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Four Decades of Cross-Mediterranean Undocumented Migration to Europe

A Review of the Evidence



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Cover photo: The "boat cemetery" in Lampedusa where the boats used by the migrants are stored to be destroyed later. © IOM 2006 (Photo: Peter Schatzer)

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A Review of the Evidence

by

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Executive summary

The report reviews available evidence on trans-Mediterranean irregular migration to Europe along various routes going back to the 1970s, particularly on the magnitude of the flows, the evolution of sea routes to Southern Europe, the characteristics of migrants, the extent to which one can separate between economic and forced movements, and mortality during the sea journey. The report also reflects on the causes of the so-called migration crisis – a record-high number of undocumented arrivals by sea between 2014 and 2016 – and the reasons for the substantial decrease in numbers in 2017. It concludes by identifying future data and research needs.

More than 2.5 million migrants have crossed the Mediterranean in an unauthorized fashion since the 1970s. Irregular sea journeys started rising in those years in response to the introduction of visa requirements for people who until then had been exempted – most of them temporary labour migrants from North Africa and Turkey – by Western States grappling with rising levels of unemployment during the 1973 oil crisis. Such policies: (a) encouraged those who were already in Europe to stay permanently; (b) increased regular migration to Europe of their family members; and (c) marked the beginning of irregular (labour) migration to Europe and the smuggling business.

Irregular migration by sea to Europe has occurred along three main routes, which have evolved in response to policy measures aimed at curbing such flows: (a) the western route, from Morocco to Spain, and (during 2005–2008) between Mauritania, and later Senegal, to the Canary Islands, which experienced an increase in numbers in 2014–2017; (b) the central route, from North Africa to Italy and (between 1991 and 2001) Albania to Italy, which became particularly significant after the Arab revolts in 2010; and (c) the eastern route, mainly from Turkey to Greece, which became prominent in 2014–2016, when over a million undocumented migrants landed on the Greek Islands (66% of the total arrivals recorded in the same period).

While arrivals to Greece almost completely stopped after the controversial European Union–Turkey statement in March 2016, arrivals to Italy by sea remained relatively high in 2014–2016, compared to previous years, and began to subside only in 2017. Cooperation with Turkey to stem irregular flows is now being replicated with Libya, the main country of departure of migrants smuggled along the central route; however, such an approach is not only morally reprehensible but likely to be unsuccessful, given the context of extremely poor governance, instability and political fragmentation in Libya. Also, available figures seem to indicate that **the majority of migrants in Libya come from Egypt, the Niger, Chad and Sudan, which represent a small minority of migrants smuggled by sea to Italy.** Despite high levels of insecurity, Libya continues to attract migrant workers from neighbouring countries and beyond. Some of them may also be refugees, although the refugee status may not be available to them given that Libya is not party to the 1951 Convention.

Europe’s Mediterranean border is by far the world’s deadliest: between 2000 and 2017 (30 June), 33,761 migrants were reported to have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean during their journeys. The highest number of fatalities (5,096) was recorded in 2016, when the short and relatively less dangerous route from Turkey to Greece was shut following the European Union–Turkey statement. **There appears to be a negative correlation between numbers of crossings and probability of dying during the journey:** the larger the numbers, the lower the probability of dying; in other terms, the higher the probability to arrive safely at destination. Stopping migration and eradicating deaths at sea may therefore be partly conflicting objectives. Shutting the shorter and less dangerous routes can open longer and more dangerous routes, thus increasing the likelihood of dying at sea.

Irregular sea crossings along the eastern route is mainly linked to the refugee crisis affecting the Arab countries, while journeys along the central route derive from more structural migratory pressures in sub-Saharan Africa. For most of the asylum seekers travelling along the eastern route, irregular and dangerous journeys by sea and smuggling services were the only options available, given the de facto absence of regular pathways existing in European law, such as humanitarian visas. A comparison of irregular arrivals by sea to Greece and Italy between 2009 and 2016 with first residence permits granted in the EU-28 during the same period shows that **irregular arrivals are higher than first permits issued only for four major refugee source countries**, while first permits are more numerous than irregular crossings for all African nationals (with the exception of Eritrea).

