EU external policies on migration and cooperation with Africa

Finnish Institute for International Affairs – Refugees and Migrants: European Politics, Policies and Practices

Tuesday, 12 March, 2019

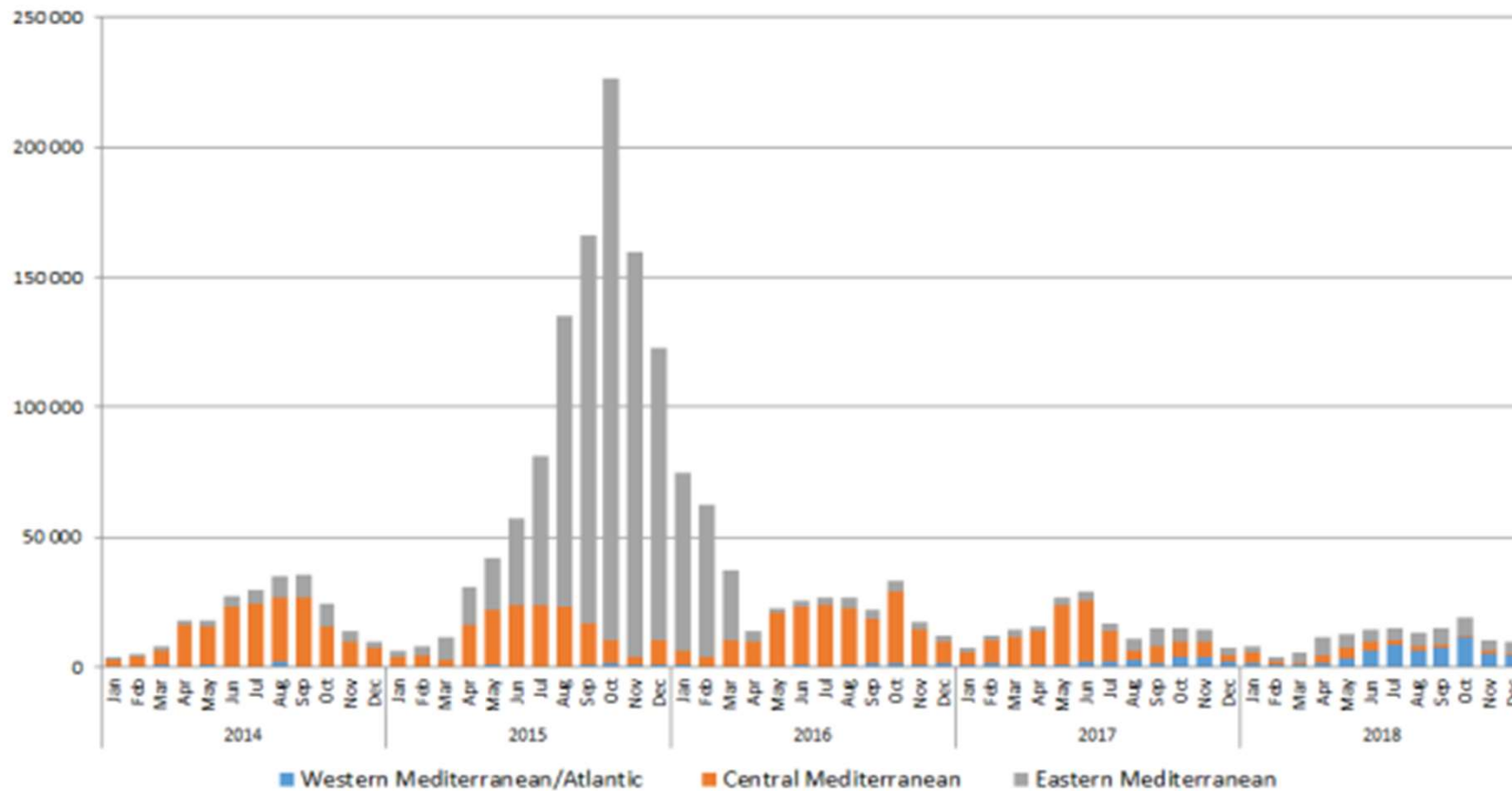Anna Knoll, Head of Migration Programme (ECDPM)

