# The Concept of the 'Transit Country' in Shaping Trans-Mediterranean International Relations: The Political Consequences for State and Non-state Actors

Amen Ben Ahmouda

Department of Political Science

McGill University, Montréal

*A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science*

Submitted August 2023

**Table of contents**

**Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my gratitude to my Supervisor, Professor Jennifer Welsh, for her guidance, and kindness throughout the writing process. Your insightful comments have been invaluable during the production of this research.

I am forever grateful to my parents for their endless support throughout this degree, and for ingraining me with a sense of curiosity about the world that has driven my constant desire for learning in and outside the classroom. *Merci pour tout ce que vous avez sacrifié pour me rendre là. Je vous aime. Vous êtes ma force.*

To my brothers, thank you for always sharing a laugh over FaceTime, a meme…or even locking my social media so that I could focus on this thesis! I couldn't have done it without your constant encouragement.

Finally, I am grateful to all the professors who have guided, supported and motivated me throughout the years. Notably: Professor R. Sparling, Professor L. Touchant, Professor L. Célérier, Professor K. Medani and Professor F. Sabetti. Thank you.

This thesis has been (mostly) a labour of love. I am honored to be contributing to a topic that I am passionate about, and I am grateful for the privilege to have been constantly learning throughout the process.

**Abstract**

To seal its territory from unwanted migrants, the European Union (EU) has engaged in practices akin to a "militarization of borders". The EU has, since the 1990s, extended cooperation on international migration beyond its territory, towards African and Middle Eastern states from which the majority of migrants are believed to begin their journeys or transit to the EU. Transit countries, which are of particular interest to this analysis, have become key actors in the prevention and containment of unwanted migration to the EU. To understand the reasons for and consequences of the term 'transit country,' and the larger phenomenon of transit migration in the context of trans-Mediterranean dynamics, this thesis asks: *a) How is the term transit country being mobilized and by whom?; and b) What are the political consequences of the mobilization of the term and concept of the 'transit country' in policy discourse (for state and non-state actors)?*

The thesis illustrates the ambiguity and variety in definitions of the term 'transit country'. By asking how the term has been useful for the key actors identified, the thesis makes four main arguments. First, the term is, indeed, highly politicized; appearing in the 1990s, around the time of European policies of externalization, the term has foreshadowed contemporary trans-Mediterranean migration policies, including those that have contributed to the securitization of migrant flows and that have focused on the 'root causes' of migration and migrant return. Second, the label has helped constitute transit countries as key actors (outside of the EU) for EU member states to cooperate bilaterally with; securing its borders without having to wait on incremental EU reforms. In tandem, and due to limitations of sovereignty, the coining of the term 'transit country' has increased reliance of the EU and EU member states on international humanitarian institutions adjacent to the EU, for longer-term external migration management goals that are portrayed as humanitarian and development activities. Thirdly, the label has provided transit countries, particularly those in the Maghreb, an opportunity to deploy a form of reversed conditionality: helping to secure the EU's external migration policy objectives, in exchange for political, social and economic benefits. Finally, the term 'transit country' is mostly only implied, rather than explicitly invoked, by states that are labeled transit countries.

**Résumé**

Afin de protéger son territoire de l'immigration clandestine, l'Union Européenne (UE) pratique une «militarisation des frontières». Depuis les années 1990, les États membres de l'UE ont étendu leur coopération en matière de la migration internationale au-delà de leurs territoires, à savoir, leurs territoires nationaux et du fait, celui de l'UE, ouvrant cette coopération envers des États africains et du Moyen-Orient, notamment les pays du Maghreb qui ont plusieurs accès maritimes et terrestres à l'UE. La région du Maghreb serait ainsi devenue une région de transit pour les migrants cherchant à se rendre dans l'UE. Les pays de transit, qui font l'objet de cette recherche, sont désormais des acteurs-clés dans la prévention et le confinement des migrants clandestins vers l'UE. Pour comprendre les raisons et les conséquences de la notion de «pays de transit» et l'étendue du phénomène de la migration de transit dans le contexte de la dynamique transméditerranéenne, cette thèse pose deux problématiques : *a) Comment le terme* «pays de transit» *est-il mobilisé et par qui? et b) Quelles sont les conséquences politiques de cette mobilisation dans le discours politique (pour les acteurs étatiques et non-étatiques identifiés)?*

La recherche illustre l'ambiguïté et la variété des définitions du terme «pays de transit». En outre, en réfléchissant sur l'utilité de ce terme pour les acteurs-clés identifiés, la thèse se trouve axée sur quatre arguments principaux. Premièrement, le terme «pays de transit» est en effet très politisé ; apparu dans les années 1990, à l'époque des politiques européennes d'externalisation, le terme a devancé les politiques migratoires transméditerranéennes contemporaines, notamment par rapport à la sécurisation, à la rhétorique des «causes profondes» , au retour des migrants, entre autres. Deuxièmement, l'étiquette «pays de transit» a identifié pour les États membres de l'UE un (nouveau) acteur-clé (en dehors de l'UE) pour la coopération bilatérale, leur permettant de sécuriser leurs frontières sans avoir à attendre des réformes progressives de la part de l'UE. Parallèlement, et en raison des limites de la souveraineté, l'invention de ce terme a accru la confiance dans les institutions internationales à vocation humanitaire proches de l'UE, pour des objectifs de gestion des migrations externes à plus long terme, sous couvert d'humanitarisme et de développement.Troisièmement, le terme a donné aux pays étiquetés comme pays de transit, notamment au Maghreb, l'occasion de déployer une forme de «reverse-conditionality» ou conditionnalité inversée : ces pays aident les objectifs de la politique migratoire extérieure de l'UE, en échange d'avantages politiques, sociaux et

économiques. Enfin, le terme «pays de transit» est généralement implicite, plutôt qu'explicitement invoqué par les pays étiquetés comme pays de transit, notamment les pays du Maghreb.

## List of Abbreviations

**AVRR** Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

**DTM** Displacement Tracking Matrix

**CEAS** Common European Asylum System

**CJEU** The Court of Justice of the European Union

**DCAF** Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

**EEAS** The European External Action Service

**EMM** European Media Monitor

**EU** The European Union

**EUBAM** European Union Border Assistance Mission

**EUFT** European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa

**FRONTEX** European Border and Coast Guard Agency

**GAMM** Global Approach to Migration and Mobility

**ICMPD** International Centre for Migration Policy Development

**IO** International organization

**IOM** International Organization for Migration

**MP** Mobility Partnership

**MPI** Migration Policy Institute

**MTM** Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration

**NATO** The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**UNECE** United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

**UN** United Nations

**UNHCR** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**VHR** Voluntary Humanitarian Returns

## Introduction

"Migration is our biggest challenge. It is putting at risk the very future of the European Union" (Antonia Tajani, European Parliament Press Release 2018). This statement – by the European Parliament President, Antonio Tajani, in the context of discussing the incoming (at the time) Austrian Presidency of the European Parliament – reflects a tension between the European Union's (EU) liberal humanitarian discourse anchored in human rights, multiculturalism, and tolerance, and its increasingly anti-immigration and protectionist rhetoric. The EU's post-Westphalian structure has one of the most coordinated policies of intra-regional freedom of mobility in the world, shifting away from a paradigm focused on limited physical territoriality, and towards exceptionally open borders within the EU (Walters, 676; den Heijer 472; Huysmans 753). At the same time, the EU's openness is asymmetrical. To seal its territory from unwanted migrants, the EU's practices have been akin to the "militarization of borders" (Talani 167). The EU has not removed borders altogether, but rather eliminated traditional forms of border control in exchange for new forms of regulation and prevention, including police cooperation across borders and information-sharing about what has been called the "networked (non)border" (Walters 679). Since the 1990s, as part of an increased focus on external action on migration, the EU has also extended cooperation on international migration beyond its territory, towards African and Middle Eastern states from which migrants are believed to begin their journey or transit to the EU (European Parliament c, 23). "Transit countries", which are of particular interest to this work, have become key actors in the prevention and containment of unwanted migration to the EU, including in cooperation on security and information sharing (Lazaridis and Wadia 147; Barker 2). As such, this thesis is concerned with understanding the rationale for and use of the term transit country[1], in the context of migration management, and how discourses related to transit countries have shaped the relations between EU and non-EU states.

To understand how the term transit country is used and to what effect, as well as the larger phenomenon of transit migration in the context of trans-Mediterranean mobility, this thesis asks: *a) How is the term transit country being mobilized and by whom? and b) What are the*

[1] The term 'country of transit', as opposed to others in a similar vein, i.e.: Transit State, was chosen because it is the term most consistently used in both academic literature and state and non-state actors (i.e. international organizations).

*political consequences of the mobilization of the term and concept of the 'transit country' in policy discourse (for state and non-state actors)?*

My research involves four categories of actors: the EU, specific EU member states (primarily Spain and Italy), the four Maghreb transit countries (Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia), and two key international organizations (IOs): the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This thesis will first provide a critical analysis of the literature on the transit country, followed by the methodology section, which highlights and justifies the methodological approach to the work. Subsequently, this thesis is further divided into two main sections. The first demonstrates how the term transit country is used, and by whom, while the second section identifies and elaborates on the political consequences of countries being portrayed as, or endorsing being, transit countries, for a key set of state and non-state actors.

*Summary of Arguments and Findings*

This thesis develops four main arguments and presents five main conclusions. In the first section, I argue that the success of Europe securing its borders has always been closely dependent on its cooperation with its non-EU neighbours. Since 2004, with the most significant enlargement of the EU – which included CIS countries of concern for the EU when it comes to irregular border crossings –there has been a shift in focus for EU migration policy from Eastern Europe towards Southern states. This is reflected in the discourse of the EU in the mid-2000s, but also in the actions of Maghreb countries (labeled countries of transit) who have taken initiatives, such as the adoption of laws to address irregular migration and transit migration, to complement the EU policy shifts. Ultimately, on the state level, Section One finds that the rise of transit country as a term in policy discourse in the early 1990s, foreshadows the policies we see today as they pertain to North and South cooperation on migration, most notably: linking development to migration, promotion of 'voluntary return and repatriation' by IOs and the EU, the framing of migration deterrence as part of 'humanitarianism' (particularly human trafficking and human smuggling). Meanwhile, on the institutional level, there has been increased reference to and reliance on institutions adjacent to the EU, such as Frontex, UNHCR, and IOM in addressing the humanitarian, development, and security concerns associated with transit

migration. As a final observation, Section One shows that countries from the Maghreb that are labeled countries of transit do not explicitly use the term themselves; instead, they focus on highlighting the role they play in transit migration for their European counterparts.

The second section, which is subdivided by actor, makes three main arguments. First, it contends that incoherence and fragmentation within the EU – demonstrated through its incremental reforms – render various transit countries as 'buffers' for coastal Mediterranean EU states who face asymmetrical migration pressures compared to other EU member states. Second, it shows that Maghreb countries have instrumentalized their role in transit migration towards the EU – reflected in their acceptance of the label transit country in EU and IOs' discourse– to deploy a form of reversed conditionality. By endorsing the term, states labeled as countries of transit have sought, in exchange, political legitimacy, as well as social and economic opportunities, through issue-linkage. Finally, to build on the findings in the first section, Section Two demonstrates that within the context of North Africa, the rise of the transit country has opened up space for both the IOM and UNHCR to play heavily operational roles in migration management, working in complementarity to achieve their respective and combined goals. It is significant to discuss the roles of the IOs here as it considers the congruence of the two organizations, which have long been considered to be competing with one another; the decentralization of EU migration management and shows IOs as independent actors with interests beyond just serving their members and partners (i.e: states).

The second section also develops two broader findings. The first is that discourse and policy practice related to transit countries both preserves the Westphalian system of nation-state sovereignty *and* sustains different forms of supranationalism. On the one hand, the prioritization of sovereignty and national interests is clear, notably in North-South bilateral agreements (North-South). Yet, these forms of migration management do not indicate rejection of the EU as an entity, given that bilateral agreements and projects on migration, development, and security are largely funded by the EU (European Commission *no date*, p; European Union *no date*, i; Baczynska 2023, Vela 2018). Moreover, there has been a quantifiable increase in the involvement of IOs (UNHCR and IOM) in EU migration management, including in longer-term policies of 'containment'. Relatedly, the thesis shows that the EU's migration management policies involving countries of transit are increasingly systematized for longer-term, sustainable solutions, with IOM and UNHCR being at the forefront of those plans. For instance, the proposal

for the EU's Regional Disembarkation Platforms project (2018- ongoing) was led jointly by IOM and UNHCR.

Before presenting these arguments and findings in greater detail, the following sections will discuss and analyze the available literature on the transit country, and the larger phenomenon of transit migration, as well as the methodological approach taken in this thesis.

## Literature Review

To situate the transit country, and the larger phenomenon of transit migration in the literature, the following paragraphs are divided into three subsections, starting with a more precise concept (the transit country), then the phenomenon of transit migration, before moving broader to the conceptualization of borders in the context of EU migration management. As such, the next paragraphs are divided as follows: *The Transit Country: As It Presents in the Literature; The Precursor to the Transit Country: Transit Migration*; and, *Conceptualizing Borders and the Rising Relevance of Border Externalisation in EU Migration Management*.

### *The Transit Country: As It Presents in the Literature*

The increased securitization of EU's borders, coupled with the persistence of traditional push factors of migration and interlinked phenomena, such as: "conflict, violence, climate change and persecution" (Bhagat 1), has increasingly contributed to reliance on non-linear routes of migration. As such, while some migrants do go directly from their starting country (whether of origin or not) to their final destination many others have been relying on various roots, passing through one or more countries, before reaching their final destination (Mol and de Valk 42; EMM, IOM 2023). Those countries through which migrants pass through are considered transit countries. For instance, the 2015 refugee 'crisis' when over 1.3 million sought refuge in Europe[2] highlighted, very clearly, the multiple-countries journeys migrants might take to reach a permanent destination country (Mol and de Valk 42). As such, it shone the spotlight on the integral role transit countries play in transit migration and reignited interest in cooperation with those states. Türkiye, for example, hosted the greatest number of Syrian refugees and continues

[2] (Pew Research 3 Center 2016; Coninck, Solano, Joris, Meuleman and d'Haenens 2021)

to be the largest host of refugees in the world for the past eight years (Statista 2023, UNHCR 2022, a). This did not go unnoticed by the EU, whose default towards securitization in thwarting irregular migration became heightened following the so-called refugee 'crisis' (Lazaridis 11; Bhagat 1). In 2016, the EU struck a EUR 6 billion deal with Türkiye, towards the containment of "European-bound" asylum seekers (Kirisci 2021). Clearly, then, transit countries have a role to play in shaping international relations, including trans-Mediterranean migration management, alongside European (destination) countries (Council of Europe 2015, g; Ribas-Mateos 11).

At the same time, existing literature shows that the label of transit country and the concept of transit migration are not legally grounded in a specific definition or criteria (United Nations Human Rights Office of The High Commissioner 7; Düvell et al. 410, a; de Massol de Rebetz 45). This potentially renders the term easily manipulatable to fit different theoretical, policy and rhetorical frameworks, such as development and foreign aid, domestic politics, and securitization. The definitional and legal ambiguity around the notion of the transit country — along with the accompanying idea of transit migration — is the starting point for this research project. On the one hand, while these terms have been rebranded within the frame of migration to Europe, their "meaning, usefulness, and appropriateness" remain "unsettled and highly contested" (Düvell 4; Düvell et al. 407). On the other hand, the term transit country continues to consistently be used to plan and legitimize policies and agreements on various levels of governance. This suggests that the notion of the transit country, and the phenomenon of transit migration, are politically useful, despite their uncertain legal status. This thesis aims to question this ambiguity and draw attention to the reasons for and consequences of the term 'transit country'.

Furthermore, as will be explored below, the existence of the transit country opens up new possibilities to the practice of migration management that pushes the legal and physical boundaries of states and co-opts new dynamics between the Global North and Global South. As highlighted by Gregory White, "The evolution of transit countries has transformed modes of governance as well as sovereignty dimensions in profound ways" (White 91). Yet neither the policy, nor academic literature has engaged in an in-depth analysis of the term transit country, largely taking it for granted rather than asking how and for what purpose it is being mobilized, and the consequences of this mobilization. As such, my research also has imminent implications for key norms and values in the discipline of International Relations, such as sovereignty and

international cooperation. To build on existing literature, both empirical and theoretical, this thesis seeks to answer two central questions: *a) How is the term transit country being mobilized and by whom?; and b)What are the political consequences of the mobilization of the term and concept of the 'transit country' in policy discourse (for state and non-state actors)?* The research is thus meant to draw attention to a term that is largely taken for granted, despite its conceptualization playing an integral role in trans-Mediterranean dynamics and the spatial reconfiguration of EU migration management. In so doing, this thesis will emphasize the social- rather than legal- notion of the term 'transit country'.

*The Precursor to the Transit Country: Transit Migration*

The so-called fourth wave of migration to Europe (2008-ongoing)[3] has been characterized by the rise of right-wing populism, placing migration policy at the forefront of electoral debates in many EU member states (de Haas 12; Sachar 53; Luo 414). Though the EU is not experiencing a 'new wave' of anti-immigration policies and rhetoric, the extent to which and creativity by which EU states are trying to thwart migration from the south of the Mediterranean is rather novel. Sabine Hess introduces the notion of the 'transit migrant,' noting that while it did not exist while she was conducting research in Türkiye (formally Turkey)[4] in the late 1980s, it emerged as a term in policy and practice "due to a specific political process" – namely, the Accession Partnership Document between Türkiye and the EU. This led Türkiye to become the first transit country with borders outside of the European continent (Hess 432). Her findings highlight the interrelation between transit migration and the transit country; with the former being a precursor to the latter (Hess 432). Equally important, her findings allude to the potential political significance of the transit country and what it might mean for migration management between the EU and its neighbours south of the Mediterranean. Yet, Hess does not provide an analysis of the label transit country. She focuses instead on the opportunities it has allowed for IOM since the label has been determined for Türkiye (Hess 433). In fact, in general, both policy

[3] de Haas, Hein. European Migration: Dynamis, Drivers and the Role of Policies. Publications Office of the European Union. 2018.

[4] United Nations Türkiye. "Turkey's name changed to Türkiye". *United Nations*.2022

and academic literature have seldom engaged in an in-depth analysis of the term transit country, largely taking it for granted rather than asking how and for what purpose it is being mobilized, and the consequences of this mobilization. This thesis aims to fill this gap by analyzing the framing of the term in policy discourse to shed light on the usage of the term, and its political consequences on identified state and non-state actors.

As briefly discussed above, transit migration serves as a precursor to the use of the term transit country in policy discourse. Following scans of the academic literature and EU policy documents, it is apparent that current literature still lends disproportionate attention to the phenomenon of transit migration (understanding transit flows), over the transit country. The concern with migration flows highlights the securitization approach to migration that dominates both academia and policy; where migration is associated with questions of security; whether socioeconomic or political (Lazaridis 13). This is clear during critical juncture events such as 9/11 and the Syrian refugee 'crisis' of 2015-16 (Lazaridis and Wadia 1; Tennis 40; Bhagat 1). Equally so during routine events, such as elections within democracies (Scipioni et al. 2020, European Parliament 2018, European Commission 2020, q). Furthermore, the earliest acknowledgments of the term transit migration date to the mid-1990s by UN bodies (i.e.: UNECE) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As will be highlighted in the body of this work, the IOM and other international and multilateral organizations' use and understanding of the term transit migration is significant, given the critical role they play in migration management in the south of the Mediterranean, notably North African countries: Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Libya (Bartels 5 Zialotti 6; Hess 432).

