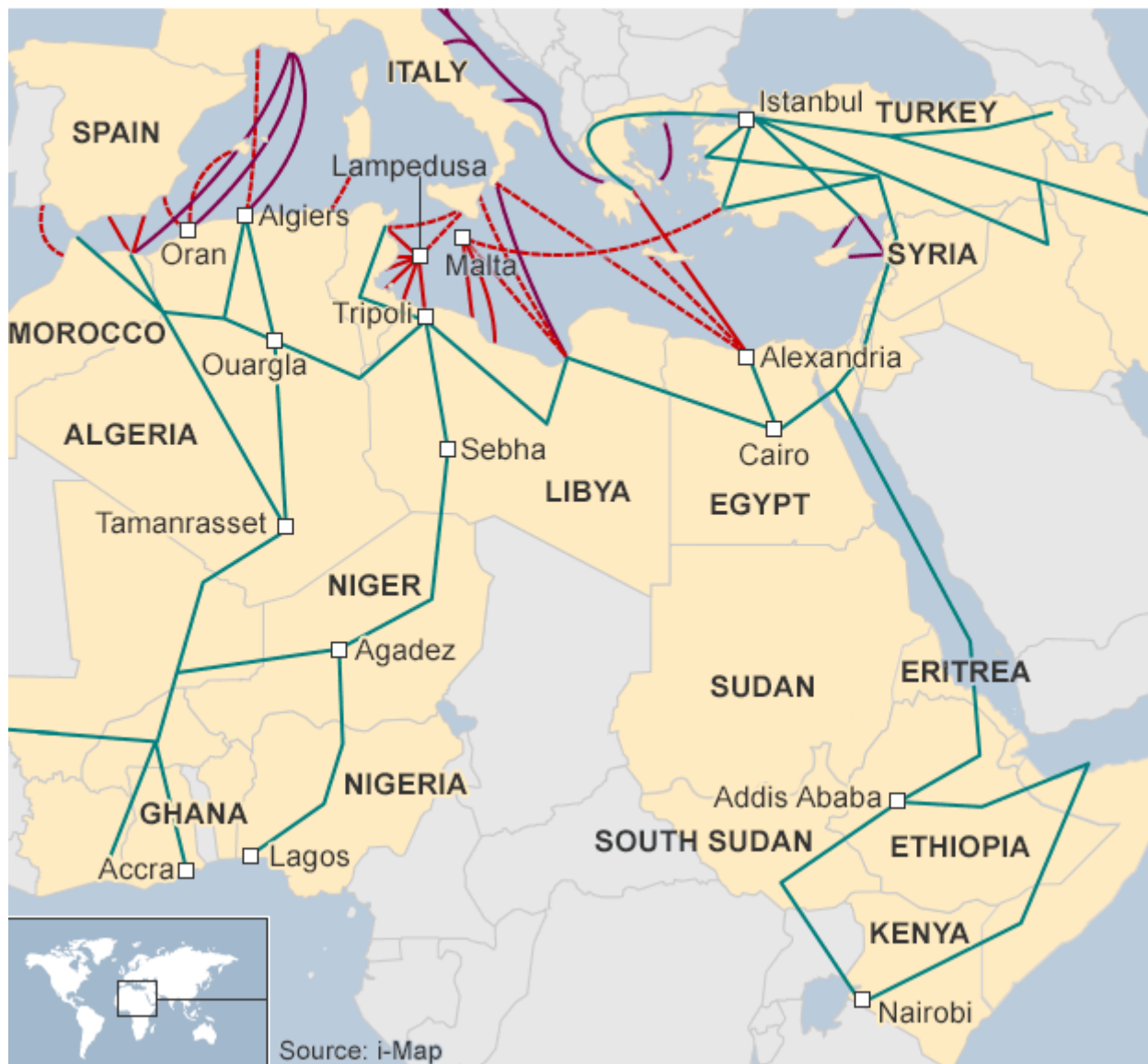
The largest group of migrants by nationality in 2015 is Syrian - more than 8,800. Then come the migrants from Eritrea (over 3,300) and Somalia (more than 2,900). Many others are sub-Saharan Africans. In 2011, there were more than Tunisians who had taken the same route but this is no longer the case today. However, the Syrians and Afghans are the largest groups of migrants through Greece according to the IOM.

In November 2014, Italy ended its search and rescue mission, called Mare Nostrum. It was replaced by a and more limited and cheaper EU operation named Triton, focused on patrol on water about 30 kilometers from the Italian coast.



Key migration routes

- Major maritime routes
- - - Minor maritime routes
- Ferry routes used by migrants
- Major land routes



The number of asylum applications in the EU has increased by 626,065 in 2014 against 435,190 in 2013, says the European Commission. The figure in 2014 was the highest since the escalation in 1992, but at that time the European Union were fewer member states.