ecdpm

Content

1. Migration trends and influence on EU policies

2. EU – Africa Cooperation on Migration:

   Policy, Dialogue Frameworks and Partnership

3. Dilemmas for balanced approaches towards

   African countries

4. Outlook

ecdpm

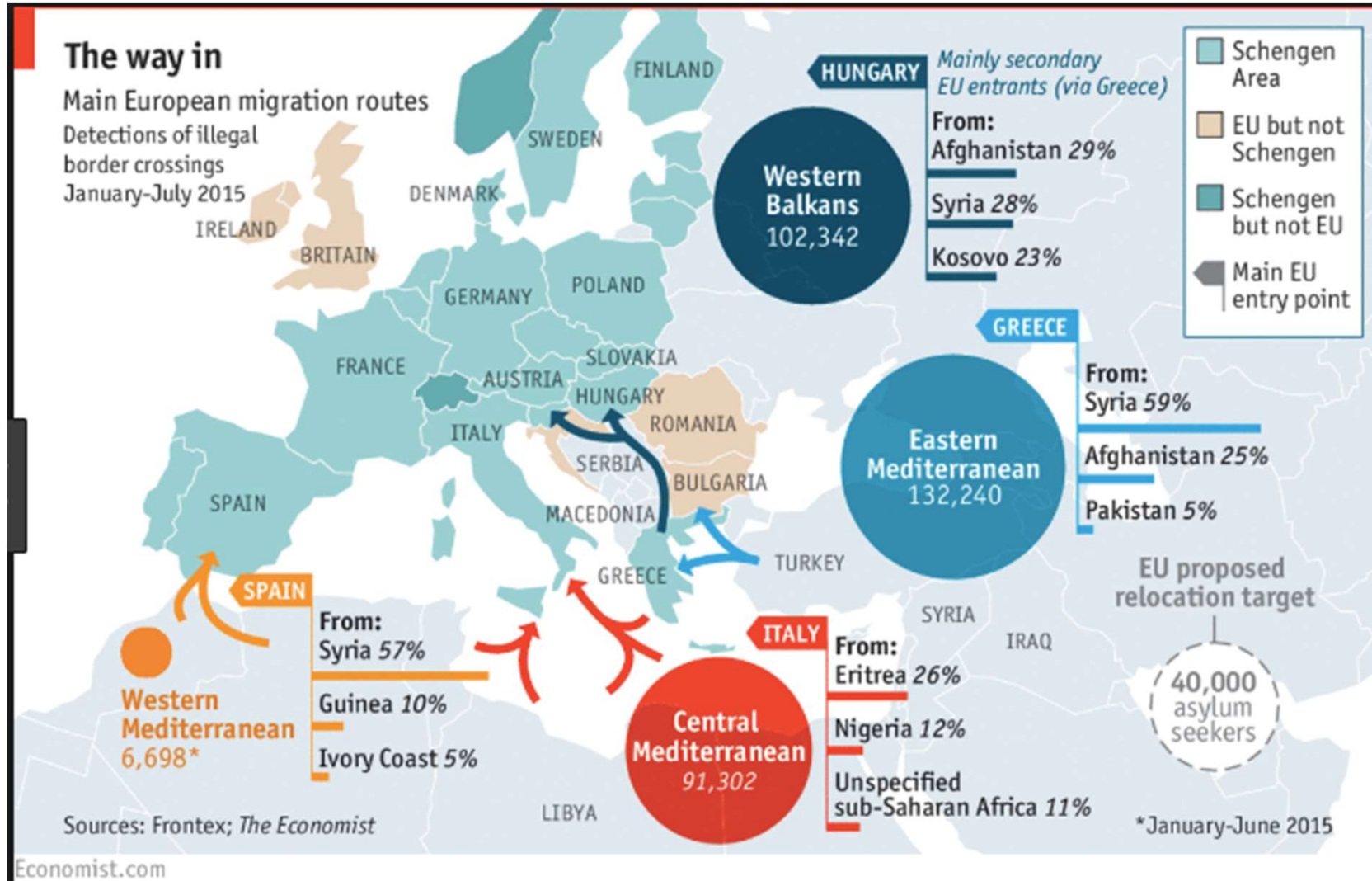# 1. Migration trends and influence on EU policies