Since the mid-2000s, scholarly and policy literature have seen the emergence of more nuanced definitions and understandings of transit migration, which demonstrate the complexity of the concept and dynamics between states and non-state actors (de Massol de Rebetz 56). Papadopoulou-Kourkoula conceptualizes transit migration as "the situation between emigration and settlement that is characterized by indefinite migrant stay, legal or illegal, and may or may not develop into further migration depending on a series of structural and individual factors" (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 4). Similarly, Cassarino and Fargues demystify the assumption of linear, and continued mobility of migrant journeys in transit, drawing attention to "its configuration is closely connected with other processes of mobility that need to be taken into account" (Cassarino and Fargues 102-103). While most transit countries see themselves as

primarily countries of emigration (Sørensen 27), the increased securitization of borders European borders since the end of the Cold War (Gibney 18), coupled with other factors that determine the journey of transit migrants often render stays in transit countries "long term and semi-permanent" (Sørensen 5). As such, building on the definitions above, migration flows are a concern for sourcing and destination countries, but increasingly a concern for the transit countries involved.

*Conceptualizing Borders and the Rising Relevance of Border Externalisation in EU Migration Management*

Current literature makes a strong link between transit migration and border externalization practices, which have contributed to changes in the fundamental notions of borders, within which transit migration exists. Before reviewing this connection, it is important to emphasize that though border externalization in the context of migration practices is not new (Zaiotti, 2), certain contemporary practices of border externalization, such as the use of surveillance technology and increased reliance on cooperation with transit countries, are relatively novel (Hess 429). As with transit migration, the term 'border externalization' has been associated with related terms such as 'remote control'[5] or extraterritoriality – which entails processing asylum claims outside of Europe, to prevent claimants from entering European territory (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 40) - and 'outsourcing'[6], among others. Europe's current migration dynamics point to a continued reliance on shifting border management beyond the EU, and towards neighbouring countries, particularly south of the Mediterranean (Stock, Üstübici and Schultz 1). In other words, migration management practices of remote control and/or extraterritoriality allow countries to transcend the physical territory of EU countries, increasingly placing the spotlight on transit countries.

To EU has been accused of mobilizing the concept of burden-sharing as a pretext to reduce its migration management responsibilities (İçduygu and Yükseker 453). The concept of burden-sharing in the context of migration has largely been explored within intra-EU dynamics. For example, Dublin Regulation III has rendered coastal states such as Italy the 'first line of

[5] The term refers to a practice that started to take place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries where regulating migration starts "at the point of embarkation", rather than point of arrival (FitzGerald 4)

[6] Often entails expelling migrants to detention centers in African countries (Hennebry and Walton-Roberts 108)

defense' for processing migrants (Migration Policy Institute 2019). However, increasingly, burden-sharing goes beyond intra-EU dynamics by implicating transit countries in receiving, containing and preventing migrants from reaching the EU, and instrumentalizing incentives of 'common' economic and political interests (Moretti 205; Paoletti 30). This does not necessarily absolve the EU from tending to the migration management of its border. Instead, scholars insist that borders are transforming, rather than dissolving: states are abandoning some of the traditional responsibilities connected to migration control, which revolved around the concepts of fixed and bounded territoriality (Walters 679; Shachar et al. 8). An example of such practice is the opening of detention centers in transit countries, thereby 'containing' migrants within those countries, instead of on European territory. Soto Bermant describes this practice as "externalizing the camps" (Soto Bermant 125). The outsourcing of traditional state responsibilities to the South effectively renders these states – which are labeled transit countries- "Europe's policemen" (Bialasiewicz, 847) or the "gendarme or border guard for the destination country" (White 5).

According to some scholars, the above-mentioned practices by EU states highlight the asymmetrical power dynamics between North and South; a "long shadow of coercive colonial rule" (Migdal and Schlichte 34; Paoletti 116). However, North African countries have demonstrated that they also play a role in this dynamic. Despite the migration itself remaining unwanted (Zaiotti 7; Sørensen 8), countries labeled of transit have conditionally co-opted the term, which has served as a 'bargaining chip' towards more resources to control their borders, to secure the facilitation of emigration for their nationals, and even to negotiate membership to institutions such as the EU and IOM, such as in the case of Türkiye (Natter 9; Hess 432). This co-optation of the term is illustrated in —often EU-financed — agreements, press releases and capacity-building initiatives, in which the participation of those countries is indispensable. This point challenges recurrent assumptions of the 'powerlessness' of the South; setting a tone of analyzing the phenomenon of the transit country as a Euro-African phenomenon, rather than one focused on a top-down approach.

The above paragraphs situated the term transit country and the broader phenomenon of transit migration in the literature. In turn, this highlighted gaps in the analysis of the term and its framing. To illustrate my plan for addressing those gaps, the following paragraphs will contextualize my research questions, and set out my theoretical approach and methodology.

**Methodology: Approaches and Justifications**

Two questions guided the research for this project: a) *How is the term transit country being mobilized and by whom?*; and b) *What are the political consequences of the mobilization of the term and concept of the 'transit country' in policy discourse (for state and non-state actors)?*. As highlighted in the literature review, the term 'transit country' or 'country of transit', under the broader theme of transit migration, is seldom questioned, and is often taken for granted. Moreover, the term is used to guide policies and projects but is not rooted in a legal definition (Düvell et al. 417; Collyer and de Haas 469, c). Given these background conditions, this thesis opted for an interpretive approach to understanding how the term 'transit country' is used, and to what effect. As pointed out by Kurowska and Guevara, the interpretive approach is frequently used to challenge the normative background of concepts that are viewed as "neutral or law-like", such as the case with the term transit country (Kurowska and Guevara 1213). Through interpretive analysis of policy discourse, my project, therefore, challenges this passive acceptance and seeks to invoke an enhanced understanding of the deeper context of the 'country of transit' (both as a label and as a concept) within the broader phenomenon of transit migration, and of how it connects to other ideas that shape international relations in the trans-Mediterranean region - involving both state and non-state actors.

To address the first question, Section One maps when the term 'transit country' begins to appear in policy discourse and scholarly literature and how the use of the term evolves. There is consensus that concern with transit migration in the Mediterranean began in the 1990s, reflected in the "(...) inception of the EU external action on migration in the 1990s" (European Parliament 23, a; de Massol de Rebetz 45). This has been accompanied by increased cooperation with third-countries, particularly the Maghreb states. As such, the 1990s until 2023 (inclusive) is the timeframe of this analysis. I conducted a manual discourse analysis using search engines search from the websites of each actor relevant to my study, in order to gain access to a variety of materials documenting the use of the term 'transit countries'. For key EU member states (Spain and Italy) and the four countries of the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya), I searched the main government websites, along with national archives, and the equivalents of Ministries of Interior, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Ministère de la Jeunesse, de la Culture et de la Communication (in the Moroccan case). Similarly, for the relevant EU bodies – the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council – I consulted

their official websites, and the Plenary questions search engine (in the case of the European Parliament) to gain access to project proposals, announcements, press releases, among other key documents. I specifically researched keywords such as: “transit”, “transit migration”, “country of transit”, “transit country” “state of transit” and “transit state”. When options were limited due to a lack of digitized archives in the case of Spain, Italy and the Maghreb countries’ websites, additional words such as “Mediterranean Sea” and “irregular migration" were used as well, along with news articles documenting press releases, and official meetings. Furthermore, while the state actors are largely- if not exclusively - concerned with migration flows between the two regions given geographic proximity, the EU and the IOs (UNHCR and IOM) have a more global reach as it pertains to migration. Therefore, I extended my search of these organizations’ use of the term transit country, to capture how the term featured in policy discourse.[7] The general picture gathered in this first phase of work created a foundation for deeper analysis of the political mobilization of the term ‘transit country’.

To answer the second research question, aimed at understanding the political consequences of portraying states as ‘transit countries’, the analysis in Section Two focused specifically on policy discourse related to trans-Mediterranean relations and migration management. Documents were selected based on the following two inclusion criteria: 1) published between 1990-2023; 2) focused on the EU, UNHCR, IOM, EU member-states and/or Maghreb countries and im/mobility towards the EU. By focusing largely on primary sources (such as press releases, policy frameworks, and press conferences), this section does not hone in on specific policy frameworks and announcements but rather seeks to analyze a broad range of key policies and events that have shaped trans-Mediterranean relations and demonstrate how the framing of the transit country and the concept, in itself, have shaped these dynamics. For example, as the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUFT) for Africa is a touchstone document in African-EU relations, it was analyzed; drawing the analysis to how the term transit country has defined dynamics within the African-EU relations. By relying on sources found using the search engine of every actor, this section focuses on the policies or political decisions taken as a result of the mobilization of the label transit country, thereby showing how the phenomenon of the transit country has contributed to shaping trans-Mediterranean dynamics today. To clarify, this thesis is not arguing that the use of the term directly causes something

[7] This included, for example, its usage in relation to countries of the former Soviet Union, in the Commonwealth of Independent states.

necessarily. Rather, it aims to demonstrate how the usage but also the *portrayal* of a state as a 'transit country' (or endorsing being a transit country) renders certain policies and activities possible.

The keywords used on the search engines, for both sections, were chosen in the dominant language used by the actor. For example, when navigating the IOM's website, keywords entered into the search engine were in English and French (i.e.: 'country of transit' or 'pays de transit'). Similarly, on the Government of Italy's search engines keywords such as "paga di transito" were used and so forth. French was used to search on the government websites of the Maghreb states. For the EU repository, French, English and Italian were used interchangeably to maximize findings. Furthermore, as prior knowledge of the languages played a role in the interest in the chosen region, the translations conducted from Italian and French to English were conducted manually. For Spanish, the AI software Deepl was used. An EU-based company, Deepl is a reliable AI translation tool often used by governments, such as the Government of Canada (Deepl no date; Government of Canada 2022).

*Case Selection*

The analysis in this thesis focuses on four sets of actors: a set of key EU member states engaged in addressing migration from the Mediterranean, the four key transit countries in the Maghreb, and the key regional (EU) and IOs (IOM and UNHCR) engaged in migration management in this geographic area.

The Mediterranean is the deadliest maritime crossing in the world (Amnesty International 2020; UN News 2017). Academic literature, news headlines and even political discourse seem to largely focus on the migrants' *journeys and* international cooperation resulting from shocking events of drowning and human rights violations (McMahon and Sigona 501; IOM 2023; European Parliament *no date*). Yet, it is the political dynamics between the EU and the countries through which migrants set off (defined here as 'countries of transit') that largely shape the journeys of migrants, including the outcome. These political dynamics, which Tazziolo defines as "governing migrant mobility through mobility"[8] (Tazzioli 4) are still largely

[8] Tazziolo uses this principle to demonstrate how mobility is an object of government, but equally so a 'government technique' to control irregular movements beyond just detention; ensuring continued mobility, and indefinite transit through securitization practices (Tazzioli 5). Though Tazzioi focuses on intra-European migration movements, the idea applies to transit countries who have become, through European externalization efforts, an extension of EU migration management, as this thesis aims to demonstrate.

understudied. As migration is a global phenomenon that implicates various state and non-state actors (de Massol de Rebetz 44; Bob-Milliar 61), this thesis applies a multiple-case qualitative research method, in which various state and non-state actors from the South and North are used to paint a global picture of Trans-Mediterranean dynamics.

On the EU side, the chosen countries are one of the 'main' Mediterranean coastal states: Italy and Spain. On the Southern side, the Maghreb states (excluding Mauritania) were chosen. Notably: Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Morocco. The reasons for choosing these actors are many. First, both EU countries share a colonial history or geographical proximity with at least one of the Maghreb countries highlighted; resulting in close trade relations, and diaspora links, among other commonalities that render them more likely to cooperate (Proglio xi; Saaf 202). Second, Italy and Spain are considered part of "les grands pays" of Europe (Lahlou 71)[9]. As such, they are more vocal within the EU (i.e.: in terms of seats in the European Parliament) and on the international stage. On top of being on the coast and facing an increased vulnerability to migrant arrivals, they are also often destination countries in many cases. On the other hand, smaller coastal EU states, such as Malta, Greece and Cyprus, despite being the most vulnerable states to Mediterranean migration as the Syrian refugee crisis has highlighted (Papageorgiou 80; Trei and Sarapuu 243) are arguably themselves countries of transit (Agelpoulos et al. 121). The focus on the Central Mediterranean Route (Algeria, Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia) is justified by the frequency of mobility through that route; more than Mediterranean departures take place from the Central Mediterranean Route (Algeria, Morocco and Spain) (Frontex News 2023, d).

Finally, given the proactive role international organizations have played in developing the label transit country and with the larger phenomenon of transit migration, two main organizations were selected as part of the research: International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UN Refugee Agency or United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or (UNHCR). IOM was chosen because it is often at the core of trans-Mediterranean migration diplomacy; acting as a broker between states; it is the go-to organization on migration issues (IOM 2, f). Furthermore, IOM programmes are heavily relied on for EU external migration policies, and in turn the EU heavily funds IOM for its migration projects (IOM *no date*, c). On a

[9] *Translation is mine: the large EU states* could mean: Italy and Spain hold the most number of seats in the European Parliament; reflected in the number of members of Parliament. The highest are France and Germany. The selection of seats follows a "degressive proportionality" approach where the number of seats allocation is dependent on the population size of the country, while maintaining representation for smaller countries (European Parliament 2023)

similar note, given that the study focuses on migrants of all backgrounds (refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, and returnees), these migrants fall under the UNHCR mandate which conducts a Refugee Status Determination (RSD)[10]. As such, the UNHCR is the other main organization that will be analyzed in this work. For IOM and UNHCR, the same methods as with the other state and non-state actors (i.e.: search engine of keywords within a specific timeframe to find reports, and press releases, among other documents), were used to ensure consistency.

*Challenges and Methodological Limitations*

This thesis is based on a combination of primary and secondary sources. Roughly 85 primary sources were consulted in English, French, Italian and Spanish, in addition to over 90 academic sources, and over 30 different online news sources, and websites of human rights organizations (i.e.: Euro-Med). The primary sources were mainly composed of written and oral press releases, and briefing notes from each actor. As mentioned above, the timeframe deployed was between 1990 - 2023 (inclusive), to address the research questions as they pertain to four categories of actors (the EU, two EU member states, four Maghreb countries of transit, and two IOs) using a manual qualitative coding approach.

The lack of consistency in the timeframe of the documents across actors, and the large timeframe of the research renders it impossible to consistently draw analysis from identical timeframes. For example, while only mid to present 2000s documents were available to analyze the Government of Italy's usage of the terms of interest, older, archived documents from the IOM and countries of transit were available for analysis. On this note, I recognize the limitations of relying on manual coding and the search engines of the different sets of actors. For instance, precise comparability of documents from the various actors. However, as the dearth of analysis of the usage of the term 'transit country', as well as its portrayal and political consequences is the driver for this work, this study adds to our understanding of the use of the term 'transit country, by providing an overall snapshot of the discourse using a high volume of documents made available through manual coding.

[10] The RSD is a "legal or administrative" process in which the UNHCR or governments determine whether a person is a refugee under international, regional or national law (UNHCR *no date*). For example, in the absence of a national policy to asylum and refusal of a state to conduct RSD's such is the case in Tunisia, the UNHCR takes on the process (De Genova 11; Al Aichi 2013).

## SECTION ONE: Mobilization of the 'transit country' by State and Non-State Actors

### EU Bodies and the Term 'Transit Country': Early Framing

*Early Definitions*

The 1990s saw an increasing EU external action on migration, strengthened by the adoption of the Global Approach to Migration (GAM) in 2005 as its political framework (European Parliament 23, c). Reinforcing EU external policies through cooperation with countries of transit is at the core of the EU's external migration management strategy (European Commission 2023, a; European Parliament 1999, c; Council of Europe 2015, d). As such, the following paragraphs will analyze how the term country of transit (and its synonyms), as well as the phenomenon of transit migration, appear in the context of the EU.

The term transit migration appears in policy documents dating to the early 1990s by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in press releases and documents by the EU Commission, the EU Parliament, among other governing bodies within the EU. The UNECE, for instance, was set up in 1947, and is one of five commissions in the UN, with the "(...) major aim is to promote pan-European economic integration" (UNECE, *no date,* a). In 1993, within the *International Migration Bulletin – a semi-annual publication that analyzes and presents data produced by The Rapid Information System*[11]*,* the UNECE offered not so much a definition, but rather a description of what it perceives as "transit migration"; "significant flows of irregular and illegal migrants from the Third World and Eastern European countries have developed in recent years following the demise of authoritarian regimes in central and eastern Europe, mostly through central Europe (...) to Western Europe" (UNECE 7, b). In contrast to the definition offered by the CMW[12], for example, this definition conveys a presumption of irregularity and illegality that is attached to transit migration. The UNECE admits that the magnitude of transit migration flows is "difficult to estimate", yet insists that these flows are a "significant concern to the respective governments because they cause disruptions and strain the

[11] *"(...) u*p-to-date and comprehensive information on various forms of international migration in the UN/ECE region" (UNECE 2023)

[12] "State of transit,' means any State through which the person concerned passes on any journey to the State of employment or from the State of employment to the State of origin or the State of habitual residence (OHCHR 1990)

economic, social, and political fabric of the respective societies" (UNECE 8, b). As one of the earliest definitions offered by the EU about the phenomenon of transit migration, it illustrates the security angle adopted by the EU, early on, linking transit migration to security concerns about "flows" of migrants. This discourse still echoes today, with the Syrian Refugee 'crisis' 22 years later, as an example (Council of the European Union 2023, a).

The success of Europe securing its borders is closely linked to its partnership with transit countries. For instance, in the same year, in 1993, during the Fifth Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Migration Affairs – which includes the thirty-two member states of the Council of the European Union[13] options for "moderating migration flows" were a principal concern on the agenda (Council of Europe b, 1993). During the conference, the Ministers concluded that effective migration management and control policies of reintegration, development cooperation, root cases, etc. "(...) depends increasingly on international cooperation, real commitment and mutual support between all the countries concerned" (Council of Europe 11). By involving "all States concerned", the Ministers imply the intention of including transit countries in the EU's external policies. Furthermore, though this meeting was largely focused on migration from East to West, the mention of migration management through development cooperation foreshadows and reflects a relationship that would develop between the EU and emerging North African transit countries, in the early late 1990s, early 2000s (Saaf 203; European Parliament 35, a). A few years later, in 1999, the Tampere special meeting[14] took place. This multiannual meeting is highly significant to EU migration management as it signaled the EU's goal of establishing a common EU Asylum and Migration Policy. This is now known as: the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) (European Commission *no date,* b). Within the idea of a common (EU) asylum and migration approach proposed at Tampere, cooperation with "countries and regions of origin and transit" is a central goal (European Parliament 1999, c). In the briefing note highlighting the conclusions of the meeting, the section on *EU Asylum and Migration Policy* mentions cooperation with countries of transit in two main ways: management of migration flows through "information campaigns on the actual possibilities for legal immigration and for the prevention of all forms of trafficking in human beings"; calls for the

[13] The Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Migration Affairs also includes Albania, Canada, the Holy See, Latvia, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the-United States of America (Council of the European Union 1993).

[14] The meeting also highlighted the importance of building partnerships with third countries and international organizations regarding migration policy (European Parliament 1999, c; Beqiraj et al. 204).

‘assistance’ of countries of transit “(...) to be developed in order to promote voluntary return as well as to help authorities of those countries to strengthen their ability to combat effectively trafficking of human beings and to cope with their readmission obligations towards the Union and the Member States (European Parliament 1999, c). A few years later in 2002, during the *Seville Summit: enlargement, immigration and reform,* the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi highlighted the priority to “conclude readmission agreements (...); undertaking joint operations at external borders before the end of 2002; introducing common visa arrangements by March 2003” (Prodi 3). These objectives are in practice today, such as the Visa Facilitation Agreement between the EU and third countries. This will be elaborated on in Section Two of the thesis.