The number of migrants who could qualify for refugee status among those who arrived in Greece and Italy by sea over the past three years can be estimated based on migrants' nationalities (recorded by national authorities), and rate of positive decisions on asylum claims lodged in the EU-28, by nationality of the claimant (from Eurostat). Based on this analysis, **refugees constituted the majority of migrants who arrived by sea to Greece in 2009–2016, but only in 2013–2014 in Italy.** The proportion increased in both countries in 2011–2014, reaching a plateau in Greece and steadily decreasing in Italy. This does not imply that all these individuals actually received refugee status in European countries, nor that individuals from other countries may not have qualified for and received such a status. Moreover, interviews with a large sample of migrants in Italy in 2016 show that the majority mentioned conflict, insecurity and persecution as reasons for having left their countries.

At any rate, the common distinction between migrants and refugees is inappropriate, both in theory and in practice, in the context of Mediterranean migration. Anyone deciding to risk one's life on a flimsy boat across the Mediterranean has imperative reasons for doing so, and such decisions often result from despair for the situation in countries of origin – be it for reasons of poor livelihood and lack of prospects, violence and conflict or a combination of those – and hope for a better future. Even asylum seekers from conflict-torn countries arriving in Greece or Italy did not lodge their claims in these countries but continued the journey to destinations that they thought would offer better opportunities.

The report notes the limitations of available data on irregular migration, a phenomenon that is by nature hard to measure. Figures of recorded undocumented migrant flows are inevitably an underestimate of the total number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean irregularly, as only migrants who are apprehended – upon entry or during their stay – are counted. Moreover, an increase in the figures does not necessarily reflect **an increase in irregular flows, but may derive from expanded border control measures.** For instance, the increase in search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean since the introduction of Mare Nostrum in October 2013 may have had an impact on numbers due to the higher probability of intercepting and counting migrants, compared to previous years.

Very little is known about migrants' characteristics, except for basic information on sex, country of (declared) nationality and whether the person is an adult or minor. This information may not be representative, given the unknown number of people who remain uncounted. **Numbers of deaths at sea may also grossly underestimate the real number of people who die or go missing while crossing the Mediterranean,** as they are based on numbers of bodies found and survivors' testimonies. An increase in sea patrol operations in the Mediterranean may have led to an increase in numbers of recorded fatalities, given bodies are more likely to be found and survivors to be apprehended and interviewed.

More data should be collected, better organized and disseminated to fill these gaps in knowledge and inform more effective and sustainable policy responses; at the same time, **new conceptual frameworks should be developed to allow to put those numbers in context.** Information that is regularly collected by national authorities on migrants' profiles, reasons, experiences and future plans should be systematically organized and made public. Ad hoc surveys should be conducted with migrants in various circumstances, from those detained and about to be returned, to those successfully settled at destination.

Data already collected by different national administrations should be collated, harmonized and processed to allow for a measurement of impact of government policies in both the short and the longer term. Research is also needed on how the European Union–Turkey statement has affected the situation of migrants waiting to travel to Europe, and how cooperation with Libya is affecting migrants stranded in the country.

I. Introduction

In mid-September 2017, the Mediterranean migration crisis was clearly receding. Since the beginning of the year, “only” 130,000 migrants had been recorded at arrival by sea with no visa in Italy, Greece, Spain, Malta and Cyprus. Though 2017 is still not finished, the total annual number of cross-Mediterranean migrants would most probably not reach the peaks recorded in previous years: 368,080 in 2016, 908,558 in 2015 and 209,662 in 2014.¹

The end of the “crisis”, a term to be understood as the sudden deterioration of a chronic situation, does not mean the end of irregular migration and its causes, nor of the circumstances that made migratory pressures paroxysmal. But subsiding numbers open a window for reflecting on what happened. What did cause such a crisis? How did political circumstances that generate movements of refugees interplay with demographic and economic factors that represent a long-term structural shift? How did political responses along migratory routes impact the problems? How did the crisis call into question the governance of migration and refugee movements at local, national and global levels? How can democratic States reconcile two of their founding duties, protecting their citizens and defending universal values?

Moreover, a reflection is needed on why the crisis receded. Is it because migrants were stopped before departure, whether by virtue of official agreements (Turkey–European Union) or as a result of unofficial deals (Libya–Italy)? Would it instead be that candidates became fewer, in countries of origin or transit? Would it then be a shift in the circumstances that generate refugee movements in European Union’s vicinity, with no corresponding change in the structural factors of economic migration?

Time has arrived to reflect on what could happen next. What are the deep movements below the surface? While recent flows of unauthorized migration across the Mediterranean are in direct continuation of an old trend, they are unprecedented in several regards: (a) their magnitude; (b) the media coverage they receive; (c) the attention they draw from international organizations and non-governmental organizations; (d) the way they put in question international law on refugees and migrants; and (e) the inability of the European Union to control its external sea border and its reliance on States from where migrants boarded.