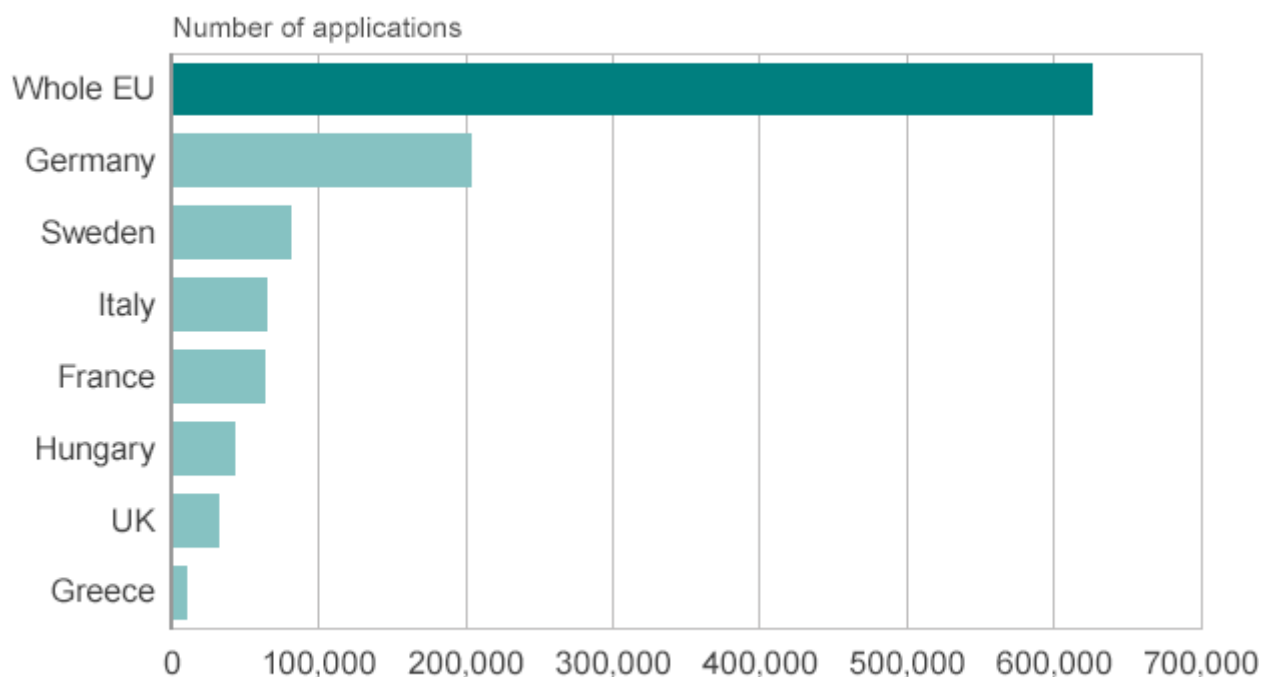
In 2014, the number of candidates from Syria more than doubled compared to 2013, reaching 123 000. This represents 20% of the total, well above other groups: Afghans, representing 7 %.

Migrants from Kosovo were in third place, just above Eritreans. Poor, marginalized Roma constitute a large number of migrants from Kosovo.



In 2014, asylum was granted to 163 000 people in the EU in the first instance decisions - which represent nearly 45% of these decisions. Germany granted the most - 41,000, followed by Sweden (31,000) and Italy (21 000).

Asylum applications in selected EU countries, 2014



Source: Eurostat



Objectives

The purpose of this conference is to expose this vast criminal activity behind the influx of African migrants to Europe. The conference aims to raise awareness, inform the African community and friends of Africa of the risk and the danger of smuggling of migrants and human trafficking and thus alert potential victims. The SCOTT is invited to treat this matter as well as testimonies of victims.

The conference also seeks to explain the reasons why Africans flee, causes and effects of conflicts in Africa and study **and analyze** response of the Swiss-European migration policy addressing this migration surge.

Activities

To achieve the above mentioned objectives, the African Diaspora Council of Switzerland organizes on **12 September, 2015 in Universal Postal Union UPU, (Weltpost) Weltpoststrasse 4, 3015 Bern, from 13h30 to 18h**, a Discussion - Conference on African migration Europe. The conference languages are **French and English** to allow the largest number of participants are to understand the message in their language. This will require infrastructure and significant costs to the served simultaneous interpretation.



The conference has presentations on:

- The Swiss migration policy by **Sylvain Astier**, Deputy Head of the direction of Intl Cooperation of the State Secretariat for Migration.
- The "Swiss and European migration policy: the big challenges" by **Prof. Etienne Piguet**, migration expert at the University of Neuchâtel and Deputy Chairman of the Swiss Federal Commission for Migration matters.
- The causes and effects of conflicts in Africa by Dr. André Loembé, the Swiss Observatory of asylum and foreign law.

Also invited to the podium are representatives of the International Migration Organization, office combating migrants and human trafficking SCOTT, the chief of the foreign police of the city of Bern as well as members of the African Diaspora in Switzerland. The members of the African diplomatic corps in Switzerland are also invited as guests of honor to present the concerns of African States.

About 100 participants are expected at the conference composed of members of the African Diaspora and friends of Africa.

Impact

- Deriving from her experience, the African community and the Swiss are better informed about the criminal activities of smugglers of migrants.
- Victims are therefore urged and encouraged to come forward, to be directed at professionals for guidance and support.
- Authorities are given the possibility to better clarify and specify to the participants the rules and other legal instruments to fight against human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. So the ADCS wishes by its action to assist better SCOTT in its mission to fight against human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.
- Information on causes-effects of conflicts in Africa which benefit both participants, Swiss authorities and civil society.

Contacts :

Celeste Ugochukwu, lic.iur.

President

contact@africancouncil.ch

079 476 74 83

Nabil Ait-Mokhtar

Vice-president &

nabiladresse@yahoo.fr

076 276 58 22