In 2005, the European Commission introduced the Global Approach to Migration, which is the first political framework on Europe’s external policy to migration (European Parliament 11). The framework is heavily Africa and security-focused, with one of the aims being to “explore the feasibility of a migration routes initiative for operational cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination (...)” (Council of the European Union 5, c). The framework directly calls on FRONTEX to conduct various security actions, including studying the feasibility of various surveillance and monitoring strategies and building a Mediterranean Coastal Patrols Network that would encompass the EU and North African countries (Council of the European Union 4). The political consequences of the term transit country on the EU security capacity will be explored in the later section. Furthermore, building on the Global Approach to Migration, the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) was communicated (2011). Within GAMM, mention of the ‘countries of transit' is more frequent. The framework highlights an aim to “improve dialogue and cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination” (European Commission 9, c), with the Africa-EU partnership being the main regional framework for this dialogue in the south. The GAMM also highlights the Mobility Partnership (MP), including “commitments on mobility, visa facilitation and readmission agreements. It may, where appropriate, also include linkages to broader security concerns” (European Commission 11, c). As will be explored later, Tunisia and Morocco are both signatories to the MP. The *Migration Partnership Framework: A new approach to better manage migration* highlights the importance of third-country cooperation for the EU. Developed in 2016 the framework “(...) fully integrates migration in the European Union’s foreign policy”

(European Commission *no date*, d); calling for a win-win relationship with EU partners "(...) to tackle the shared challenges of migration and development" (European Commission *no date*, d). There is a clear attempt to link development to migration policy in migration management partnerships in the EU. A link that the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has denounced in the EU's relationship with third countries (European Economic and Social Committee 2016).

*Shifting Focus: From the East to the South*

In 2015, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, under Resolution 2073, offered its definition of the "concept" of transit countries (Parliamentary Assembly 2015). The Parliamentary Assembly is one of two statutory organs of the Council of Europe, and that combines the three-hundred-and-twenty-four parliamentarians on matters of human rights, advocacy and rule of law in EU states (Council of Europe *no date*, d). The Assembly defines transit countries as "(...) European Union neighboring countries from which the final step across the EUs external border is taken. However, several European Union member States located between the EU's external borders and migrants' preferred final countries of destination also experience significant levels of transit migration" (Parliamentary Assembly 1). The document recognizes the influential nature of the EU with its counterparts to the South, and acknowledges that "the European Union's relations with countries of transit emphasize migration policy" (Parliamentary Assembly 3). This demonstrates very clearly the ties shared between the EU and the transit countries.

Furthermore, and equally significant for this analysis, though the EU document does brush on western Bulkan states and Greece as countries of transit, the document spends more time evaluating the progress made by southern Mediterranean states when it comes to transit migration, notably: Libya, Turkey, Morocco (Parliamentary Assembly 4, 11). The solution to migrants' dangerous journeys appears to be for transit countries to improve their situations and migration policies. This is a reflection of a larger EU discourse, in which, Europe's desire for transit countries' cooperation in its border externalization goals comes in the guise of human rights discourse, a tactic equally employed by EU-funded institutions, such as IOM (de Massol de Rebetz 53; Garelli and Tazzioli 174). On the one hand, the Assembly reminds the European

states of their legal obligation toward the protection of refugees. On the other hand, it emphasizes the role transit countries need to play in developing their migration policy in order to "(...) serve the interests of European migration policy" (Parliamentary Assembly 4). This reflects a larger narrative of implicating transit countries in the EU's migration management.

Finally, following a manual scan of the documents mentioned above, the terms 'origin' and 'transit' countries appear to be used together. For example, the Tampere meeting proposed cooperation with "countries and regions of origin and transit" (European Parliament 1999, c). As another example, the MP framework recognizes and calls for a tailored approach that distinguishes between countries of transit, destination and origin (European Commission *no date,* d). Yet, the two terms are referenced as one unit. For example, in the section highlighting the concrete steps taken by the framework, the document indicates a: "Support to host and transit countries through existing Common Security Defence Policy (CSDP)" (European Commission *no date,* d). On top of the clear securitization approach, the language focuses on protecting EU borders. The combining of the two terms contradicts the special attention given to transit countries in third-country cooperation. It raises the question of where do transit and origin countries diverge for the EU? On a national level, irregular migration management seems to be narrowed to relations with transit countries in particular. As highlighted in the methodology section, the next paragraphs will distinguish between the EU and EU member-states, highlighting the mobilization of the term 'transit country' by Italy and Spain.

### The EU Member-States: Statist Mobilization of the Term 'Transit Country'

Overall, Mediterranean coastal states (including small states) face higher pressures to exercise migration management due to their geographic proximity, and colonial history, among other factors. For instance, coastal states such as: Italy, Spain, Malta and Greece all see themselves as the first line of migrant receipt (Papageorgiou 80; Trei and Sarapuu 243). This is manifested in the varied degrees to which EU states push for engagement on migration within the EU, and the extra effort towards bilateral cooperation between the EU coastal member-states and countries of transit, beyond an EU-state or regional cooperation (European Parliament 24, a). Bilateral agreements, in which migration is a priority, exist between Spain and Morocco (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Morocco 2023, a), Italy and Libya (Odysseus Network

*no date*). Negotiations are ongoing for an agreement with Tunisia (European Commission 2023, h; Reuters 2023, b).

*Italy's Relationship with Transit Migration*

Historically a country of emigration, managing migration in Italy has been present since the increase in migration to Italy in the late 1990s, and early 2000s (ICID and Agenzia Italiana per la cooperazione Allo Sviluppo 7). The first studies on migration management to Italy started as recently as the 1980s; around the same time as the conception of the term transit country (Caponio 445). In fact, Tunisian nationals constituted the earliest migrants to Sicily post-Italian reunification in the mid-1960s (Fleri 625). From the 1990s until now, the anti-migrant discourse has proven fruitful politically for Italian leaders who endorsed securitization of borders and containment policies via cooperation with transit countries, such as: former president Silvio Berlusconi with the center-right party Forza Italia (1994-1995 and 2001-2006) and more recently in 2022, President Meloni, the right-wing politician of Fratelli d'Italia.

Despite limited data dating to the 1990s[15], the term 'transit country' is present in recent Italian news and press releases. For instance, during an address to the Chamber of Deputies, President Meloni, gave a great deal of importance to cooperation with North African states vis-à-vis migration, and emphasized the central role Italy "can and must" play (Italian Government 2022, a) within the EU as it pertains to Southern Mediterranean migration, "while always being guided by the defense of its own national interest" (Italian Government 2022, a). President Meloni did mention "countries of origin and of transit" as well as destination countries (without specifying which ones) within the context of calling for cooperation, arguing that "Italy is bearing the heaviest burden in protecting Europe's borders against human trafficking in the Mediterranean" (Italian Government 2022, a). Though she does mention combating human trafficking and migrants' rights, ultimately, Italy's concerns remain consistent with those of the EU, of containment and halting irregular migration through cooperation with North African countries (Italian government 2022, a). The President's address mere days earlier at the Rome MED- Mediterranean Dialogues' echoed the same sentiments (Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean 2022). Through almost identical wording to the address at the Chamber of

[15] See methodology section.

Deputies, transit countries in this press release were mentioned in the context of the need for cooperation with and commitment from transit countries "for international legality and the need to tackle the migration phenomenon at structural level" (Italian Government b, 2022). Following the special European Council meeting that took place in May 2022 pertaining to Ukraine, President Meloni's press release mentioned prioritizing the securitization of Europe's external borders before internal ones, particularly that of the Central Mediterranean route through "(...) greater cooperation with and resources for the countries of origin and the countries of transit in particular" (Italian Government 2022, c; Council of Europe 2022, e). Meloni has also linked economic cooperation to migration, notably investments to "bring investments, create employment and ensure people have the right not to have to escape their own countries, not to have to migrate; in order to combat poverty, which is what underlies instability in a number of African nations" (Italian Government 2023, d). Here, the President is consistent with EU messaging concerning fighting the "root causes" of migration towards combating illegal migration, dating back to the 1990s, as highlighted in the EU paragraphs.

*Spain's Relationship with Transit Migration*

Spain, like its Italian counterpart, has, due to its history and geographic proximity, been a destination for migrants originating from or transiting from North Africa, either via the Mediterranean Sea from Morocco and Algeria or by land through the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa (Council of the European Union *no date,* f)[16]. The evolution of Spain's migration policy has known three main steps, motivated by two spikes in migration. The first being at the end of 1999, and the other between 2002-2007. Notably, 1992-2001 saw a transformation of Spain from a country of emigration to one with increased migration; leading to pressure to adopt concrete migration policies. Since the beginning, policies have been characterized by control and readmissions of nationals to countries of origin and transit (Souvannavong 48; Ministerio del Interior 8, a) During these years, Spain participated directly in policies of return, where migrants were granted temporary stay (15 days) before receiving thirty euros to choose a different destination (whether that is country of origin or another EU country is not specified) (Souvannavong 42). Spain has also invested in surveillance technology

[16] For reasons highlighted in the introduction and methodology, this thesis is focusing on trans-Mediterranean migration via the Mediterranean Sea.

(Sistema integrado de vigilancia exterior (SIVE)) for external migration practices and increased its budget towards cooperation and overall migration management with African states (Souvannavong 41).

Now that we have traced the beginning of Spain's migration policies from North Africa, it is equally as important to identify how the term is being used. Based on the Government of Spain's search engine, I was able to find documents on migration dating back to 2001. Where illegal migration appeared in documentation by the Ministry of Interior under the "Delegacìon del Gobierno para la Extranjería y Ia Inmigración"[17] report. The report is a reflection of consultations done by the government delegation for foreigners and immigration with various sectors, including NGOs, as well as Presidents of autonomous communities in Spain (Ministerio del Interior 6, a). In line with the discussion above, the document highlighted its approach to migration, notably characterized by its SIVE surveillance technology (Ministerio del Interior 6, a). It also highlighted agreements with third countries, notably Morocco. Despite the focus on illegal migration in the document, the document also highlights a historic labor accord between Morocco and Spain as a legal way for migration. Two years later (2003), the ministry produced a similar report, but highlighted a more detailed and explicit agenda. For example, explicitly allocating sections on "Repatriaciones; desarticulación de redes y organizaciones criminales; Retorno voluntario"[18] (Ministerio del Interior 2003, b). Equally as significant, unlike the last report just two years prior, this report makes mention of the transit country. The report mentioned the Seville Summitt that took place in 2002, and reiterated discussions on the importance of a common EU migration and asylum policy, as well as for the EU to cooperate with origin and transit countries (Ministerio del Interior 5, b). Furthermore, the report highlights bilateral cooperation with Morocco and a relaunching of the relationship between the two countries, following disagreements that temporarily halted their relations (Ministerio del Interior 5, b). Under repatriation and voluntary return, the Government of Spain highlighted Spain's first-time participation in the IOM's Voluntary Return programme (Ministerio del Interior 5, b; IOM 348, u). On a similar note, in 2004, the Ministry of Interior published a short press release stating that

[17] *Translation is mine: Government Delegation for Foreign Nationals and Immigration*

[18] *Translation is through Deepl: "repatriation; dismantling criminal networks and organizations; voluntary return" (Deepl no date)*

Spain has been “en colaboración con diferentes policías de países africanos”[19] (Ministerio del Interior 2004, e) although those countries were not explicitly mentioned, the press release signifies increased efforts of border control compared to the 1990s as a result of increased funding on the external border (Ministerio del Interior 15, b). It also highlights direct cooperation and shared responsibility between Spain and police in African countries on border and migration management. Overall, Spain’s willingness and interest in mutual EU policy is clear. At the same time, the coastal Mediterranean state does not shy away from securing its national interests via bilateral cooperation with transit countries. The explicit mention of the transit country in 2003 versus 2001 points to the increased, indispensable cooperation between EU states and transit countries at the beginning of the 2000s.

Finally, in two recent press releases, the Spanish Government highlighted its efforts and cooperation projects on “illegal immigration and security”, but does not explicitly mention words such as country of ‘transit’ and ‘origin’. Instead, the press releases simply name the countries and the cooperation that takes place. For instance, in a press release titled *Ukraine, the NATO Summit and Morocco mark the Foreign Affairs agenda for 2022* following the Madrid Summit, the Ministerio de Asuntos exteriores, unión Europea y cooperación[20] highlighted its successful efforts towards the inclusion of a reference to the Southern Flank in the new NATO Strategic Concept[21]. Furthermore, the press release references the recent Joint Declaration between Spain and Morocco on April 7, 2022, and that “illegal migration from Africa has declined the most in Europe” due to these corporations (Government of Spain 2022, c). Similarly, a press release published in July 2022 highlights the Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, José Manuel Albares’ trip to Mauritania and Senegal, and the importance of this partnership in "the fight against illegal immigration and security” (Government of Spain 2022, d). With thousands of migrants from West Africa making transit journeys to Spain, it is puzzling that the word ‘transit’ was not mentioned. As such, unlike its European counterparts, Spain’s use of the terms transit country and transit migration does not appear to be consistent in its

[19] *Translation through Deepl: “in collaboration with different police of African countries” (Deepl no date)*

[20] *Translation is through Deepl: the Foreign Affairs European Union and Cooperation (Deepl no date)*

[21] (the Strategic Concept “outlines NATO’s enduring purpose and nature, its fundamental security tasks, and the challenges and opportunities it faces in a changing security environment. It also specifies the elements of the Alliance’s approach to security and provides guidelines for its political and military adaptation” (NATO 2023)

government press releases. However, given my small sample size due to data availability and that this observation goes beyond directly answering my research question of *Who is using the term transit country and how?*, it is sufficient to contend with the conclusion of Spain's focus on security when it comes to cooperation with countries of transit and the increased use of the term from the 1990s to now.

## *Qui sommes-nous?* : The Mobilization of the 'Transit Country' by Maghreb States

The Maghreb countries, labeled countries of transit[22] have been, since the early 2000s, proactive actors in the containment and prevention of migration to their territory, and by extension, to the EU. For example, in a press release, Moroccan Agriculture Minister Akhannouch expressed that "(...) ainsi qu'un véritable risque de reprise des flux migratoires (vers l'UE) que le Maroc, au gré d'un effort soutenu, a réussi à gérer et à contenir"[23] (Ministère de l'Agriculture 2017), highlighting that the involvement in managing migration flows is not just passive, but a concerted effort to safeguard Europe's borders (the significance of this will be explored in the second section). Yet, the use of the term transit country by countries labeled transit themselves seems very seldom studied, despite the universal acceptance by academics, European policymakers (EU, EU member states) and IOs that Maghreb countries constitute countries of transit[24]. The following paragraphs will try to analyze the use of the term from the perspective of the countries labeled transit. Similar to the case of Italy, access to archival data has been a challenge throughout this research.

### *Shifting Stances on Mobility by Countries Labeled of Transit*

In 2003, Morocco adopted one of the earliest laws adopted by a North African country towards controlling entry and stay in Morocco (Lahlou 85). The law aims to address emigration

[22] Düvell, Franck. Transit Migration: A Blurred and Politicised Concept. Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS). University of Oxford, UK. 2012.

[23] *Translation is mine "(...) as well as a real risk of resumption of the migratory flows (towards the EU) that Morocco, through sustained effort, has managed to manage and contain"* (Ministère de l'Agriculture 2017)

[24] Mohsen-Finan, Khadija. Le Maghreb dans les relations internationales. *CNRS Éditions*. 2011. Print; Baghzouz, Aomar. « L'Algérie face aux questions migratoires et de mobilité », *Outre-Terre*, 2017..

and irregular immigration. It highlights penalties for migrants who are caught trying to stay in Morocco or leave Morocco irregularly (Kingdom of Morocco 2003, a)[25]. Furthermore, the term 'transit' is applied to travelers who are rejected by their transportation company to start their journey, who are rejected by their country of destination and return, regardless of if the journey was done by air or sea. Those travelers need to regularize their stay in Morocco (Kingdom of Morocco 2003, a)[26]. The document also mentions returns of non-Moroccan nationals to their country of origin, unless a refugee status was accorded to them or if their asylum applications were being processed. The punishments of return and detention are in line with European discourse on irregular migration. Similarly, in 2004, Tunisia adopted a law pertaining to passports and travel documents; the law is aimed to target irregular migration and render entry and exit of Tunisian territory more controlled (DCAF Tunisie 2004)[27]. Although the document does not explicitly mention the word 'transit' in any form, the law does explicitly highlight punishments for individuals who facilitate entry or exit of irregular migration to/from Tunisian territory, including providing transportation. This could be interpreted more broadly as human smugglers[28], though the term is not explicitly mentioned in the legal document.

Unlike Morocco and Tunisia, who experienced protectorate rule under the Spanish and the French, Algeria's particularly traumatizing history with French colonial rule has rendered European cooperation with the North African country more difficult and less likely than its Maghrebins counterparts (Lahlou 91; Zeghbib 2). A traumatic colonial history, coupled with a desire to maintain relations with Sub-Saharan African neighbors, has led Algeria to refuse the label of the transit country, despite having always faced the phenomenon of transit migration (Lahlou 93). However, economic incentives such as the signing of the EU-Algeria Association Agreement[29] (a free-trade agreement) in 2002, have rendered Algeria a more proactive partner on matters of migration. Notably, the acceptance of the term, manifested in the adoption of a law in

[25] This document was accessed in French (also available in Arabic)

[26] This document was accessed in French (also available in Arabic)

[27] This document was accessed in French (also available in Arabic)

[28]: "Migrant Smuggling is the facilitation, for financial or other material gain, of irregular entry into a country where the migrant is not a national or resident" (The United Nations on Drugs and Crime *no date*)

[29] (European Commission *no date*, j; Lahlou 91)

2008 placing conditionalities on entry and mobility of foreigners to Algeria (Journal officiel de la république Algérienne 2008)[30]. The legal document does mention 'transit' in the context of a 'transit visa' required for foreigners who already hold a visa for a destination country, and can justify their transit in Algeria (Journal officiel de la république Algérienne 2008). Similarly to the Tunisian and Moroccan laws, the document is heavily security focused; emphasizing random residency card checks by police, punishments against those who help irregular migrants enter or exit the territory (smugglers) and detention and expulsion of irregular migrants. Similarly, in 2010, Libya adopted the law on combating illegal immigration; including the facilitation of human smuggling, which is explicitly mentioned in this document (General People's Congress - Libya 2010). The legal document, unlike the other three mentioned, is almost exclusively focused on 'illegal' migration and does not mention the rights of minors entering or exiting Libya (General People's Congress - Libya 2010). There is no mention of keywords used for this research, including 'transit country'.

In 2014, Morocco became the only North African country to officially adopt a National Immigration and Asylum Strategy. The strategy does not make mention of Morocco being a transit country, nor to the phenomenon of transit migration. Yet, "managing migration flows and combating human trafficking; International cooperation and partnerships…", as well as the integration of migrants in Moroccan society make up some of the priorities of this strategy (Kingdom of Morocco *no date,* b). Since 2012, Tunisia has started demarches towards a "Strategie Nationale Migratoire[31]" (SNM). Similar to Morocco's national strategy, the outline of the SNM seems to adopt a more humanitarian tone. It acknowledges the global phenomenon of migration and its benefits to socio-economic development (Ministère des Affaires Sociales 2017). The outline also highlights intentions toward the involvement and integration of migrants into Tunisian society. As the second section will highlight, a national strategy remains absent from Tunisian policy, and migrants are the primary victims of this legal gap.