Finally, three remarks must be made, one on the geographic area covered by the paper and two on the terminology it uses.

- Geographic coverage: This paper concentrates on the Mediterranean Sea. It does not look at the whole journey of migrants, neither between their place of origin and the spot from where they embark, nor between their point of disembarkation and the place they will eventually reach further away in Europe.
- Refugees versus migrants: The distinction commonly found in official or media reports between migrants and refugees is a wrong dichotomy. Indeed, refugees are migrants. International migration is defined by border crossing (followed by an effective, or intended, duration of stay of at least one year according to the official UN definition).² In any country, international migrants are therefore born-abroad persons, and foreign citizens unless they are granted the nationality of their destination country. Defined as persons “outside the country of their nationality”, most from the 1951 Convention, or the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, refugees were born in their country of nationality and are international migrants in

¹ Unless stated otherwise, numbers of arrivals at sea are those provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM): see <http://iom.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapAndAppGallery/index.html?appid=3af3e9630ab849e99e6970a29aa25ff5>

² A migrant is defined “as any person who changes his or her country of usual residence. A person’s country of usual residence is that in which the person (...) normally spends the daily period of rest” (United Nations (1998), Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1, p.17).

their country of asylum.³ The true distinction referring to the motives behind the cross-border movement is between migrant workers (and their family dependants), also commonly referred to as “economic migrants”, and refugees. And even that distinction is in practice very difficult to make, given that the same individual needs – at the same time – international protection and to earn a livelihood. Most cross-Mediterranean migrants have indeed mixed reasons for migrating.

- Irregular is the act of migration, not the migrant: Media stories and political statements often refer to “irregular migrants”, “unauthorized migrants” or “illegal migrants”. One should not miss their implicit meaning, which is that migrants whose entry or stay breaches a host country’s laws are negated as persons. Persons cannot be irregular, unauthorized or illegal. Only their action and their situation can. This paper will therefore use the following terms: irregular migration/entry or unauthorized migration/entry, but refer to migrants as “undocumented” or “in an irregular situation”.

The paper will successively review the state of knowledge about cross-Mediterranean flows of migration, their (relatively short) history in the western, central and eastern routes, mortality during the journey by sea, the (often misleading) distinction between economic migrants and refugees, and the situation in Turkey and Libya from where most migrants embark, to finally suggest ways for a better understanding of the issue.

³ But some of them are not (e.g. those sons and daughters of refugees born in exile; youngest age groups of populations in protracted refugee situations and others).

2. How much is known about trans-Mediterranean undocumented migration to Europe?

Observing a phenomenon that by essence eludes normal procedures of administrative recording is like squaring the circle. From the most elementary question (How many? When? Where?) to more elaborated ones (What profiles? What processes?), analysis must rely on data that are always incomplete and often biased, therefore to be taken with much caution.

2.1. Flows

Migrants are normally counted at entry by border police in charge of controlling passports. The problem with counting undocumented migrants – defined as migrants with no passport or with no entry visa on their passport – is that they precisely try to escape police control for fear of being arrested and sent back to their place of departure. They are recorded by the police only if they are apprehended, which can happen either as soon as they arrive, later during their stay or never. By nature, numbers of recorded undocumented migrants are an underestimate of total flows of undocumented migrants. Moreover, underestimation varies according to place and time. Differences across countries hamper international comparisons. Variation according to time is a source of bias when it comes to assessing trends. An observed increase (or decrease) in flows of recorded irregular migration can reflect a real trend in migration, but also a change in public authorities' ability to control borders. The more efficient the shore and sea control by the police and navy, the higher the probability for undocumented migrants to be apprehended and therefore counted.

In this regard, the systematic search and rescue at high sea launched in October 2013 by Italy and never discontinued since then may well have introduced a breaking point in the statistics. While Mare Nostrum and subsequent operations in the Mediterranean were decided in response to alarming increases in the numbers of migrants entering Italy and Greece by sea or drowning during the crossing, one cannot rule out that they further impacted the numbers themselves. Not only because operations at high sea would have (as alleged by many though never established) incited more migrants to risk the journey in the hope they would be rescued and safely brought to Europe, but also because they have extended the administrative coverage of undocumented migration.