Irregular crossings to the EU 2014-2018: Mediterranean

Irregular border crossings on the three main routes

Source: EU Commission, 2019

Irregular crossings to the EU - 2015

Source: The Economist

ecdpm

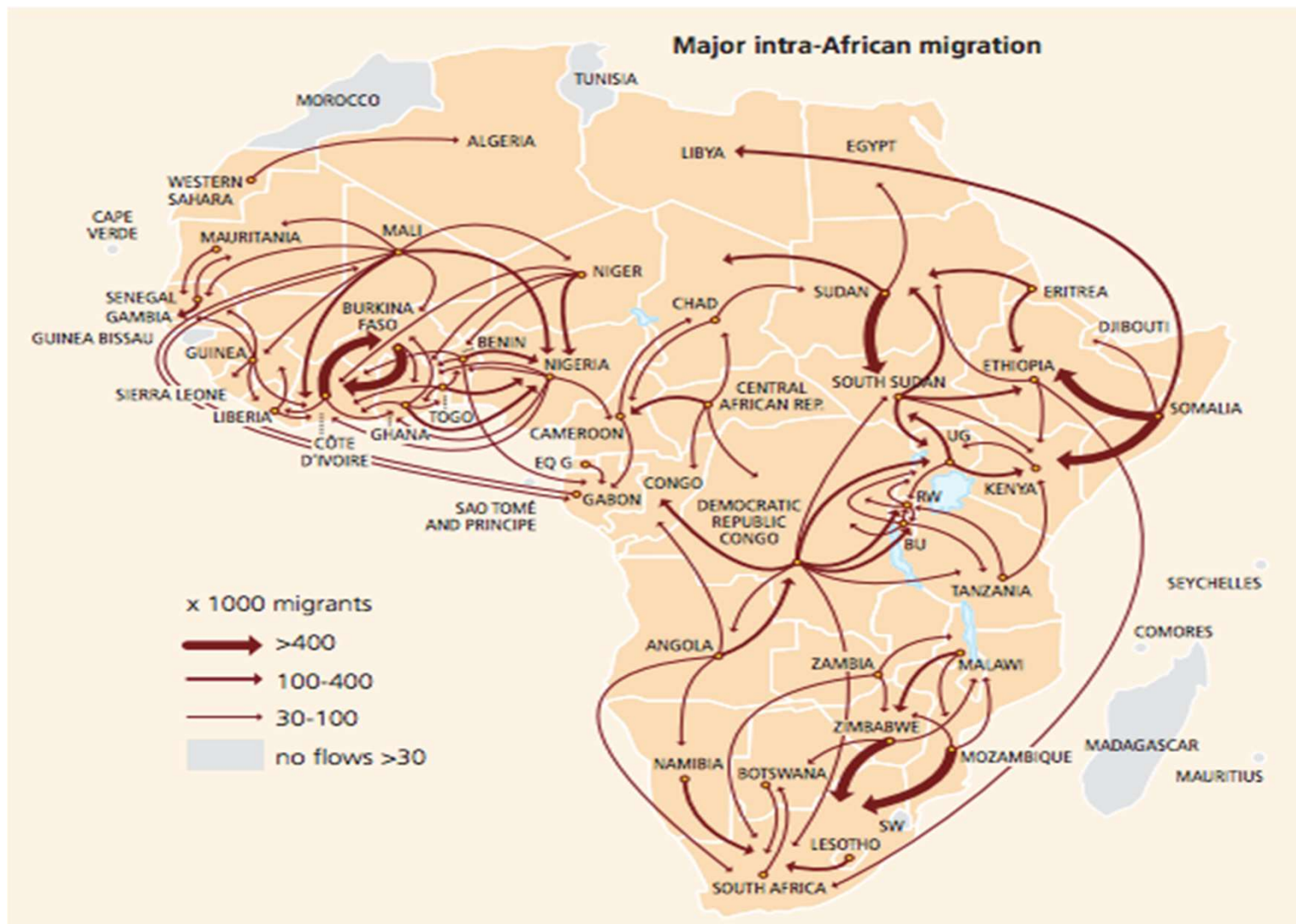**MYTH** — EUROPE IS EXPERIENCING A MIGRATION CRISIS.