Thus, by adopting laws towards combating human smuggling to and from their territories, openly expressing their efforts to manage migration flows at their borders, and making progress towards national migration and asylum strategies, it is clear the North African countries (regardless of their progress) acknowledge their role in the migration to Europe and de

[30] This document is in French.

[31] *Translation is mine: National Migration Strategy*

facto of transit migration. However, unlike the EU, EU member states and the IOs, the Maghreb countries do not seem to mention the label 'transit country'. Instead, the label seems to be implied through their actions that link to EU externalization practices, due to their geostrategic position.

## The Decentralization of Migration? The Mobilization of the 'transit country' by IOs

### *The UNHCR*

As mentioned earlier, IOs play an integral role in defining both the terminology and boundaries of the phenomenon of the transit country. The phenomenon of transit migration and references to countries of transit have been appearing frequently in the projects and press releases of the UNHCR (also known as the UN Refugee Agency) since the 1990s, consistent with the trend of state and non-state actors in the Mediterranean region at the time, as highlighted above. The UNHCR's mandate is to provide international protection to refugees, and also seek permanent solutions to the refugee problem (UNHCR *no date*, d). This has expanded since the General Assembly of 1950 to include stateless persons, asylum seekers and returnees (UNHCR *d, no date*). The UNHCR's mandate has been complemented by the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol and regional refugee instruments. The following paragraphs will seek to answer: *how* is the term transit country mobilized by the UNHCR?

One of the earliest mentions of transit migration by the UN Agency was in *UNHCR publication for CIS Conference (Displacement in the CIS) - Transit migrants and trafficking UNHCR publication for CIS Conference.* The publication begins, in bold, with the header "Transit migrants: a new phenomenon" (UNHCR e, 1996). It highlights the increase in migration movements from Eastern Europe towards the EU following the liberation of CIS societies[32]. Though the document does not give an official definition of the transit country nor the phenomenon of transit migration, it implies it by stating that "A substantial number of people began using CIS countries as a stepping stone to the West " (UNHCR 1996). The publication highlights the link between human trafficking and smuggling, as well as the corruption involved in transit migration. Moreover, the document hones in on the "threat to the security and welfare

[32] The CIS encompasses 12 countries post USSR: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. (Nuclear Threat Initiative 1996; The European Commission 2008)

of the CIS countries" (UNHCR 1996); demonstrating a concern with the state sovereignty of those countries. As such, early on, the UNHCR has been implicated in the discourse linking transit migration to illegal activities, such as: smuggling and human trafficking.

In a 2005 briefing note, the agency announced launching a *North Africa transit project* (UNHCR f, 2005) This project was funded by the European Commission, highlighting the direct concern of the EU with migration from North Africa dating to the 2000s and reflects the domestic and organizational policies that were being implemented by the EU and EU member-states at the time (as mentioned above). North Africa here is referred to as a "central transit point from Africa into Europe" (UNHCR f, 2005). In the briefing note, the UNHCR indicates the 'needs' of asylum seekers "who are often mixed in with illegal migrants" are often ignored by the EU and transit countries, alike. By identifying certain migrants as 'illegal' the UNHCR enters into a dimension of securitization when it comes to migration. Yet, the agency maintains its humanitarian objectives, including strengthening protection for refugees and asylum seekers in the region, and interception at sea and boat rescues and the fate of asylum seekers that are 'intercepted'; key priorities for the EU today. Equally of significance, the project is said by the UNHCR to be "the first step towards understanding the link between transit migration and refugees and creating a protection space for asylum seekers while they are in transit" (UNHCR f, 2005; UNHCR g, 2005). This is an important dimension in UNHCR's involvement in transit countries, which will be discussed more in-depth in the second section.

More recently, the UNHCR was a present actor following the massive displacements that took place as a result of the Arab Spring that caught on in Libya and first erupted in 2010, in Tunisia (Masri 5). In 2011, the NATO-backed revolution[33] in Libya led to an increased demand for refugee and internally displaced people protection in Libya. Given that the Central Mediterranean Route (formally known as the Libyan Route) is the main departure point for migrants (up to 90%) seeking to reach Europe, the situation in Libya presented a "complex displacement scenario" in which the UNHCR's "overall objective in Libya is to improve protection and life-saving assistance" (UNHCR *no date*, m). In 2017, the UNHCR published a press release highlighting its approval of Libya's newly established transit facility aimed at encouraging the contribution of third countries to refugee management (UNHCR 2017, a). One of the objectives is to facilitate the "evacuation to UNHCR-run emergency facilities in other

[33] Campbell, Horace. Global Nato and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya : Lessons for Africa in the Forging of African Unity. *Monthly Review Press*, 2013 (Page 18).

countries, or voluntary return, as appropriate" (UNHCR 2017, a). The shift towards the use of a 'transit facility' in the Libyan case is not an anomaly. The UNHCR, along with the IOM, has aimed towards creating 'transit facilities' in various transit countries, in order to scan migrants seeking asylum in the EU; further contributing to the EU's external policies on migration (Bisiaux 11). This will be further explored in the second section.

On top of the terms transit country and transit migration, the word 'transit' also appears within UNHCR documents, in the form of transit facility, transit center, transit routes and Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM). The EMT was launched to "provide short-term temporary accommodation for displaced populations pending transfer to more suitable, safe and longer-term settlement" (UNHCR *no date*, j). For instance in 2019, in response to the "Mediterranean crisis in 2014" (UNHCR *no date*, k), the UNHCR established an EMT in Gashora, Rwanda. The MoU that rendered this possible was signed in 2019 and then later resigned in 2021; extending it until 2023, and "increasing the number of individuals to be hosted in the center to 700 people at any given time" (UNHCR *no date*, k). The role of the UNHCR within the EMT is to screen individuals, and conduct refugee status determination and durable solutions assessments (UNHCR *no date*, k). As such, since the 1990s, transit migration has been observed from a security lens by the UNHCR, in a way that lines up with EU external policies and priorities.

*International Organization for Migration (IOM)*

IOM (formerly PICMME and ICEM), like the UNHCR, IOM is a product of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) (Bradley 99; Geiger and Pécoud 50). A product of post-World War II, IOM was originally established in 1951 to resettle European migrants. Today, IOM has a broad, global mandate that is focused on "human management of migration" (IOM *no date,* v), despite the absence of a formal humanitarian mandate. Since the appearance of the term 'transit country' in the context of Mediterranean migration management, IOM has been present; playing a proactive role in anchoring the term for Mediterranean and African states, brokering EU-transit country agreements and equally present within the larger phenomenon of transit migration and migration management (i.e in refugee camps, in collaboration with the UNHCR).

From the very first World Migration Report produced by IOM in 2000, the terms 'transit country', and 'transit migration' were mentioned on multiple occasions. IOM identifies transit migration as a "process" that involves multiple countries before migrants reach their 'destination' (IOM e, 53). In the same report, IOM makes mention of its "Assisted Return activities" and describes them as "complimentary" (IOM 52, e). Here, IOM downplays and passively describes its controversial[34] Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme (AVRR), whose efforts started in 1992 (Barbau 5). Between the years 1995-2000, AVRR contributed to returning 250 thousand migrants to over 100 countries, including the "return of irregular migrants in transit" (IOM 52, e). A few years later, in 2008, IOM described AVRR as an "indispensable part of ensuring the integrity of regular migration", with one of its services being "In regions and countries affected by transit migration, such as Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean regions (...) IOM implements a number of AVR programmes aimed at strengthening the capacity of transit countries to manage their return migration caseloads" (IOM 4, f).

As mentioned in the literature review section, the term 'country of transit', and what it implies, remains contested (de Massol de Rebetz 42; Düvell et al. 143). The 2003 World Migration Report highlights that "for several years now, the Maghreb countries, particularly Morocco and Algeria have become transit countries (...)" (IOM 37, g). Around this time (2002-2003), Algeria was only beginning to create policies targeting irregular Sub-Saharan migration towards Europe with the creation of the 5+5 Dialogue and trade treaty signed with the EU (Lahlou 91). Before 2002, the North African country resisted accepting the country of transit label and instead, its government portrayed Algeria as a destination country for, and a country of solidarity with, Sub-Saharan migrants (Lahlou 91). This evolution in Algeria's discourse and practice, in contrast with the conclusion by IOM, draws attention to the subjectivity of the label country of transit.

In the 2003 World Migration Report, transit countries are mentioned as they relate to irregular migration. In other words, the report focuses on irregular migration when discussing transit migration and transit countries. For example, "(...) recruitment by smugglers in the country of origin, via passage through a number of transit countries(...)" (IOM 265, f). This

[34] The 'voluntary' and humanitarian nature of the AVRR is considered controversial, since the programme is intended to deter migrants from reaching the EU or returning them once they do, with a financial incentive. Furthermore, for migrants who are not legally allowed to remain in the EU (i.e: rejected asylum claim), the alternative to 'voluntary' return is coercive return; offering a fake sense of choice for migrants (Barbau 12).

demonstrates the negative connotations associated with the phenomenon of transit migration, and how the IOM focuses mainly on irregular migrants. Furthermore, economic opportunities in the EU being a pull factor for irregular migration, the report dedicates a section to the EU-specific response to irregular migration. Within this analysis, the IOM highlights the European Commission's desire for cooperation with third-country (IOM 68, g). Including, building capacity-building for "transit countries to be safe countries (...)" (IOM 65, g) and an "establishment of a Europe-wide corps of border guards (...)" (IOM 65, g), which is now known as Frontex. This approach points to the emergence of burden-sharing with transit countries; safe countries no longer start with the EU, but south of the Mediterranean.

IOM's involvement with countries labeled transit and transit migration shows up in its proactiveness in dialogues and forums. For instance, the 2006 Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM), an inter-regional and intergovernmental consultative forum composed of seven IOs as Partner Agencies (one of which is IOM), 19 non-EU participating countries (mainly from the MENA region and Switzerland) and 17 EU states to discuss various themes in migration (IOM 2003, h). Originally - and as the name suggests- the nonbinding (ICMPD 1) forum was meant to focus on transit migration. The objectives of the form range from interception; combating smuggling and trafficking, reception and detention, asylum and refugee protection and return and readmission. Within the scope of the forum's objectives and based on the final summaries of those meetings, the terms country of transit and transit migration are seldom mentioned. For example, in the report on the meeting that took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2010, the term country of transit (or the like) was only mentioned three times, two of which were in the title (MTM) and once more in the context of burden sharing between countries of origin, transit and destination (IOM, ICMPD and Government of Ethiopia 2010). At another meeting, that took place in Gammarth, Tunisia, titled *Strengthening African and Middle Eastern Diaspora Policy Through South-South Exchange,* the term transit country was only mentioned once: in the title (IOM, ICMPD and la République Tunisienne 2). The document focused instead on inter-institutional cooperation[35] and comprehensive diaspora policies. The document highlighted Tunisia's and Morocco's respective approaches to inter-institutional cooperation, yet no allusion was made to their label as countries of transit. This is puzzling, given the name of the dialogue. It raises questions on whether the outright use of the term is less prominent when

[35] Inter-institutional cooperation, in the document, is defined "as the ability of a country's state institutions to respond to this transversal, cross-cutting nature of migration. Inter-institutional coordination is therefore a means to measure capacity in migration and development" (IOM, ICMPD and République Tunisienne 2 2023).

transit countries are directly involved in the discussion, such as in this meeting, given their approach to the term transit country, as discussed above. In which, the term itself is quietly accepted, but not often vocalized. With this in mind, the next section will explore the political consequences of the usage of the term transit country and the phenomenon of transit migration.

## SECTION TWO: The Political Consequences of the Use of the 'transit country' for Key State and Non-State Actors

The previous section highlighted how the transit country is *mobilized* by key actors on both sides of the Mediterranean, and by international organizations. Across the four categories of actors, common themes and priorities as it pertains to the externalization of EU migration policy have emerged. Notably: emphasis on irregular migration, detention, repatriation and return. As such, discourse makes certain linkages and norms possible. By discussing the political consequences of the use of the term transit country from the perspective of each category of actor, the following section builds on the findings of the first section, by demonstrating how the usage but also the *portrayal* of a state as a 'transit country' renders certain policies and activities possible.

### The Political Consequences for EU Member-States: Shifting From a United EU Approach to Preserving the Westphalian System of Nation-State

As highlighted in Section One, despite the EU's aim towards a Common EU Migration and Asylum Policy, EU member states can implement their own asylum legislations, creating heterogeneity in acceptance rates of asylum seekers and protection status (European Commission *no date*, b). This is emphasized, in particular during critical mixed migration flows toward Europe[36]. For instance, in 2022, certain EU countries invoked the Schengen Borders Code (SBC)[37], in the context of the Ukraine war; leading to temporary internal border controls in the EU (European Commission *no date*, e). State discretion in migration management creates

[36] Here mixed migration flows could be interpreted as a sharp rise in irregular migrant crossings, or the unprecedented Syrian refugee 'crisis'.

[37] "(...) provides Member States with the capability of temporarily reintroducing border control (...) which must be applied as a last resort measure, in exceptional situations" (European Commission *no date*.

pressures on them to meet management demands. This leads, in turn, to frustrations with the EU's incremental bureaucracy, as well as tensions between states. In the case of Mediterranean migration management, tensions rise largely between coastal EU member states and those experiencing secondary movements (European Parliament 2023, f; Reuters 2019, a; Joensen and Taylor 53). In this dynamic, the transit country is no longer just a concept or a label, but a key actor; posing as a 'valve' or a 'buffer' to migration management pressures facing EU member states.

*The Networked Southern Border: Bilateral Agreements*

The key EU coastal states studied in this thesis - Italy and Spain- have both sought bilateral agreements with transit countries to ease the pressures of migration flows. In fact, collaboration between the EU and North African countries is largely bilateral, with Italy and Spain being at the forefront of those efforts (Cherti and Grant 13; Joensen and Taylor 84). These partnerships, however, are largely funded by the EU. This highlights not the rejection of the EU, but rather, that in the absence of an adequate EU approach (in the eyes of many member states)[38], the label transit country has constituted a key actor (outside of the EU); allowing the EU member states to pursue their interests more efficiently. For instance, the recognition of Libya as a transit country allowed Italy (an EU-member state), to further its individual interests as it pertains to external border management, which includes security against irregular migration and policies return (Italian Government 2022, a; Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean 2022). The 2017 EU-sponsored agreement between Italy and Libya was signed at a time when the EU was still negotiating "new asylum and migration rules" (Migration and Home Affairs 2020, f) and reforming the Dublin Regulation III[39]. These negotiations had been marked by tension and disagreements among European states, particularly with secondary movement countries, such as France, resisting the proposed New Pact on Migration and Asylum that would increase their responsibility of processing migrants, under the notion of burden-sharing (European Parliament

[38] Roberts, H. "Italy accuses the EU of fueling domestic political row". *Politico*. 2023; Tagoris, K. "Feeling abandoned by Europe, Greece hardens migration policy". *Reuters*. 2021.

[39] The Dublin Regulation determines the EU country responsible for processing a migrant's asylum claim (European Union Law 2013)

2018, g; European Parliament 2017, h). The difficult negotiations highlighted the incoherence within the EU. The signing of the MoU between Italy and Libya, at the height of such tensions, illustrated the efficiency of bilateral agreements to reach border management goals, largely outside of direct EU bureaucracy. The MoU publicly declared Italy's "commitment to relaunch dialogue and cooperation with African Countries of primary relevance for migratory routes (...)" (Odysseus Network *no date*). While the MoU was reported as a Memorandum *of understanding on cooperation in the fields of development, the fight against illegal immigration, human trafficking and fuel smuggling and on reinforcing the security of borders between the State of Libya and the Italian Republic,* the desire to protect national borders is clear. For instance, human rights organizations, such as EuroMed and Doctors Without Borders highlighted that the agreement was aimed not only at addressing human trafficking and strengthening development cooperation but also at "securing national borders" and "eliminating irregular migration" (Ceretti 2023; Médecins sans frontières 2022). In the case of Italy-Libya relations, in particular, the proximity of the two territories has long been cited by the Italian Government as added pressure on Italy to protect its border[40].

*Bilateral Cooperation and EU Dynamics*

Pre-established bilateral relationships between EU member states and transit countries could surpass a unified EU approach. For instance, in early 2003, as Italy was preparing to take on the European Council presidency, Libya was threatening to halt its efforts in preventing irregular migration from reaching Europe, if EU sanctions against its country were not lifted (Italian Government 2014, e). Though Italy (and Malta) were supportive of lifting the sanctions, citing that "weapons are needed to combat irregular migration" (Malta Independent 2004), the rest of the EU did not share the same pressure. Faced with threats from Libya of a looming migration flux, Italy was prepared to ignore the EU approach "(...) to force the move through at EU level (...) under a rule which allows such actions when a country is confronted with an exceptional problem" (Deutsche-Welle 2004). Though the EU unanimously voted- under Italian pressure- to lift sanctions against Libya (precisely to maintain and increase its support for

[40] The distance from Libya to the Italian island of Lampedusa – through what is known as the Central Mediterranean Route - is a mere 355 kilometers (Licciardi Group *no date*).

irregular migration management)[41], Italy's existing relationship with Libya, as a transit country, has pushed it to (almost) ignore an EU political stance (Joensen and Taylor 51). Furthermore, Italy's willingness to unilaterally take a stance by lifting sanctions on Libya, citing their importance as a partner on irregular migration, clearly communicates a) the desire to protect Italy's sovereign territory above all else, and b) the indispensability of Libya, as a transit country, to Italy's migration management.

## The Political Consequences for the EU: The Development-Security Nexus

To a large extent, the EU reaps the benefits from the proactiveness of EU member states to engage with transit countries bilaterally. In return, the EU has contributed by funding bilateral agreements, being part of partnership negotiations. However, what are the consequences of the term for the EU? By framing the transit country as a source of irregular migration, and an indispensable space for migration management, the term has contributed to the capacity building[42] of the EU's Security-Development nexus. It has done so by strengthening the link between development and cooperation on border management with North African countries and expanding the EU security nexus by increasing its investments in research and technologies on border security.

### *Linking Development Aid to Migration: The Emergency Trust Fund for Africa*

The relationship between development aid and mobility is complex and has been developing in recent years, notably linking development aid with addressing "root causes for migration" (IOM 11, b; Zaiotti 7). Development, as a pretext, is instrumentalized towards exercising migration control, under the guise of addressing 'root causes' of migrations and towards eliminating the push factors to migration (i.e. underdevelopment) (Collyer 69, b). For instance, as a result of the Syrian refugee 'crisis' in Europe, the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) was established in 2015 to address the 'root causes' of irregular migration and

[41] Banks, Martin. "EU to lift Libya sanctions in return for migration help ". *Politico.* 2004.

[42] According to the UN, capacity-building is defined "as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world" *United Nations Academic Impact no date,* a).

displacement of migrants in Africa, through economic aid. The EUTF is focused on three regions: Sahel & Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and North Africa (European Commission EUTF 2020, f). The North African sphere includes Libya, Tunisia and Morocco. The Fund's objectives include improving migration management in countries of transit (and origin) and return, admission and reintegration (European Commission EUTF 2020, f). The EUTF contributes to the EU's external policies through programs of border management and voluntary return. Ultimately, the EUFT contributes to further executing the EU's external borders; linking development funding to the EU's external policies beyond development in transit countries (Paoletti 30; Ufficio Immigrazione Arci 5). A key project under the EUTF in North Africa is the Border Management Programme (BMP) for the Maghreb region, executed in collaboration with the ICMPD and the Italian Ministry of Interior. The project was originally operationalized in Tunisia and Morocco and valued at EUR 65 million). It later expanded in 2020 to Libya (European Union 2020, a). The programme works with national border agencies in those countries to offer support on various levels of border management capacity building; from training to the purchase and maintenance of equipment (European Union no date, b). Under the EUTF, for example, Libya received thirty SUVs funded by the Italian Ministry of Interior towards the management of the Libyan border. Libyan border agents also received training, as well as security apparatus (European Union 2020, c). By contrast, projects in the other two regions (Sahel & Lake Chad and the Horn of Africa) seem to place more emphasis on the "root causes" than on border management, namely: employment and better protection for women and children from violence (European Commission EUTF 2020, f). This could be, perhaps, due to the lesser urgency of border management given that they are further geographically than Maghreb countries.

The push towards 'voluntary return' is clearly reflected in EUTF projects. The voluntary return, as highlighted earlier, is a key strategy in EU external policy (United Nations 2022, b). Indeed, the EUFT contributed funding to the project: Facility for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in North Africa the amount of EUR 10 million, in collaboration with IOM. It is important to clarify here that the facilities exist for "migrants stranded in North Africa" (European Union 9, d). Meaning, the facilities exist on North African soil. The project highlights its intention to work "(...) in close coordination and complimentary with existing IOM AVRR programmes as well as other EU and EU Member States' instruments and tools on return" (European Union 2020, d). The project then indicates EU efforts to deter migrants from reaching

the EU, while they are in transit. Those facilities are at the heart of the EU's externalization policies, as they contribute to the shift of migration flows to be not in Europe, but in the counties of transit (Collyer 4, a). Furthermore, though voluntary return programmes funded by the EUFT seem not to be limited to North African countries, with projects being implemented in various African countries,— i.e: Senegal[43], Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon— the large scale at which they are being implemented in North African countries, the special focus on security, as well as the continuous funding for new and extended projects, highlights the particular interest the EU has in North Africa (European Commission 2018, g).

*Security and Border Management: Frontex and the EU Border Assistance Mission*

The increased framing of development aid and border management as linked phenomena, has not eliminated traditional security strategies. The label transit country has allowed for the EU's capacity-building in security by expanding the EU's own security dispositif and by expanding its security network with those countries. Frontex and the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) are a demonstration of this. Launched in 2005, the EUBAM is funded by the EU under the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument and is implemented by IOM. In 2013, two years after the uprising in Libya, Libyan authorities (according to the EU) asked the Council of Europe for support through the EUBAM project (EUBAM Libya 2021). Hence, commenced the Mission EUBAM Libya, "to support the Libyan authorities in improving and developing the security of the country's borders" (EUBAM Libya 2021). Operating on an MoU, the European Council has since renewed the mission twice and invested over EU 84.85 million, and incorporates collaboration with Frontex and the Italian Ministry of Interior to train Libyan General Administration for Coastal Security (GACS) and support Libyan authorities "on the development of a national integrated Border Management Strategy" (EUBAM Libya 2021; European Union 2019, e). The current mission is on until June 30, 2023. Currently, its only other active mission appears to be in Moldova and Ukraine (European Union 2022, f).

Frontex illustrates the expansion of the European security nexus due to the rise in transit migration. Established in 2004, around a time when the EU had just secured partnership

[43] European Union. "Renforcement de la gestion de la gouvernance des migrations et le retour et la réintégration durable au Sénégal" *Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.* (European Union *no date*).

agreements with transit countries on border management, Frontex has played a major role in expanding EU externalization policies to North African transit countries. Some of Frontex's key roles include: protecting borders, return and reintegration, monitoring borders, risk analysis, training and international and EU cooperation (FRONTEX *no date*, a). Since its foundation, the Frontex budget has been seeing exceptional growth (EUR 6 million in 2005; EUR 254 million in 2016 and a record EUR 788 million in 2023) (Statista *no date,* b; Frontex 2023, b). Given their role as countries of transit, and the significant number of Tunisian, Algeria, Moroccan and Libyan nationals departing to Europe through the Central and Western Mediterranean routes, North Africa is a key priority area for Frontex. The collaboration on border migration management between the EU and Libya and Morocco has allowed the EU, through Frontex, to invest in unprecedented surveillance technology; improving information sharing and detection of migrant boats (Düvell et al. 409; Frontex News 2017, a). As such, aside from training coastal guards, such as in the case of the joint operation with EUBAM Libya, Frontex also employs surveillance technology such as drones to detect irregular departures from the Libyan and Moroccan coasts (Frontex News 2022, b).

Furthermore, the facilitation of surveillance of the Mediterranean due to the label transit country and the cooperation by the transit country should not be taken for granted. Tunisia, for example, is a country that has recently refused cooperation with FRONTEX, citing a desire to independently "set up an integrated border surveillance system" (Statewatch 2022). Though Tunisia continues to increase its surveillance in the Mediterranean (largely through EU support), its refusal to officially cooperate with the EU agency FRONTEX causes disruptions to the EU's efforts of surveillance in the Mediterranean. Instead, as recently as June 11, 2023, the European Commission, the Italian President Meloni, the Dutch Prime Minister Rutte and the Tunisian President Saied met in Tunisia to discuss an ongoing 'comprehensive package', including an immediate release of EUR 100 million towards Tunisia's border management, while also creating a "Tunisia window" in the Erasmus+ window to facilitate student exchanges for Tunisian nationals. It is unclear how the latter differs from the MP with Tunisia that expired in 2017, or the joint EU-Tunisia Youth Partnership of 2016, which aims to promote the development and mobility of youth (European Union 2016, g). However, it demonstrates that despite their best efforts of surveillance and partnerships with Maghreb countries labeled transit, the EU and the EU member states remain constrained by the rules of state sovereignty. It also

points to the interconnectedness between various conditionalities (which will be further explored in the following paragraphs).

## The Political Consequences for States Labeled Countries of Transit: Reversed Conditionalities

As highlighted in the introduction, this thesis shifts away from the overwhelming approach to North African states as passive victims of European policies. It endorses the premise that the EU's externalization policies "cannot be understood entirely in terms of an old style geopolitics of dominance" (Cuttitta 2). Per Section One's findings, though the term transit country is not mentioned in legal documents or recent frameworks (i.e.: Morocco's National Immigration and Asylum Strategy 2017), Maghreb countries adopt the term, and de facto experience the political consequences attached to it. However, since the 2000s, migration management by North African countries, largely for the benefit of the EU, has not been unconditional. It has been unaccompanied by negotiation opportunities for the North African states, or what Tittel-Mosser referred to as 'reversed conditionality' (Tittel-Mosser 351; Papagianni 67). As such, while the EU, on its end, sets the tone for its vision of external migration policy, Maghreb states set their proper conditions on the implementation of those policies. With the 'transit country' increasingly being the focus of European externalization of migration management (as highlighted in the previous sections), Maghreb states have imposed reverse-conditionality through issue linkage on the EU and EU member states.

### *Political Legitimacy Through Issue Linkage*

Libya's strategic position as the point of entry to the Central Mediterranean Route for irregular migrants looking to cross to the EU has rendered it a vocal actor in migration diplomacy. On several occasions, Libya has instrumentalized its position as a transit country to employ migration diplomacy, placing its interests on the political agenda of the international community. Tsourapas provides a straightforward definition of issue linkage where the concept is defined as "(...) simultaneous negotiations on two or more issues aimed for a joint-settlement" (Tsourapas 2370). He goes even further to situate issue linkage among migration diplomacy

where, when employed, Global South countries could "bypass the artificial categorization" of states (origin, destination)[44] to negotiate with Global North states (Tsourapas 2370).

The concept and strategy of issue linkage (both tactical and substantive)[45] are clearly reflected in Libya's approach to migration diplomacy, particularly in the Kadhafi era (1977-2011). It is not a coincidence that in the early 2000s, Libya's desire to access foreign investments and capital was coupled with its adoption of the transit country position[46] (Mohsen-Finan 93; Tousapas 2376). In 2004, around the same time as reintroducing visa restrictions on migrants, Kadhafi wanted the lift of the arms embargo, asset freeze and travel ban imposed on Libya by the U.N. Security Council following the 1989 bombing that killed over 170 people, for which Libya was blamed (CNN 2004). Using the position of Libya as a transit country, Kadhafi applied pressure on the EU and Italy; instrumentalizing the arrival of migrants to the Island of Lampedusa to lift the imposed bans. He was successful, as the EU (with Italy holding the EU Council Presidency) lifted in 2004 (Mertin 2004; DW 2004; Malta Independent 2004). A few years later, as irregular migration peaked in 2007-8, Kadhafi found another opportunity to impose Libyan priorities on the political agenda. In exchange for Libya's cooperation on irregular migration (under The Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation), Italy issued a formal apology to Libya for its colonial rule (Tsourapas 2377). The absence of any 'intellectual coherence' between the conditionality for an apology for Italy's colonial history and Libya's collaboration on migration issues points to a tactical linkage (Haas 372). Whereas, as highlighted earlier, given that lift of the EU embargo would allow the EU to share weapons with Libya to address an agreed social goal (irregular migration)[47], the issue-linkage applied in this context is substantive. As such, Kadhafi's history with the EU clearly highlights the leveraging of the prioritization of external policy by the EU to achieve his own political goals. Perhaps, had Kadhafi refused the position of the transit country in the early 2000s, his demands would not be met. On several occasions, Kadhafi threatened to halt migration management, if certain demands by his country were not met, citing a lack of

[44] It is unclear why Tousapans only chose to mention origin and destination countries, given that the author's paper pertains to Libya's deployment of issue linkage, as a *transit* country. Nevertheless, the concept remains relevant.

[45] More on substantial and tactical issue linkage: Haas, Ernst B. "Why Collaborate?: Issue-Linkage and International Regimes." World Politics, vol. 32, no. 3, 1980, pp. 357–405.

[46] Demonstrated in shifting away from being a host and destination country for Sub-Saharan and West-African migrants (Lahlou 84).

[47] Malta Independent. "Government Welcomes EU lifting of embargo on Libya". *Malta Independent.* 2004.

resources and the cost of said management in his country (Banks 2004; Tsourapas 2372). In an attempt to secure funding for migration in 2010, Kadhafi infamously threatened that "(...) could turn into Africa " (BCC 2010, a), should they not cooperate. Amongst North African countries, Libya is no exception to the issue linkage strategy facilitated by the adoption of the label transit country.

As other Mediterranean countries advance in their cooperation with the EU and EU member states (i.e.: Mobility Partnerships), their ability to leverage issue linkage and their position in migration diplomacy strengthen. Morocco demonstrates this newfound dynamic between the transit country and the EU. With access to the Western Mediterranean Route, Morocco has increasingly been voicing a "defiant tone" with the EU; with migration as its bargaining instrument of choice (Suarez-Collado and Contini 1164). Most notably, amidst disaccord regarding the inclusion of Western Sahara in various agricultural and fisheries agreements between Morocco and the EU, the Kingdom has threatened that any obstacles to its agriculture and fish exports would see Morocco ceasing its efforts to manage irregular migration. With the EU Commission, the European Council and the European Court of Justice all having different positions on the Sahara matter (further reflecting disaccord within the organization) as it pertains to the long-running dispute, the Moroccan government has utilized its role in EU external policies to put pressure on the EU Commission to influence the CJEU (Suarez-Collado and Contini 1166; BCC no date, b). Similarly to Kadhafi's ultimatum mentioned above, Morocco, in a press release by the Minister Akhannouch expressed that "toute entrave à l'application de cet accord est une (...) véritable risque de reprise des flux migratoires que le Maroc, au gré d'un effort soutenu, a réussi à gérer et à contenir"[48] (Ministère de l'Agriculture, Kingdom of Morocco 2017, e). So far, Moroccan pressure did not yield any real impact on the CJEU. However, it has indeed created tensions with the EU bodies which tend to various priorities; with the EU Commission's focus being irregular migration (European Commission no date, i). As such, Morocco's adoption of the position of transit country has allowed it (like others) to leverage this point in migration diplomacy in order to impose its other priorities on the international stage via the strategy of issue linkage.

Finally, it is important to note that this 'bargaining chip' played by North African

[48] Translation is mine: "*any hindrance to the application of this agreement is a (...) real risk of resumption of the migratory flows that Morocco, through sustained effort, has managed to manage and contain"* (Ministère de l'Agriculture, Kingdom of Morocco 2017, e)

countries is temporally circumstantial, based on when transit countries' interests align with an increase in migration flows, for instance. It does not erase the power imbalance between North and South, but it does offer a window of opportunity for Maghreb countries to harness the position of the transit country to exercise migration diplomacy in their own right.

*Economic Opportunities Through Issue Linkage*

Since the 1990s, migrants from Sub-Saharan and West Africa resided permanently or semi-permanently in the Maghreb. Anti-migrant (particularly anti-Black African) rhetoric has existed as long as migration has on the African continent. In 2004, amidst high rates of unemployment in Libya and discontent by African leaders with Khadaffi due to rising violence by Libyan citizens against African Black migrants, Libya lifted the visa requirements for many African workers on its territory, many of whom were already working in the country illegally (Solomon and Swart 482; Lahlou 93). The decision was later revoked and followed by an anti-migrant discourse by the Colonel, blaming migrants for the economic situation in the country; rendering thousands of regularized migrants illegal; further subjecting them to exploitation and abuse (United Nations 91, c). This shift signaled a desire to "(...) modifier ses relations avec les pays dont sont originaires les travailleurs qu'elle accueille, dans coût politique significatif pour elle (La Libye)"[49] (Lahlou 93). The adoption of the label 'transit country' has allowed Libya to both distance itself from what it perceived as a high-cost relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa (requiring resources and capacity building on migration), while simultaneously strengthening relationships with the EU on economic issues and irregular migration). With stricter border management and adoption of a securitization lens to migration aligned with the EU, the Maghreb countries have been asking "(...) Qui voulons-nous accueillir?" [50] (Boubakari and Mazella 27).

In Tunisia, migrant workers contribute significantly to the informal sector, such as in construction and domestic labor, often with an irregular status that is quietly accepted by authorities, in exchange for cheap labor (IOM 20, t; Lahlou 75; de Haas 20; Bob-Millar et al.

[49] *Translation is mine: modify the relationship with countries from which labour migrants origin, that (Libya) hosts at a significant host on the country*

[50] *Translation is mine: "Who do we want to welcome?"* (Boubakari and Mazella 27)

10). Yet, recently in 2023, amidst political tensions and economic hardship in the country, the sitting Tunisian President, Kais Saied, called on Europe's support on irregular Sub-Saharan migration to Tunisia "(...) à tous les niveaux, diplomatiques sécuritaires et militaires pour faire face à cette immigration (...) une application stricte de la loi sur le statut des étrangers en Tunisie et sur le franchissement illégal des frontières"[51] (Le Figaro 2023). Saied accused African migrants in Tunisia of threatening the heterogeneous Tunisian society (Soyez 2023). Major news outlets, such as TV5Monde and France 24 have coined this the 'Tunisian version' of the great replacement theory (Soyez 2023; Makhloufi 2023)[52]. It is important to note that Tunisia is currently suffering record-high inflation at 10.9%, with high rates of unemployment, particularly among youth (37.1%) (Statistiques Tunisie 2023; International Monetary Fund 2020; World Bank 2023). When asked in an interview by TV5 Monde 24 to respond to Saied's speech, the Tunisian Minister of les Affaires Étrangères (Foreign Affairs), Nabil Ammar, reiterated the need for strategic cooperation between the EU and Tunisia, calling for support from the EU for "(...) réformes socio-économiques et asseoir un modèle de développement inclusif et équitable (...) pour mieux gérer les défis communs, y compris la thématique migratoire" (TV5 Monde 2023, c)[53]. The EU seems on board with this trade-off; showing signs of strengthened cooperation with the country labeled transit both on the economic and political level (particularly on migration). In a press conference that included the EU President van der Leyen, Italian President Meloni, Dutch Prime Minister Rutte and Tunisian Kais Saied, the EU announced several funding for Tunisia linked to operational cooperation on migration (including return), smuggling and legal pathways migration, economic development through macro-financial assistance (EUR 900 million), and increased investment and trade (EUR 150 million), with intentions of more announcements in the future (European Commission 2023, k; European Commission 2023, h). Ironically, the speech by Saied has spiked asylum requests to Europe by migrants in transit or residing in Tunisia, as well as irregular border crossings to the EU, highlighting the interconnectedness of the phenomenon

[51] *Translation is mine: "at all diplomatic, security and military levels, in order to tackle this migration… and a strict application of Tunisian law as it pertains to foreigners and the illegal crossing of borders"*) (Makhloufi 2023)

[52] The extreme right-wing conspiracy theory was coined by French writer Renaud Camus and endorsed by right-wing politicians in France, such as Eric Zemmour, argues that foreigners or migrants (including Maghrebins) threaten European culture and would replace it with their own culture(s) and religion(s) (Syed Zwick 290).

[53] *Translation is mine: "(...) socio-economic reforms, and establish a model of development that is inclusive and equitable (...) to better manage our shared challenges, including on the theme of migration*" (TV5 Monde 2023).

across the two continents (deHaas 14; UNHCR 17, a; TV5 Monde 2023, c). This raises the question of the long-term solution sought by the EU on migration management.

*The Maghreb Countries as Countries of Emigration: Visa Conditionalities*

Closely tied to economic factors, North African countries are not just countries of destinations or transit. They are also, if not primarily, countries of emigration; encouraging emigration to alleviate unemployment pressures (Baldwin-Edwards 312). De facto, neoliberal policies of selective inclusion apply to North African nationals, despite their collaboration in fighting irregular migration. Particularly since the 2015 refugee 'crisis', "obtenir un visa (...) est devenu un véritable parcours du combattant"[54] (Pauron 177). For instance, in 2018, 33% of temporary-stay visas to France from African nations were rejected, compared to a 6% rejection rate for Chinese nationals (Pauron 181). Similarly in 2022, Spain received the second-highest number of Schengen Visa applications (second only to France), and had a rejection rate of 15.5%, though the nationalities of rejected applicants were unclear (The Economic Times 2023). As state border control defines migration flows, the hindrance to legal pathways to migration has been driving irregular migration by North African nationals and others (Papadopoulou 7). This poses a real crisis for North African countries, whose geographical proximity to the EU contributes to their nationals making up a significant number of irregular migrants to Europe. For instance, in 2022, Tunisian nationals were among the top nationalities of irregular migrants traveling through the Central Mediterranean route, while Algerians and Moroccans were among the top nationalities to travel through the Western Mediterranean route (UNHCR 77, a)[55]. These trends are consistent with previous years. In 2020, Tunisians, Moroccans and Algerians made the top three nationalities arriving in Europe, according to the IOM's DTM (IOM 2023, n)[56]. The adoption of the country of transit label has allowed transit countries to negotiate for the

[54] *Translation is mine: "Obtaining a visa (...) has been a true obstacle course"* (Pauron 177)

[55] Migrants from other nationalities have also made the most common nationalities to cross the Mediterranean Sea (Egypt, Bangladesh, Syrian Arab Republic, Côte d'Ivoire…) (UNHCR 2023, a).

[56] In this interactive map, IOM covers 'Mixed Migration Flows to Europe'. It is not specified, though implied, whether all those journeys and arrivals were irregular. IOM defines mixed migration flows as "A movement in which a number of people are traveling together, generally in an irregular manner, using the same routes and means of transport, but for different reasons" (European Commission *no date*)

facilitation of mobility of their own nationals into the EU, in exchange for the restriction of mobility of others trying to do the same. As mentioned in the EU section, the Mobility Partnerships signed between Morocco, the EU and member states (2013) and between Tunisia, the EU and member states a year later (2014) is a manifestation of this trade-off (European Commission 2013, l; European Commission 2014, m). Algeria and Libya are both not privy to the Mobility Partnership Framework. Perhaps this speaks to the varied stages of the Maghreb states' cooperation with the EU, with Tunisia and Morocco being more advanced in this partnership[57] (European Commission 11, c).