FACT — EUROPE IS NO LONGER IN CRISIS MODE.

"Europe is no longer experiencing the migration crisis we lived in 2015, **but** structural problems remain" (EC, March 2019)

Migration realities within Africa

Major intra-African migration

Source: Africa Studies Centre Leiden

Legal migration from Africa to EU

- The majority of migration into the EU takes place regularly through legal channels

- Number of legal African immigrants (visa/residence permit) has dropped significantly since 2008

- Composition of regular migration from Africa:
  - More family reunification
  - Less legal mobility for work

ecdpm

Predominant Narrative frames influencing EU policies

(1) **Migration as a threat to national security and welfare**

(2) Migration as a symptom of poverty, conflict and weak governance

(3) Migration as opportunity for livelihoods and long-term development

(4) Migration as humanitarian and protection issue

ecdpm

2. EU's external migration policy towards Africa: Policy, Dialogues, Deals and Partnerships?

Cooperation with Africa at continental level

- **Joint Africa-EU Strategy, EU-ACP Dialogue on Migration**

  - JAES: Driven by EU Commission/ AU, little interest shown by MS

  - ACP framework, largely limited to development projects and capacity building, yet little political traction

- **Since 2015 - Valletta Declaration and Action Plan**

  - EU initiated process - not without initial tensions

  - Not fully continental

- **UN-AU-EU Task Force on Return from Libya**

  - Reestablished Trust around mutual objectives

ecdpm

Regional level engagement

- **Rabat Process (West Africa, 2006)** has built some trust and common understanding over the long-term and adopted a broader approach to migration governance → yet under pressure

- **Khartoum Process (Horn of Africa, 2014)** more focused on security responses to trafficking and smuggling in the Horn of Africa and has raised concerns about Human Rights issues

- Increasing EU support to **migration management along routes**, e.g. coordinated governance: Mali, Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco

ecdpm

Bilateral engagement: EU Migration Partnership Framework

- Stronger focus on **transactional bilateral deals** with third countries with aim to reduce irregular migration and increase returns

- Initial focus: 5 priority countries (Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal); Now also other countries in West and North Africa as well as Asia.

- Funding/Incentive:
  - Use of aid-conditionality (or incentives): **EU Trust Fund for Africa / European External Investment Pl**an (EIP)
  - Visa/ labour mobility pilots

Bilateral engagement: EU Migration Partnership Framework

- Progress and Success?
  - Niger vs. Libya vs. Cote D'Ivoire/ North Africa
  - Little progress on return from EU
  - Overall, reduction of irregular migration as indicator of successful approach? (EU Commission, 2019)

- African Union: EU approach undermines trust and African migration governance
  - How do bilateral deals fit with regional and continental policies?