In a press release issued by the Ministère de la Jeunesse, de la Culture et de la Communication, (Moroccan) Minister El Otmani emphasized the collaborative and evergreen nature of the partnership due to an improved approach to legal Moroccan migration to the EU, particularly due to improved visa issuance (Government of Morocco 2013, d). While the Moroccan Minister's speech seemed to focus on the victories and implications of the partnership for Morocco economically and politically, the EU's press release afforded more attention to the non-legally binding nature of the agreement and securing the third country return policy through the agreement (European Commission 2013, l). On a similar note, though it was not possible to track primary-source speeches from the Tunisian government websites[58], the EU in a press release said a similar tone of cooperation and conditionalities was reiterated in the case of the EU-Tunisian partnership European Commission 2014, m). As such, on the one hand, transit countries can alleviate unemployment pressures and safeguard their nationals from taking dangerous journeys in the Mediterranean. In exchange, the EU is able to further externalize its migration management, focusing on policies of return largely via the AVRR program, as highlighted in the IOM section. Thus, despite the margin of negotiation offered by the mobilization of their position as countries of transit, the non-legally binding nature of the agreements reinforces the vulnerable position of South states; rendering meeting their conditionalities incremental. This highlights the power imbalance between the colonizing power and the former colonies and between the North and South more broadly (Pauron 8; Paoletti 21).

[57] Since its democratization, Tunisia benefits from a 'privileged partnership' status with the EU, leading to closer political cooperation between the EU and Tunisia due to shared democratic values (Délégation de l'Union européenne en Tunisie 2021). In 2008, Morocco was accorded an 'advanced status' indicating closer cooperation with the EU (European Commission 2010). Largely politically symbolic in nature, Mehdi Lahlou argues that the advanced status was a way to 'thank' Morocco for their efforts on limiting irregular migration (Lahlou 86).

[58] Navigating the primary sources of the Tunisian government was limited due to frequent technical challenges with the website(s).

This, in turn, sees pressure on transit countries to engage in EU migration management, without necessarily substantially reaping the social and economic benefits that come with it.

## The Political Consequences of the Transit Country for IOs: IOM and UNHCR

### *The Complementarity Between IOM and the UNHCR in the Transit Country*

The transit country, as a target for EU external policy, coupled with limitations of state sovereignty has created an opportunity for IOM and UNHCR to position themselves as key actors in the region, under humanitarian grounds. While it was appropriate to analyze how each actor uses the term separately, the application of the term often highlights the complementarity between the two. Since the inception of the transit country, the IOM and UNHCR have been working in close partnership in the Mediterranean; contributing to the EU's projects and working, at the country level, in the countries labeled of transit; largely spared from rules of state sovereignty given their humanitarian roles. In 2021, as a further testament to their relationship, IOM and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which is non-legally binding, to "(...) formalize and strengthen existing collaboration (...)" on multiple areas, namely: identification, reception and referral of new arrivals, coordination of assistance upon disembarkation (of migrants rescued at sea) "(...) while ensuring complementarity" (UNHCR 49, a). As intergovernmental organizations, IOM and the UNHCR are often described as an extension of the nation-state or as "servants of states" (Bradley 100); executing the vision and strengthening the sovereignty of the nation-state, and pushing EU policy forward. In this thesis, I question and adjust this narrative, in part by highlighting the integral role UNHCR and IOM have played in the construction of the label transit country and the phenomenon of transit migration at large. By building mainly on the work of Megan Bradley, Sabine Hess and Joeson and Taylor, I demonstrate that the mentioned organizations possess an autonomy that helps them serve their interests, as well as the member states that fund them. The following sections aim to convey that the role of IOM and UNHCR in transit migration and their relationship to countries of transit is not monolithic. The label transit country has created a space where various interests can be pursued in tandem.

*Containment, Processing, and Migrant Returns… away from the EU*

The involvement of IOs in migration management has increased in North Africa (Cuttitta 4). The case of the Choucha camp in Tunisia is a strong demonstration of the competing political opportunities that the label of the 'transit country' allows for IOs: to simultaneously serve European border externalization priorities, while augmenting their organizations' capacity-building and maintaining relationships with the 'temporary' host country labeled of transit (Cuttitta 4). In 2011, an unprecedented number of people fled Libya to Tunisia and Egypt as a result of the NATO-backed uprising in Libya (Al Aichi 2013; IOM 2011, i). This represented a shift for Tunisia, as it went from largely a country of emigration to increasingly a country of transit (and sometimes destination) (Bisiaux 3). In six months, over one million people fled to Tunisia, with 200,000 being non-Libyan nationals (mainly former labour migrants working in Libya from Sub-Saharan Africa) (Al Aichi 2013; De Genova 28; Garelli and Tazzioli 172). In response, IOM and UNHCR focused on the humanitarian catastrophe posed; while highlighting the role of the Tunisian authorities in managing the security aspect of the crisis (IOM 2011, i). As such, a refugee camp operated by the UNHCR, in conjunction with IOM was set up in 2011: the Choucha camp. Between 2011-2013, the Choucha camp served as an indefinite waiting area for migrants looking to have their status processed, and hoping to reach EU territory (Al Aichi 2013).

The portrayal of the transit country as a temporary host, unable and unwilling to protect refugees and migrants quickly in the absence of adequate asylum laws, rendered UNHCR and IOM the primary players in migration management during a critical time in Tunisia (UNHCR 2017, n; Al Aichi 2013). In this context, while the UNHCR, under its humanitarian mandate was conducting the process of refugee status determination, IOM was registering (and tracking) migrants arriving in Tunisia, and counselling migrants "(...) to determine whether they need assistance to return to their countries of origin." (IOM 2011, i). The camp is not a negligible accomplishment for the IOM, UNHCR and EU alike. It marked the first refugee camp opened in Tunisia (Garelli and Tazzioli). While the EU, largely through FRONTEX, tries to survey and control the limits of the Mediterranean, the humanitarian organizations are often physically present, on the ground, operating in transit countries (Bisiaux 12; IOM *no date,* j; UNHCR *no*

*date,* l). Thus, the transit country has helped constitute a key actor in migration management.

Furthermore, the camp has not purely served humanitarian interests. With IOs and NGOs (i.e: Tunisian Red Crescent) being largely funded by the EU, the camp also clearly serves the interests of externalization of the EU to contain and prevent migrant mobility towards its borders, and also the interests of the transit country itself (in this case Tunisia) who got to play the role of the temporary host, without assuming the responsibility to protect those on its territory (Cuttitta 4). The camp closed abruptly in 2013. With many neglected migrants still residing there to this day, the humanitarian framing of the mission by the UNHCR and the EU has been questioned (De Genova 28; Garelli and Tazzioli 167). Looking to shift away from the camp, the UNHCR provided monetary incentives for people to relocate to the urban areas of Tunisia as part of its "urbanization scheme" (Al Aichi 2013). On the one hand, by further trapping migrants and refugees in Tunisia and outside of EU borders, the camp contributes to EU policies of externalization. However, as mentioned, the UNHCR must balance competing priorities. This is reflected in its paradoxical decisions. For instance, due to UNHCR's interest in maintaining harmony with the transit country to be able to operate the camps, the organization's monetary incentive of 1,500 for participants in the urbanization scheme was also the exact amount needed to take a boat to Italy (Cuttitta 5). Therefore, the organization was simultaneously containing migrants, and incentivizing them to reach Europe's borders.

Thus, the Choucha camp was communicated as a necessary response to the humanitarian crisis and rise of refugees coming from Libya (Al Aichi 2013; IOM 2011, i). The portrayal of the transit country as both unable and unwilling to manage the influx of migrants in the case of Choucha, for example, rendered the IOM and UNHCR key actors in a historic camp in the North African transit country. In turn, IOM and UNHCR were able to reinforce themselves as key players, while balancing the objectives of both the EU and the transit country.

*The Expansion of IOs in the Migration Management Space*

As highlighted in Hess' work, the contributions of IOs (particularly IOM) in migration management have an "institutional power side" (Hess 432). In the case of IOM in the mid-2000s, providing the EU data and the naming of some central (irregular migration routes) prior to EU-Türkiye accession negotiations helped the agency "recommend itself to the EU commission,

which was about to introduce Schengen regulations, as the only agency with expertise in the field of irregular migration" (Hess 232) Similarly, the Choucha Camp, among other examples of EU-IOM-UNHCR cooperation, is also an example of the EU's reliance on the work of the two organizations given the limitations on EU efforts by state sovereignty. IOM's operational budget, for instance, has grown every year (currently at USD 1.2 billion). The largest portion of the budget is allocated to Africa (Appiah 49-50). The ability to wiggle into this opportunity has paid off for international organizations, particularly in the Maghreb region, due to increased pressures of migration containment and control. In 2021, IOM appealed to the donor community for a sum of EUR 8.3 million to "scale up" its Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme (AVRR) in Algeria (IOM 2021, p). The largely EU-funded programme began in 1979 as an effort started to incentivize Eastern European *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) to return to their countries of origin (IOM 2018, k; PRIO 2014). It has subsequently expanded its goals for migrants "in a vulnerable situation" to return to their countries of origin and has become an indispensable instrument in EU migration management (MENA IOM 2022, l). The AVRR is largely focused on rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants, once they have been processed by the UNHCR (IOM xi, k). In 2022, Algeria, Morocco and Libya were among the top ten transit countries from which migrants used the AVRR programme to return to their countries of origin (IOM 2022, m). Similarly in 2021, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia were all among the top 5 host countries for migrants who used the Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) (Migration Data Portal 2022; IOM 2022, m). For the latter, the large majority of returnees were from Africa, with Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Senegal being the top 3 nationalities in 2022 (IOM 8, l; UNHCR 2023, b; IOM *no date, n*). Documents by IOM are filled with testimonials of migrants who are relieved to go home, rather than stay in poor conditions in countries of transit or risk their lives on their journey to Europe (IOM 2022, l; IOM 2019, o). However, the programme's 'voluntary' nature is questionable; given that rejected asylum seekers are not allowed to stay in the EU; the choice between voluntary and coercive return renders the choice of voluntary return illusive. The programme is operational largely in the EU and with EU-state members. This reflects an approach to migration that is anchored in securitization and management, rather than human rights and dignity that starts at the transit state (Prio 2014; Cherti and Szilard 10).

**Discussion of Findings and Conclusion**

The question of why and how the term 'transit country' has been used by states and IOs concerning migration in the Mediterranean has been significantly understudied and is the *point de départ* of this work. As such, this thesis asked: *How is the term 'transit country' being mobilized and by whom?*. The findings from this section support and build on the previous work done by William Walters, Sabine Hess, Ayelet Schachar, Franck Düvell, and Michael Collyer, among others, by arguing that the usage of the term is highly politicized, but also going further to convey that early *portrayals* of a state as a transit country have foreshadowed policies of externalization today. This thesis proceeded on the assumption that the transit country, as a label and concept, along with the phenomenon of transit migration, are both legally ambiguous and highly politicized; they are largely rooted in the securitization of migration discourse. Based on a combination of primary and secondary sources, from four categories of actors (EU member-states, the EU, IOs, and four Maghreb countries labeled of transit), the first section found that the early usage of the term transit country has foreshadowed the political mobilization of the term today, particularly in the context of policies of return and discourses on economic advantages to transit countries that cooperate in the area of migration with the EU and its member states. Furthermore, the first section found that while the EU, EU member states, and IOs have been widely using the label transit country to refer to Maghreb countries since the 1990s, the countries in question do not explicitly use the term themselves; instead, they chose to adopt laws and strategies to address irregular migration and transit migration, to anchor their role in Europe's migration management. Finally, with respect to UNHCR's and IOM's involvement in transit countries in North Africa, section one demonstrated that these organizations increasingly seek to play a greater role in transit migration, and do so by using humanitarian and development discourse as a premise to cooperate with transit countries in North Africa. Ultimately, the transit country is instrumentalized[59] by a variety of actors, in some cases to advance the project of externalizing borders, and in other cases to achieve various political interests on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Following a contextualization of the *mobilization* of the term transit country and by *whom,* the second research question asked: *What are the political consequences of the*

[59] De Massol de Rebetz, Roxane. "How Useful Is the Concept of Transit Migration in an Intra-Schengen Mobility Context? Diving into the Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking Nexus in Search for Answers." European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research, 2020.

*mobilization of the term and concept of the 'transit country' in policy discourse (for state and non-state actors)?* Using the same set of actors, Section Two contends that the 'transit country' has been a consequential label in shaping the international relations between the two sides of the Mediterranean, and in enhancing the involvement, and de facto, the influence of IOs[60]. For the Maghreb countries labeled 'countries of transit', the co-optation of the term, since the late 90s - early 2000s, has been accompanied by a shift in their approaches to policies of mobility towards their Sub-Saharan and West African neighbours (through a heavier emphasis on immobility and regular migration)[61]. It has equally presented them with the opportunity to impose a 'reverse conditionality' (or conditionalities) on the EU and EU member countries that has helped to reaffirm their political legitimacy (i.e., through claims to territorial legitimacy over Western Sahara by Morocco), enhance mobility towards the EU for their nationals (i.e., through the Mobility Partnerships) and address their economic challenges (i.e youth unemployment) (Suarez-Collado and Contini 1164; Tsourapas 2377). Furthermore, though the EU and its individual members' desire for cooperation with so-called third countries is clear ( in matters of externalization of migration management), the extent of cooperation between Maghreb countries and the EU and EU member states is not constant. For instance, the Mobility Partnership has only been achieved with Tunisia and Morocco. In addition, despite efforts towards decentralization of the issue of migration by the EU and IOs, the traditional role of the state remains central to Europe's externalization policies. The perceived security risks posed by transit migration, coupled with incremental migration reforms at the EU level, have rendered bilateral efforts between the Maghreb countries and the EU member states central to migration containment and prevention. The funding of bilateral agreements by the EU demonstrates not a rejection of an EU approach by its members, but rather the 'lifeline' that direct cooperation with the transit country offers to realize Europe's externalization goals.

[60] Rendering IOs increasingly indispensable to migration management in the Mediterranean.

[61] Lahlou, Mehdi. "Un schéma migratoire reconfiguré" P. 71 - 99 in *Le Maghreb dans les relations internationales* by Mohsen-Finan, Khadija. CNRS Éditions. 2011. Print.

*Moving Forward: Limitations, Tensions, and Paradoxes of the Transit Country*

The Choucha Camp of 2011 was an example of a temporary, reactive measure to a migration crisis that was believed to be heading to the EU (Bisiaux 12). Today, the EU's migration management plans in transit countries, particularly in Africa, are increasingly systematized for longer-term, "sustainable solutions" (European Union *no date, h*). This contradicts the portrayal of the transit country as a temporary space for migration management. Already, migrants in transit claiming asylum spend over five years[62] in transit, before reaching a final destination, if they are lucky (Brekke and Brochmann 153). One notable demonstration of this trend is the Regional Disembarkation Platforms that have been explored by the EU Commission and European Council since 2018 (European Commission 2018, n). The platforms, on the ground in African countries, are designed to work in parallel with "controlled centers" in Europe (European Commission 2018, n) towards a "shared regional responsibility in responding to complex migration challenges" (European Commission 2018, n). The policy would render, according to the European Commission, the processing of migrants rescued at sea more successful on both sides of the Mediterranean, targeting specifically migrants "from Africa" (European Parliament e, 2019; European Commission 2018, d). The platform is to be led by IOM and UNHCR, which in 2018 submitted a joint proposal detailing their vision for the arrangement (European Parliament e, 2019; European Commission 2018, d; UNHCR and IOM 2018). According to this policy proposal, the two organizations would be on the ground in transit countries to support in every step: from disembarkation to processing to return to countries of origin (UNHCR and IOM 2-5). Currently, the scheme remains just a concept; no country of transit has leaned into this agreement, and it has even been openly rejected by the African Union (African Union a, 7; Lixi 2018; Bisiaux 13). However, as discussed in this thesis, development and security funding continue to guide regional migration dynamics. With longer-term projects being planned in the transit countries led by the UNHCR, IOM and the EU, migration management in the transit country hints at a shift from 'transitory' towards 'permanent'. As the transit country potentially becomes a space for Europe's longer-term externalization plans, the temporariness implied in the term must be questioned.

[62] Due to the clandestine nature of many migrants' journeys, it is difficult to predict, with accuracy, how long migrants spend in transit.

In the coming decades, as the EU continues to eliminate its 'pull factors' through heavy reliance on the transit country, and as people - particularly- in developing countries keep facing old and emerging push factors (such as conflict, economic crisis, and climate change, among others)[63], the temporary status of the transit country could become an illusion. The humanitarian/ legal implications of these developments are many. Consequently, it will be worth exploring the evolution of the term in the coming decades, and how it shapes future dynamics. The significance of the term 'transit country' does not cease to play a role. The questions posed in this thesis could therefore be repurposed to explore the evolution and implications of the term 'transit country' a decade from now, along with its connection to broader trans-Mediterranean international relations. By analyzing the portrayal of the term and its political implications in contemporary times, I hope to have contributed to initiating the conversation on the future use and implications of the transit country.

[63]Bhagat, Ali. "Governing Refugees in Raced Markets: Displacement and Disposability from Europe's Frontier to the Streets of Paris." Review of International Political Economy, 2022.

Van der Vliet, J.M.M., "The International Legal Protection of Environmental Refugees: A human rights-based, security and State responsibility approach". Eleven international publishing, 2020. Print.

**Bibliography**


Agelpoulos G., Kapetanaki E., and Kousaxidis K. "Transit Migrants in a Country Undergoing Transition:The Case of Greece" in *Characteristics of Temporary Migration in European-Asian Transnational Social Spaces. Pitkänen et al. Springer International Publishing.* 2018.

bitly.ws/K7eV

Appiah Samuel, J. “29th SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMS AND FINANCE. AGENDA ITEM 5: Programme and Budget for 2022”. *IOM-UN Migration. No date.*

shorturl.at/ilwR9

African Union (a). “DRAFT COMMON AFRICAN POSITION (CAP) ON THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION.” *SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (STC) ON MIGRATION, REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS* , 2017.

shorturl.at/ipLPT

African Union (b). “The Chairperson of the African Union Commission strongly condemns the racial statements on fellow Africans in Tunisia”. African Union. 2023.

shorturl.at/ajovM

Baczynska, Gabriela. “Italy wants more money for Africa to curb arrivals in Europe”. *Reuters*. 2023.

shorturl.at/gsvGX

Baldwin-Edwards, Martin. “‘Between a Rock & a Hard Place’: North Africa as a Region of Emigration, Immigration & Transit Migration.” Review of African Political Economy. pp. 311–24. *JSTOR.*2006.

shorturl.at/mnwFV

Banks, Martin. “EU to lift Libya sanctions in return for migration help ”. *Politico.* 2004.

rb.gy/0tm1k

Barbau, Régis. « Les programmes d'aide au retour dans les centres d'accueil pour demandeurs d'asile en France », Le sujet dans la cité. 2012, pp. 10-23.
rb.gy/zxtnj

Barker, Fiona. Nationalism, Identity and the Governance of Diversity : Old Politics, New Arrivals. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
rb.gy/hpbx2

Bartels, Inken. The International Organization for Migration in North Africa : Making International Migration Management. Routledge, 2022. 16 Dec. 2022.
bit.ly/3PxGlWs

BBC News (a). "Gaddafi wants EU cash to stop African migrants". BBC News. 2010.
rb.gy/zolau

BBC News (b). "Western Sahara profile". BBC News. *No date*.
rb.gy/zqo66

Beqiraj J, Gauci J.P., Khalfaoui A. "Chapter 11: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM). EU engagement in international migration policies" in Wessel, Ramses A, and Jed Odermatt, editors. *Research Handbook on the European Union and International Organizations*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2019.
shorturl.at/eltMR

Bermant, Laia Soto. "4 The Mediterranean Question: Europe and Its Predicament in the Southern Peripheries". The Borders of "Europe": Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering, edited by Nicholas De Genova, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2017.
bitly.ws/K7f6

Bhagat, Ali. "Governing Refugees in Raced Markets: Displacement and Disposability from Europe's Frontier to the Streets of Paris." Review of International Political Economy, 2022.
bitly.ws/K7iL

Bob-Milliar, Gloria K, and George M Bob-Milliar. “The Politics of Trans-Saharan Transit Migration in the Maghreb : Ghanaian Migrants in Libya, C.1980 - 2012.” African Review of Economics and Finance, 2013, pp. 60–73.
bitly.ws/K7f8

Boubakri, Hassen, and Sylvie Mazzella. “Tunisia between Transit and Immigration: Migration Policies and Reception Conditions of African Migrants in Tunis.” *Autrepart*, 2005, pp. doi.org/10.3917/autr.036.0149.

Bialasiewicz, L. 2012. ‘Off-Shoring and Out-Sourcing the Borders of Europe:Libya and EU Border Work in the Mediterranean.’ Geopolitics.
http://bitly.ws/K7fa

Bisiaux, Sophie-Anne. « La Tunisie, terre d’accueil… des politiques européennes », *Plein droit.* 2020, pp. 27-30.
cairn.info/revue-plein-droit-2020-2-page-27.htm

Brekke, Jan-Paul, and Grete Brochmann. “Stuck in Transit: Secondary Migration of Asylum Seekers in Europe, National Differences, and the Dublin Regulation.” Journal of Refugee Studies, vol. 28, no. 2, 2015, pp. 145–162.
doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feu028

Campbell, Horace. Global Nato and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya : Lessons for Africa in the Forging of African Unity. *Monthly Review Press*, 2013.
shorturl.at/rFGMX

Caponio, Tiziana. “(Im)Migration Research in Italy: A European Comparative Perspective.” The Sociological Quarterly. pp. 445–64. JSTOR. 2008.
jstor.org/stable/40220078

Cassarino, Jean-Pierre, Fargues, Philippe, Policy Responses in MENA Countries of Transit for Migrants: An Analytical Framework for Policy-Making, in Ninna Nyberg Sørensen, Mediterranean Transit Migration DIIS, Copenhagen, 2006.
bitly.ws/K7iQ

Ceretti, V. “Italy-Libya Memorandum of Understanding: An affront to the fundamental human rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers”. Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor. 2023.
bitly.ws/K7fd

Cherti, M. and Szilard, M. “Returning Irregular immigrants: How effective is EU’s response?”. Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). 2013.
bitly.ws/K7ff

Cherti, M. and Grant, P. “The Myth of Transit: Sub-Saharan Migration in Morocco”. Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). 2013.
bitly.ws/K7fj

Collyer, Michael (a). “Migrants, Migration and the Security Paradigm: Constraints and Opportunities.” Mediterranean Politics, vol. 11, no. 2, 2006, pp. 255–270., doi.org/10.1080/13629390600682974.

Collyer, Michael (b). "Border work: Frames, barriers, and disingenuous development". Routledge, 2020.
bitly.ws/K7fm

Collyer, Michael, and Hein Haas (c). “Developing Dynamic Categorisations of Transit Migration.” *Population, Space and Place*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2012.
doi.org/10.1002/psp.635

Council of the European Union (a), Council of the European Union (a). “Syria: EU Response to the Crisis .” *European Council, Council of the European Union. No date.*
bitly.ws/K7g5

Council of the European Union (b). “Fifth Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Migration Affairs, Athens, 18-19 November 1993” *European Council Archives*. 19 Nov. 1993.
bitly.ws/K7g9

Council of the European Union (c). *"Council of Brussels, 13 December 2005 the European Union." COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 13 Dec. 2005.* *data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15744-2005-INIT/en/pdf*

Council of the European Union (d). "Parliamentary Assembly." *Council of Europe - No Hate Speech Youth Campaign*, no date. *Council of Europe Portal*. No date. bitly.ws/K7fq

Council of the European Union (e). "Special Meeting of the European Council, 30-31 May 2022." *European Council, Council of the European Union*, 2022. bitly.ws/K7fr

Council of the European Union (f). "Migration Flows on the Western Routes." *European Council, Council of Europe*, *no date*. bitly.ws/K7fA

Council of the European Union (g). "Countries of transit: meeting new migration and asylum challenges". *Parliamentary Assembly*. 2015. shorturl.at/lzR49

CNN. "Key Facts: Libya Sanctions". *CNN*. 2004. bitly.ws/K7fv

Cuttitta, Paolo. "Non-Governmental/Civil Society Organisations and the European Union-Externalisation of Migration Management in Tunisia and Egypt." *Population, Space and Place*, vol. 26, no. 7, 2020. doi.org/10.1002/psp.2329

Dalia, Al Aichi. "UNHCR Closes Camp in South Tunisia, Moves Services to Urban Areas." *UNHCR Stories*, 2 July 2013. bitly.ws/K7fB

De Genova, Nicholas, editor. The Borders of "Europe" : Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering. Duke University Press, 2017.
bitly.ws/K7fG

De Massol de Rebetz, Roxane. “How Useful Is the Concept of Transit Migration in an Intra-Schengen Mobility Context? Diving into the Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking Nexus in Search for Answers.” European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research, 2020.
bitly.ws/K7fK

de Haas, Hein. European Migration: Dynamis, Drivers and the Role of Policies. Publications Office of the European Union. 2018.
bitly.ws/K7fM

den Heijer, Maarten. "Visas and Non-discrimination". European Journal of Migration and Law 20.4 (2018): 470-489.
bitly.ws/K7fQ

Drazanova, Lenka, et al. What Are Europeans' Views on Migrant Integration? : An In-Depth Analysis of 2017 Special Eurobarometer "Integration of Immigrants in the European Union". OECD Publishing, 2020.
doi.org/10.1787/f74bf2f5-en

Düvell, Franck. Transit Migration: A Blurred and Politicised Concept. Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS). University of Oxford, UK. 2012.
bitly.ws/K7fS

Düvell et al. “Critical Approaches to Transit Migration.” Population, Space and Place., 2012.
doi.org/10.1002/psp.630

DW. “EU to Lift Arms Embargo against Libya”. *Deutsche-Welle.* 2004.
bitly.ws/K7fU

European Commission (a). “Managing Migration: New Initiatives to Strengthen European Integrated Border Management and Expedite Returns”, *European Commission*. 14 Mar.

2023

bitly.ws/K7fZ

European Commission (b). “Common European Asylum System.” *Migration and Home Affairs*, *No date.*

bit.ly/44nD1U8

European Commission (c). *“*Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee on the Regions: The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility*”. European Commission.2011.*

*bitly.ws/K7gd*

European Commission (d). EEAS. “Migration Partnership Framework: A New Approach to Better Manage Migration.” *EEAS - European Commission*, *No date*.

bitly.ws/K7ga

European Commission (e). “Fleeing Ukraine: Travel inside the EU.” *EU Solidarity with Ukraine*, *No date*.

bitly.ws/K7gg

European Commission (f). “Country Responsible for Asylum Application (Dublin Regulation).” *Migration and Home Affairs*, *no date*.

bitly.ws/K7bZ

European Commission (g). “EU Trust Fund for Africa: New Actions Adopted to Support Vulnerable Migrants, Foster Socio-Economic Development and Improve Border Management in North of Africa.” *European Commission - European Commission*. 2018.

ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ro/IP_18_6793

European Commission (h). “Press Statement by President von Der Leyen with Italian Prime Minister Meloni, Dutch Prime Minister Rutte and Tunisian President Saied.” *European Commission*, 11 June 2023.

ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_23_3201

European Commission (i). “Irregular migration and return” *Migration and Home Affairs*, *no Date.*

*bitly.ws/K7gE*

European Commission (j). “Algeria” *European Commission - Trade*, *No date*.

bitly.ws/K7gz

European Commission (k). “The European Commission and Tunisia have expressed willingness to establish a stronger operational partnership on migration, anti-smuggling, and the promotion of legal migration” *European Commission. 2023.*

ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_23_2494

European Commission (l). “Migration and mobility partnership signed between the EU and Morocco” *European Commission, 7 June 2013.*

ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_13_513

European Commission (m). “l’UE et la Tunisie établissent leur partenariat de mobilité*, European Commission. 2014.*

ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/fr/IP_14_208

European Commission (n). Managing migration: Commission expands on disembarkation and controlled centre concepts”. *European Commission*. 2018.

ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_4629

European Commission (o). “Migration Partnership Facility (MPF)”. European Commission. No date.

shorturl.at/gosvM

European Commission (p). “EU Institution: European Commission”. EU. *no date*.

shorturl.at/adJ26

European Commission (q). *EUTF FOR AFRICA The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa*, 2020.

bitly.ws/K7mW

European Economic and Social Committee. “Establishing a New Partnership Framework with Third Countries under the European Agenda on Migration.” *European Economic and Social Committee*, 2016.

bitly.ws/K7bV

European Parliament (a). “EU COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES IN THE FIELD OF MIGRATION.” *Directorate-General for Internal Policies: Policy Department C, Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs*, 2015.

bitly.ws/K7fW

European Parliament (b). “Search and Rescue in the Mediterranean.” *Briefing: European Parliament*, 2021.

bitly.ws/K7fY

European Parliament (c). “TAMPERE EUROPEAN COUNCIL 15 AND 16 OCTOBER 1999 PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS.” *European Parliament*, 16 Nov. 1999.

bitly.ws/K7g3

European Parliament (d). “Countries of Transit: Meeting New Migration and Asylum Challenges.” *PACE Website*, 11 Sept. 2015.

bitly.ws/K7g4

European Parliament (e). “Parliamentary Question: Regional Disembarkation Platforms.” *Parliamentary Question - European Parliament*, 2019.

europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2019-002505_EN.html

European Parliament (f). “EU Pact on Migration and Asylum: State of Play.” *European Parliament Briefing*, 2023.

bitly.ws/K7gi

European Parliament (g). “Eu Asylum Rules: Reform of the Dublin System.” *News, European Parliament*, 24 July 2019.

bitly.ws/K7gn

European Parliament (h). “Reforming the Common European Asylum System.” *News, European Parliament*, 26 Apr. 2017.
bitly.ws/K7gs

European Union (a). “Action Document for the Implementation of the North Africa Window.” *ACTION DOCUMENT FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR STABILITY AND ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN AFRICA*, EUTF. 2020.
bitly.ws/K7c6

European Union (b). “Border Management Programme for the Maghreb Region (BMP-Maghreb).” *Emergency Trust Fund for Africa*, *No date*.
bitly.ws/K7gv

European Union (c). “EU Delivers Support to Border Management in Libya.” *EU Neighbours - South*, 21 July 2020.
south.euneighbours.eu/news/eu-delivers-support-border-management-libya/

European Union (d). “Action fiche of the EU Trust Fund to be used for the decisions of the Operational Committee” *Annex IV to the Agreement establishing the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa and its internal rules*, EUTF. 2020.
trust-fund-for-africa.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/t05-eutf-noa-reg-04modified.pd

European Union (e). EEAS. “Joint Pilot Project EUBAM – FRONTEX – Italy for the Libyan General Administration for Coastal Security (GACS).” *European Union External Action: The Diplomatic Service of the European Union*, 21 Feb. 2019.
www.eeas.europa.eu/node/58534_en

European Union (f). EEAS. “EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine. European Union External Action. *No date.*
eubam.org/

European Union (g). EEAS. “The European Union and Tunisia launch the EU-Tunisia Youth Partnership” *European Union External Action: The Diplomatic Service of the European*

*Union*, 2016.

www.eeas.europa.eu/node/16253_en

European Union (h). “Protection and sustainable solutions for migrants and refugees along the Central Mediterranean route”. European Trust Fund for Africa. *No date*.

bitly.ws/K7c9

European Union (i). “European Union funding, grants, and subsidies”. *European Union*. *No date*.

shorturl.at/hswHM

EUBAM Libya. “About the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM).” *EEAS-EUBAM Libya*, 2021.

rb.gy/qoijw

Fleri, Giuliano Beniamino. “The (Re)Birth of a Mediterranean Migration System. the Case of Tunisian Migration in Sicily.” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 2022, pp. 623–642., doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2021.1965743.

FitzGerald, David Scott. “Remote Control of Migration: Theorising Territoriality, Shared Coercion, and Deterrence.” Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. 2019.

bitly.ws/K7ni

Fratzke, Susan. “International Experience Suggests Safe Third-Country Agreement Would Not Solve the U.S.-Mexico Border Crisis.” *Migration Policy Institute*, June 2019,

bitly.ws/K7gP

Frontex (a). “Who We Are.” *Frontex*, *No date*.

frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/who-we-are/tasks-mission/

Frontex (b). “Voted Budget 2023.” *Frontex - Public Register of Documents*, *no date*.

prd.frontex.europa.eu/document/voted-budget-2023/

Frontex News (a). “Frontex looks at new border surveillance technologies.” *Frontex. 12 May 2017.*

bitly.ws/K7gR

Frontex News (b). “Frontex and Morocco to strengthen cooperation” *Frontex. 28 Oct. 2022.* bitly.ws/K7gU

Frontex News (d). “EU’s external borders in 2022: Number of irregular border crossings highest since 2016” *Frontex. 13 Jan. 2023.* bitly.ws/K7cb

Garelli G. and Tazzioli M. Choucha beyond the Camp. Challenging the Border of Migration Studies. in *The Borders of "Europe" : Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering* by De Genova, Nicholas, editor. Duke University Press, 2017. shorturl.at/fgGOV

Geiger, Martin, and Pécoud Antoine. *The Politics of International Migration Management*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. link.springer.com/book/10.1057/9780230294882

General People’s Congress Libya. “Law No. (19) of 2010 on combating illegal immigration”. *Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance: DCAF Libya*. 2010. security-legislation.ly/en/law/32174

Gibney, Matthew. Beyond the bounds of responsibilities: western states and measures to prevent the arrival of refugees. Global Migration Perspectives. Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM). 2005. bitly.ws/K7jv

Government of Canada. “Neural Machine Translation with DeepL—Information Session (SFE-246).” *Government of Canada.*, 2022, shorturl.at/iN459

Government of Spain (a). “Balance 2001 - Ministerio Del Interior.” *Vicepresidencia Primera Del Gobierno, Ministerio Del Interior*, 2001, shorturl.at/dHRUY

Government of Spain (b). “Balance 2003 - Ministerio Del Interior.” *Vicepresidencia Primera Del Gobierno, Ministerio Del Interior*, 2003, bitly.ws/K7h6

Government of Spain c). “Ukraine, the NATO Summit and Morocco Mark the Foreign Affairs Agenda for 2022.” *Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación*, 28 Dec. 2022
bitly.ws/K7h5

Government of Spain d). “José Manuel Albares Travels to Mauritania and Senegal to Strengthen Collaboration with Two Strategic Partners in the Region.” *Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación*, 19 July 2022,
bitly.ws/K7nS

Government of Spain (e). “Operación contra la inmigración ilegal” *Ministerio Del Interior*, 2004.
interior.gob.es/opencms/en/detail-pages/article/Operacion-contra-la-inmigracion-ilegal/

Haas, Ernst B. “Why Collaborate?: Issue-Linkage and International Regimes.” World Politics. 1980, pp. 357–405.
bitly.ws/K7h8

Hess, Sabine. “De-Naturalising Transit Migration. Theory and Methods of an Ethnographic Regime Analysis.” Population, Space and Place., 2012.
bitly.ws/K7jB

Horii, Satoko. “It Is About More Than Just Training: The Effect of Frontex Border Guard Training. Refugee Survey Quarterly. 2012.
bitly.ws/K7jF

Huysmans, J. The European Union and the Securitization of Migration. University of Kent. 2000. Web.
onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1468-5965.00263

İçduygu Ahmet, and Yükseker Deniz. “Rethinking Transit Migration in Turkey: Reality and Representation in the Creation of a Migratory Phenomenon.” Population, Space and Place. 2012.. bitly.ws/K7hg

ICID and Agenzia Italiana per La Cooperazione Allo Sviluppo. “Verso Una Migrazione Sostenibile - Interventi Nei Paesi d’origine.” *ICID and Agenzia Italiana per La*

*Cooperazione Allo Sviluppo*, 2017,
aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Verso_migrazione_sostenibile_ITA.pdf

ICMPD. "Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue: Building partnerships through innovation". *ICMPD. International Centre for Migration Policy Development*. *No date*.
iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/2018-07/MTM_Factsheet_20_05_2015.pdf

IMF. "Tunisia". International Monetary Fund. no date.
imf.org/en/Countries/TUN

IOM (a). "IOM and UNHCR Call for Decisive Action Following Mediterranean Tragedy." *International Organization for Migration News Global*, 16 June 2023,
iom.int/news/iom-and-unhcr-call-decisive-action-following-mediterranean-tragedy

IOM (b) "Council 110th Session -IOM STRATEGIC VISION 2019–2023: Setting a Course for IOM" IOM. 15 Nov. 2019,
bitly.ws/K7o3

IOM (c). "IOM-EU Cooperation around the Woxrld: IOM Office in Brussels: IOM Regional Office for the European Economic Area, the European Union and NATO." *IOM-EU Cooperation Around the World*. *No date*.
eea.iom.int/iom-eu-cooperation-around-world

IOM (d) "The Global context of international migration: Phases of migration". *EMM 2.0*, *no date*.
bit.ly/3D8HNdc

IOM (e). "World Migration Report 2000 - International Organization for Migration." Edited by Susan Martin et al., *IOM*, 2000.
publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2000_edited_0.pdf

IOM (f). "Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) ." *Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR)*, 2008.
publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/avr_en.pdf

IOM (g) “World Migration Report 2003: An Overview of International Migration.” *World Migration Report 2003: Managing Migration*, 2003, publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2003-managing-migration

IOM (h). “Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM).” *IOM: Making Migration Work for All*, iom.int/mediterranean-transit-migration-mtm. *No date*.

IOM (i). “IOM Begins Screening of Migrants Rescued off Tunisian Coast.” *IOM - UN Migration: Making Migration Work for All*, 2 June 2011. iom.int/news/iom-begins-screening-migrants-rescued-tunisian-coast

IOM (j). “History of the International Organization for Migration.” *International Organization for Migration*. *No date*. iom.int/iom-history.