ecdpm

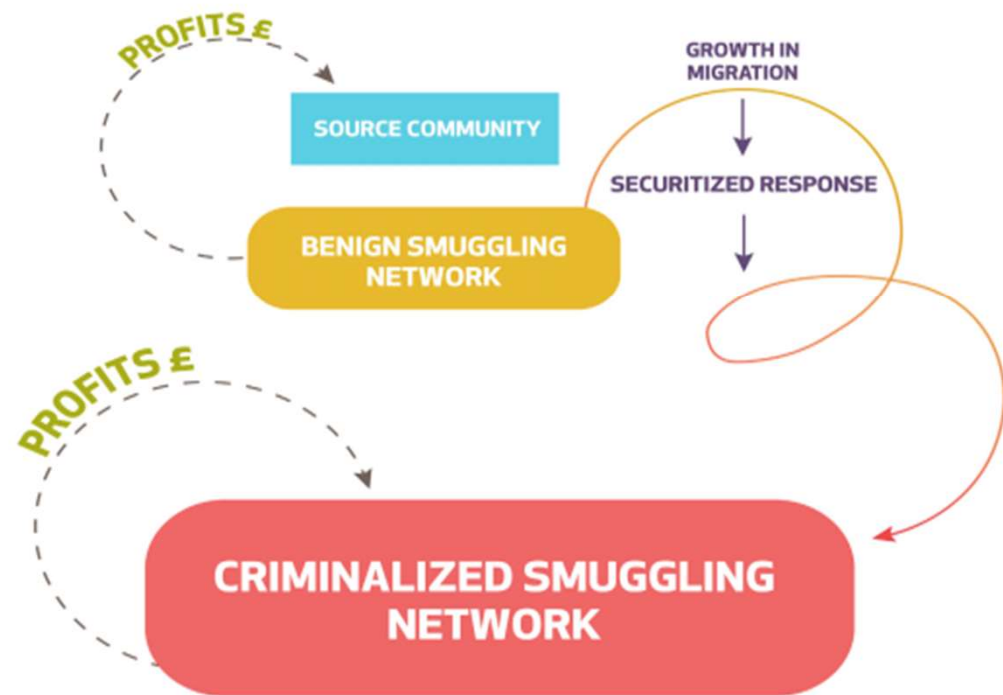# Bilateral engagement: Disembarkation Platforms

- Concept of Disembarkation Platforms (incl. extra-territorial asylum processing)

  - Rejected by North African countries

  - African Union: contravenes international law and AU legal instruments, violates rights of Africans, undermines African solidarity

- African Union: EU approach undermines trust and African migration governance frameworks

ecdpm

3. Dilemmas for balanced approaches towards African countries

Balancing Policy Objectives: Migration, Stability, Development

- Focus on migration as prime objective - at the cost of other critical challenges in partner countries (weak governance, broader human security, human development)?

- Security responses to smuggling push market to become more criminal and organised
- Dissatisfaction / resentment and political tensions (e.g. Mali, Niger)
- Enforcing return – what development impact?

Figure 4: Negative spiral – Consequences of securitized responses

Source: Reitano and Ruiz-Benitez de Lugo, 2018

ecdpm

Improving partnerships between EU and Africa

- Beyond EU migration narrative as starting point
- Embedded in a more comprehensive partnership beyond migration
- Built on trust, dialogue, time for consultation and development of joint objectives
- Grounded in international agreements (SDGs, Global Compact)

Hindering factors:

- EU divergence over external migration management, no unequivocal support for global frameworks
- EU restricting migrants' rights → credibility globally?

ecdpm

Legal labour Migration – the missing "Elephant"?

- Transform a flow from irregular to regular: Back to Money, Markets and **Migration?**

- To date underrepresented part of Comprehensive Agenda: Pilot schemes called for by EU Commission slow to start

- Increasing selectivity: refugees (resettlement)/ high skilled

- Example of a model: The Global Skills Partnership
  - Challenge: Do origin countries of irregular migration have the necessary skill level
  - Challenge: Scale and target groups

ecdpm

Outlook on EU agenda

- The next EU budget 2021-2027

    - Likely strong increase in flexible funding for addressing migration externally (level/ scope to be negotiated)

- EU negotiations with African countries on the successor of the post-Cotonou partnership

- Key question: Finding balanced approach when considering migration as part of EU international cooperation and possibly consider development aspects in migration policies.

ecdpm

Thank you!

www.ecdpm.org

Anna Knoll – Head of Programme Migration
ak@ecdpm.org

ecdpm European Centre for Development Policy Management

European Agenda on Migration

THE EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION

| Rescue | Resettlement | Relocation | Assistance |

Sets out **long-term** steps to manage migration in all its aspects

A strong common asylum system

A new EU policy on legal migration

Fighting irregular migration and human smuggling

Securing the EU's external borders

Source: European Commission.