IOM (k). “The Implementation of Assisted Voluntary Returns Including Reintegration Measures (AVRR). Annual Report”. *IOM UN Migration. June 2017 - May 2018*. publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom_greece_avrr_booklet.pdf

IOM (l). “Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration in Morocco: 2022 Yearly Report”. *IOM UN Migration. 2022.* *bitly.ws/K7hn*

IOM (m). “Nearly 50,000 Migrants Assisted to Voluntarily Return Home: 2021 Return and Reintegration Key Highlights.” *IOM UN Migration: Making Migration Work for All*, 28 July 2022. bitly.ws/K7cp

IOM (n). “Migration Flow to Europe: Arrivals - Methodological Note.” *Europe Arrivals | Displacement Tracking Matrix*, *IOM UN Migration. No date.* dtm.iom.int/europe/arrivals

IOM (o) “ Return and Reintegration Key Highlights 2019.” *IOM UN Migration*, 2020, rb.gy/6nu5q

IOM (s). *IOM Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa*. “IOM Launches USD 8.3 Million Appeal to Scale up Its Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme in Algeria.”. IOM. 10 May 2021.
bitly.ws/K7cx

IOM (t) “Irregular Migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union: An Overview of Recent Trends.” *IOM Migration Research Series*, 2008,
rb.gy/czmur

IOM (u) “Return Migration: Policies & Practices in Europe” *Iom International Organization for Migration, 2004.*
rb.gy/zwxl7

IOM (v) “Who we are” *Iom International Organization for Migration, no date*
iom.int/who-we-are

IOM and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, the Government of Ethiopia. “Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM). Linking Emigrant Communities for More Development - Inventory of Institutional Capacities and Practices. Joint ICMP-IOM project”. *ICMPD and IOM*. 13-14 April 2010.
bitly.ws/K7oi

IOM and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, la République tunisienne Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. “Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM). Strengthening African and Middle Eastern Diaspora Policy Through South-South Exchange”. *ICMPD and IOM*. 08 Nov. 2012..
bitly.ws/K7ck

Italian Government (a). “President Meloni’s Address to the Chamber of Deputies Ahead of the European Council Meeting on 15 December.” *Italian Government Presidency of the Council of Ministers*, 13 Dec. 2022.
bitly.ws/K7cz

Italian Government (b). “President Meloni’s Speech at ‘Rome Med - Mediterranean Dialogues.’” *Italian Government Presidency of the Council of Ministers,* 3 Dec. 2022, shorturl.at/nwFU7

Italian Government (c). “President Meloni’s Introduction at Her Press Conference Following the Special European Council Meeting.” *Italian Government Presidency of the Council of Ministers*, 10 Feb. 2023. bitly.ws/K7cE

Italian Government (d). “President Meloni’s Press Statement with Chancellor Scholz.” *Italian Government Presidency of the Council of Ministers*, 3 Feb. 2023. bitly.ws/K7hr

Italian Government e). Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale. “Migrations: Pistelli, Italy to Make Migration Issue a Priority during EU Presidency.” *Ministero Degli Affari Esteri e Della Cooperazione Internazionale*, 26 May 2014. bitly.ws/K7ht

Joensen Tómas, and Ian Taylor, editors. Small States and the European Migrant Crisis : Politics and Governance. Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-66203-5

Journal officiel de la République algérienne n°36. “Lois: Loi n° 08-11 du 21 Joumada Ethania 1429 correspondant au 25 juin 2008 relative aux conditions d’entrée, de séjour et de circulation des étrangers en Algérie”. *Journal officiel de la République algérienne n°36.* 2008. gisti.org/IMG/pdf/loi_08-11_algerie_2008-06-25.pdf

Kingdom of Morocco (a). “Loi n° 02-03 relative à l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers au Royaume du Maroc, à l'émigration et l'immigration irrégulières”. *Royaume du Maroc. 2003.* *sgg.gov.ma/Portals/0/profession_reglementee/Dahir_immigration_fr.pdf*

Kingdom of Morocco (b). “National Immigration and Asylum Strategy”. *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, de la Coopération Africaine et des Marocains Résidant à l’Étranger.*

*Département des Marocains Résidant à l'Étramger. No date*. marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/en/national-immigration-and-asylum-strategy/

Kingdom of Morocco (c). "Morocco-Spain: Signing of Cooperation Agreements". *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates.* 2023. bitly.ws/K7hy

Kingdom of Morocco (d). "Partenariat pour la mobilité: une nouvelle phase de la collaboration entre le Maroc et l'UE dans le domaine de la migration". *Royaume du Maroc.* 2013. bitly.ws/K7db

Kingdom of Morocco (e). "Ministère de l'Agriculture : l'Union Européenne doit assurer le cadre nécessaire pour l'application des dispositions de l'accord agricole dans les meilleures conditions. *Ministère de l'Agriculture*. 2017. bitly.ws/K7hR

Kirisci, Kemal. "As EU-Turkey migration agreement reaches the five-year mark, add a job creation element". Brookings Edu. 2021. bitly.ws/K7hB

Kurowska, X., & Bliesemann de Guevara, B. "Interpretive Approaches in Political Science and International Relations" In L. Curini, & R. J. Franzese, Jr. (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations* (pp. 1211-1240). SAGE Publishing, .2020. doi.org/10.4135/9781526486387.n66

Lahlou, Mehdi. "Un schéma migratoire reconfiguré" P. 71 - 99 in *Le Maghreb dans les relations internationales* by Mohsen-Finan, Khadija. CNRS Éditions. 2011. Print.

Lazaridis, Gabriella. *Security, Insecurity, and Migration in Europe. Ashgate, 2010.* *bitly.ws/K7hC*

Lazaridis, Gabriella, and Khursheed Wadia, editors. "The Securitisation of Migration in the EU Debates Since 9/11". *Palgrave Macmillan Publishers*, 2015. bit.ly/3D8knnU

Le Figaro. “Tunisie : le président Saied veut des «mesures urgentes» contre l'immigration subsaharien”. *Le Figaro*. 2023.
bitly.ws/K7cI

Le Président de la République. “Loi n° 2004-6 du 3 février 2004, modifiant la loi n°75-40 du 14 mai 1975, relative aux passeports et aux documents de voyage”. *Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance: DCAF Tunisia, 2004.*
*bitly.ws/K7cM*

Lixi, Luca. “After Revolution, Tunisian Migration Governance Has Changed. Has EU Policy?” *Migration Policy Institute*, October 2018.
bitly.ws/K7hE

Luo, Chih-Mei. The Rise of Populist Right-Wing Parties in the 2014 European Parliament Election and Implications for European Integration. European Review. 2017..
libkey.io/libraries/61/articles/102524859/full-text-file

Makhloufi, Nabil.“Kaïs Saïed s’en prend aux migrants : le président tunisien annonce des "mesures urgentes"”. *France 24: Le Journal de l’Afrique*. 2023.
bitly.ws/K7cT

Malta Independent. “Government Welcomes EU lifting of embargo on Libya”. *Malta Independent.* 2004.
bitly.ws/K7cU

Masri, Safwan M, and Lisa Anderson. *Tunisia : An Arab Anomaly*. Columbia University Press, 2018. Print.

McMahon, S., & Sigona, N. Death and Migration: Migrant Journeys and the Governance of Migration During Europe’s “Migration Crisis.” International Migration Review, 605–628. 2021.
doi.org/10.1177/0197918320958615

Médecins sans frontières. “Italy-Libya agreement: Five years of EU-sponsored abuse in Libya and the central Mediterranean”. Médecins sans frontières. 2022.

msf.org/italy-libya-agreement-five-years-eu-sponsored-abuse-libya-and-central-mediterranean

"Mediterranean Crossing Still World's Deadliest for Migrants – UN Report." *UN News Global Perspective Human Stories*, 2017, news.un.org/en/story/2017/11/637162https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/11/637162

Megan Bradley. "The International Organization for Migration (Iom): Gaining Power in the Forced Migration Regime." in Refuge: Special Issue "Power and Influence in the Global Refugee Regime". *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*. 2017. doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40452

Migration Data Portal. "Return Migration" Migration Data Portal: The bigger picture. 2022. migrationdataportal.org/themes/return-migration

Migdal, Joel and Shichte Klaus. Rethinking The State. The Dynamics of States. Routledge.. bitly.ws/K7hI

Ministère des Affaires Sociales. "Sommaire - Cadre générale de la Stratégie Nationale Migratoire (SNM)". *L'Office des Tunisiens à l'Etranger (OTE)*, 2017. ote.nat.tn/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SNM_FRA_FINALE.pdf

Mohsen-Finan, Khadija. Le Maghreb dans les relations internationales. *CNRS Éditions*. 2011. Print.

Moretti Sébastien. The Protection of Refugees in Southeast Asia a Legal Fiction? Routledge, 2022.. bitly.ws/K7hM

Natter, K. Rethinking immigration policy theory beyond 'Western liberal democracies'. 2018. bitly.ws/K7kc

No author. "Rome Med - Mediterranean Dialogues." *Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Assemblee Parlementaire de La Mediterranee*, 2022, pam.int/en/events/rome-med-mediterranean-dialogues

No author. “The World’s Deadliest Sea Crossing.” *Amnesty International UK - Refugees, Migrants and Asylum*, 2020. amnesty.org.uk/worlds-deadliest-sea-crossing-mediterranean

No author. “Secure, AI-Powered Translations for Legal Teams.” *DeepL for Legal Teams*, deepl.com/en/deepl-for-legal-teams.

Odysseus Network. “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Fields of Development, the Fight against Illegal Immigration, Human Trafficking and Fuel Smuggling and on Reinforcing the Security of Borders between the State of Libya and the Italian Republic.” *Odysseus Network: Academic Network for Legal Studies on Immigration and Asylum in Europe, no date.* *bitly.ws/K7cW*

Paoletti.Emanuela. "The migration of power and North-South Inequalities: The Case of Italy and Libya". *Palgrave Macmillan*. 2010. bitly.ws/K7po

Papagianni, Georgia. “The Challenges and Opportunities of the Eu Migration Partnerships: A North African Perspective.” International Migration, vol. 60, no. 4, 2022, pp. 61–72., doi.org/10.1111/imig.12979.

Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, Aspasia (a). Transit Migration : The Missing Link between Emigration and Settlement. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. bit.ly/3PyumrE

Papadopoulou, Aspasia (b). “Global Migration Perspectives - Exploring the Asylum-Migration Nexus: A Case Study of Transit Migrants in Europe.” Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), Jan. 2005. iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/2018-07/gmp42.pdf

Papageorgiou, Ioannis. *“The Europeanization of Immigration and Asylum in Greece (1990-2012).” International Journal of Sociology, pp. 72–90. JSTOR.2013. jstor.org/stable/43301212* .

Pauron, Michael. Les ambassades de la Françafrique : l'héritage colonial de la diplomatie française. Lux Editeur, 2022. Print.

Prodi, Romano. President of the European Parliament. "The Seville Summit: enlargement, immigration and reform" *European Parliament. 2 July 2002.* *bitly.ws/K7et*

PRIO. "Why Assisted Return Programmes Must be Evaluated: Insights from the project 'Possibilities and Realities of Return Migration". PRIO Policy Brief. 2014. bitly.ws/K7d2

Proglio, G. "Decolonising the Mediterranean: European Colonial Heritages in North Africa and the Middle East". *Cambridge Scholars Publishing*. 2016. Web. cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-4438-0070-9-sample.pdf

Reuters staff (a). "Italy's Salvini bans latest migrant ship entering waters". *Reuters.* 2019. reuters.com/article/uk-europe-migrants-mare-jonio-idUKKCN1VI289

Reuters (b). "EU considering major Tunisia aid package as migration surges". Reuters. 2022. bitly.ws/K7eA

Ribas Mateos, Natalia. "Border Shifts : New Mobilities in Europe and Beyond". Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. bitly.ws/K7eG

Saaf, Abdallah. "Le partenariat euro-maghrébin. " P. 189 - 211 in Le Maghreb dans les relations internationales by Mohsen-Finan, Khadija. CNRS Éditions. 2011. Print.

Shachar, Ayelet, et al. The Shifting Border: Legal Cartographies of Migration and Mobility: Ayelet Shachar in Dialogue. Project Muse, 2020. muse.jhu.edu/book/73968

Soyez, N. "Tunisie : propos racistes et théorie du grand remplacement, Kaïs Saïed accable les migrants subsahariens". *TV5 Monde*. 2023. bitly.ws/K7hV

Solomon, Hussein, and Gerrie Swart. “Libya's Foreign Policy in Flux.” African Affairs, pp. 469–492. 2005

**bitly.ws/K7kC**

Sørensen, Ninna Nyberg, and Dansk institut for internationale studier. Mediterranean Transit Migration. DIIS, Danish Institute for International Studies, 2006. Print.

Souvannavong, S. David, J. “Evolution De La Situation Migratoire De L’Espagne De 1991 À Nos Jours.” Migrations Société, vol. 125, no. 5, 2009, pp. 49–49. doi.org/10.3917/migra.125.0049.

Statista (a). "Syrian refugees-major hosting countries worldwide in 2022". Statista. 2023. bit.ly/3H3eM3s

Statistica (b). “Annual Budget of Frontex in the European Union from 2005 to 2022.” *Statista*, 2023, statista.com/statistics/973052/annual-budget-frontex-eu/

Statistiques Tunisie. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), third quarter 2022. Statistiques Tunisie. *2022. ins.tn/en/publication/gross-domestic-product-gdp-third-quarter-2022*

Statewatch. “EU: Tracking the Pact: Tunisia refuses cooperation with Frontex but will set up an "integrated border surveillance" system”. 2022. bitly.ws/K7dh

Stock,I., Üstübici, A. & Schultz, S.U. Externalization at work: responses to migration policies from the Global South. Comparative Migration Studies. 2019. bitly.ws/K7kL

Suárez-Collado, Ángela, and Davide Contini. “The European Court of Justice on the Eu-Morocco Agricultural and Fisheries Agreements: An Analysis of the Legal Proceedings and Consequences for the Actors Involved.” The Journal of North African Studies. pp. 1160–1179. 2022.

doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2021.1917122.

Syed Zwick, Hélène. “Onward Migration Aspirations and Destination Preferences of Refugees and Migrants in Libya: The Role of Persecution and Protection Incidents.” Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. 2022, pp. 3705–3724. doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2031923.

Talani, Leila Simona. International Political Economy of Migration in the Globalization Era. Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-79321-0

Tennis, Katherine H. Outsourcing Control : The Politics of International Migration Cooperation. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020. bitly.ws/K7i4

The Economic Times. “These 3 EU Countries Have a History of Rejecting the Most Number of Schengen Visas.” *The Economic Times*, 2023. bitly.ws/K7i8

The World Bank. “Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Tunisia”. The World Bank. 2023. data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=TN

Tittel-Mosser, F. “Reversed Conditionality in EU External Policy: The Case of Morocco”. J*ournal of Contemporary European Research. University of Minho.* 2018. jcer.net/index.php/jcer/article/view/843/826

Trei, Mariliis and Sarapuu Külli. "A Small Administration Facing a Complex Policy Challenge: Estonia and the 2015 Refugee Crisis". p. 243 - 261 in *Small States and the European Migrant Crisis: Politics and Governance*. Edited by Joensen T. and Taylor Ian. Palgrave Macmilan. 2021. link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-66203-5

Tsourapas, Gerasimos. “Migration Diplomacy in the Global South: Cooperation, Coercion and Issue Linkage in Gaddafi’s Libya.” Third World Quarterly., pp. 2367–2385. 2017. doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1350102.

TV5 Monde (c). “Migrants : la Tunisie demande à l'Union européenne de faire preuve de "solidarité”. *TV5 Monde*. 2023.
bitly.ws/K7if

Ufficio Immigrazione Arci. “Steps in the process of externalization of border controls to Africa, from the Valletta Summit to today”. *Open Society Foundations. Centro Stampa e Riproduzione Srl*. 2016.
bitly.ws/K7ij

United Nations Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner. Situation of Migrants in Transit. United Nations Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner. 2021.
ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/INT_CMW_INF_7940_E.pdf

UNHCR (a) “UNHCR’s 2022-2023 Updated Risk Mitigation Strategy and 2022 Appeal.” *UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP): Routes towards the Central & West Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic - UNHCR 2022 Appeal*, 28 June 2022.
data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93898

UNHCR (b). “Italy Fact Sheet April 2023.” *UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP): Refugee Situations*, 8 June 2023.
data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/101216

UNHCR (c). “Mediterranean Situation: Most Common Nationalities of Mediterranean Sea and Land Arrivals from January 2021.” *Operational Data Portal: Situation Mediterranean Situation*, no date.
data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean

UNHCR (d). “UNHCR’s Mandate for Refugees, Stateless Persons and IDPs.” *UNHCR Emergency Handbook*, 2020.
bitly.ws/K7ir

UNHCR (e)“UNHCR Publication for CIS Conference (Displacement in the CIS) - Transit Migrants and Trafficking UNHCR Publication for CIS Conference.” *UNHCR Ireland*, 1996.
bitly.ws/K7it

UNHCR (f). “UNHCR Launches North Africa Transit Project.” *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency*, 1 Feb. 2005.
unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/unhcr-launches-north-africa-transit-project

UNHCR (g)“UNHCR Project to Shed Light on Africa-Europe Transit Migration.”*: The UN Refugee Agency*, 1 May 2005.
unhcr.org/news/stories/unhcr-project-shed-light-africa-europe-transit-migration

UNHCR (h) “Libya.” *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency*, *No date*.
unhcr.org/countries/libya

UNHCR (i). “UNHCR Welcomes Libya’s Transit Facility to Expedite Third Country Solutions for Vulnerable Refugees.” *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency Press Releases*, 29 Nov. 2017.
bitly.ws/K7dw

UNHCR (j)“Site Planning for Transit Centres.” *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, Emergency Handbook*, *No date*.
bitly.ws/K7dB

UNHCR (k) “Evacuees from Libya – Emergency Transit Mechanism.” *UNHCR Rwanda*. *No date*.
Bitly.ws/K7e5

UNHCR (l). “UN and International Institutions”. *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. No date*.
unhcr.org/about-unhcr/our-partners/un-and-international-institutions

UNHCR (m). “Libya”. *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. No date*.
unhcr.org/about-unhcr/our-partners/un-and-international-institutions

UNHCR (n) “Tunisia: Fact Sheet” *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency*, *No date*.
shorturl.at/xIQU2

UNHCR and IOM/OIM. “Proposal for a regional cooperative arrangement ensuring predictable disembarkation and subsequent processing of persons rescued-at-sea” *UNHCR: The UN*

*Refugee Agency and IOM*/OIM. 28 June 2018.
unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/5b35e60f4.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Forum (c). "Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing Dynamics and Protection Challenges". *UNHCR*. 2017.
bitly.ws/K7dr

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (a). "UNECE". *The United Nations Office at Geneva*. *No date*.
/rb.gy/g5762

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (b). *International Migration Bulletin*. UNECE. 1993.
shorturl.at/dknoZ

United Nations (a). "Capacity-Building". *United Nations Academic Impact*, no date.
un.org/en/academic-impact/capacity-building

United Nations (b). "Contribution by the EEAS / European Commission services to the International Migration Review Forum of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (17-20 May 2022)". *United Nations Migration Network*. 2022.
http://bitly.ws/K7e6

United Nations (c). "Irregular Migration, Human Trafficking and Refugees". United Nations. No Date.
bitly.ws/K7eb

Van Mol, C., de Valk, H. Migration and Immigrants in Europe: A Historical and Demographic Perspective. 2016. IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham.
bitly.ws/K7ee

Vela, JH. “Spain asks EU for emergency funds to cope with migration”. *Politico*. 2018.
shorturl.at/fghwV

Walters, William. The Frontiers of the European Union: A Geostrategic Perspective. Geopolitics. 2004.
tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14650040490478738

Walton-Roberts, Margaret, and Jenna Hennebry, editors. Territoriality and Migration in the E.u. Neighbourhood : Spilling Over the Wall. Springer,. 2013.
bitly.ws/K7eh

White, Gregory. Climate Change and Migration : Security and Borders in a Warming World. Oxford University Press, 2011.
bitly.ws/K7iz

Zeghbib, Hocine. “Les Étrangers En Algérie : Quel Statut Juridique ?” *Naqd*, pp. 73–73. 2009.
doi.org/10.3917/naqd.026.0073.

Zaiotti, Ruben, editor. Externalizing Migration Management. Europe, North America and the Spread of 'Remote Control' Practices. Routledge, 2016.
bitly.ws/K7qg