2.2. Deaths at sea

Deaths at sea are not directly recorded unless bodies are found. No mechanism of systematic, direct recording can be put in place for counting drowned persons as individual identities and numbers of people boarding the boat were not registered at departure. Statistical series of dead and missing migrants can be drawn from reports compiled separately by Italian blogger Gabriele Del Grande (back to 1988),⁴ the European network UNITED for Intercultural Action (back to 1993),⁵ and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) since 2014, which are the three most reliable and consistent sources.⁶ In all three sources, most reports are those of survivors when apprehended by the police, and/or interviewed by the media or humanitarian workers.⁷ The probability for a death to be reported therefore grows with the probability for a surviving migrant to be apprehended and counted. The

⁴ Fortress Europe, available from <http://fortresseurope.blogspot.it/>

⁵ See www.unitedagainstracism.org

⁶ Missing Migrants Project, available from <https://missingmigrants.iom.int>

⁷ Most dead and missing data in the Central Mediterranean comes from IOM Italy's interviews with survivors and reports from the Libyan Red Crescent.

more high sea is patrolled, the more likely are survivors to be interviewed about dead and missing persons among fellow travellers. Reports, in general, do not provide individual cases of well-identified deaths but rounded estimates of numbers of migrants drowned in the course of a sinking. Moreover, when there are no survivors and the sinking has remained unnoticed, all the involved deaths will most likely remain ignored.⁸

2.3. Characteristics of migrants

The circumstances in which smuggled migrants are registered at arrival restrict to the minimum the list of individual characteristics collected at the time of registration: at best, sex, broad age group (minors/adults) and country of (declared) nationality. They provide an imperfect picture of the reality, as it is not known how many people remain uncounted and whether they have the same distribution by age, sex and nationality as those who could be counted.

More detailed characteristics can be known through the few sample surveys conducted in specific locations among migrant populations arrived by sea.⁹ But surveys have their own biases. As soon as interviewed persons do not feel confident in their likelihood to be admitted in, their responses can be determined by the fear of being sent back. Because lodging a claim for asylum gives a few months' respite until the claim is processed, migrants may use this channel to increase their probability to be legally admitted, and their responses may be inspired by their knowledge of what will make their asylum claim most plausible. Responses to surveys would somehow anticipate those to be given to administrative questionnaires allowing refugee-status determination.

⁸ For a detailed analysis, see T. Last and T. Spijkerboer, "Tracking deaths in the Mediterranean" in: T. Brian and F. Laczko (eds.), *Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration* (IOM, Geneva, 2014), pp. 85–107, available from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/fataljourneys_countingtheuncounted.pdf. See also S. Grant, "Identification and tracing" in: T. Brian and F. Laczko (eds.), *Fatal Journeys volume 2: Identification and Tracing of Dead and Missing Migrants* (IOM, Geneva, 2016), pp. 31–73, available from <http://publications.iom.int/books/fatal-journeys-volume-2-identification-and-tracing-dead-and-missing-migrants>

⁹ For example, L. Achilli et al., *Study on Migrants' Profiles, Drivers of Migration and Migratory Trends* (IOM, Rome, 2016). Available from www.italy.iom.int/sites/default/files/news-documents/Migrants%20Study%20-%20FINAL%20ENG%20VERSION%20-%20ELEC.pdf

3. Changing sea routes to Southern Europe

“Another huge wave of migrants washed onto Italy’s shores on Thursday seeking an economic haven, but instead finding edgy police officers and a hard-line Government determined to send them back home.”¹⁰ This was not at the peak of the Mediterranean migration crisis in the summer 2015, but 24 years earlier after 15,000 undocumented migrants disembarked overnight at the Italian port of Bari from the *Vlora* vessel, a cargo boat chartered in Albania. The *Vlora* epic was shortly following another massive movement of arrivals by sea when an estimated 27,000 Albanians landed with no visa on the shore of Brindisi within three days in March of the same year, in what remains until today the largest-ever single wave of cross-Mediterranean irregular migration.

The Albanian story brings some insights into the Mediterranean migration crisis that recurrently makes the front pages since 2015. First, were those fleeing Albania refugees, migrant workers or both at the same time? Indeed, Albania’s democratization that came after 45 years of authoritarianism and isolation from the rest of the world caused havoc to the economy and at the same time created the fear of retaliation among supporters of the fallen regime.¹¹ Second, who apart from historians and the protagonists themselves remembers the *Vlora* episode? Indeed, with the passing of time, the boat people from Albania have either become ordinary residents of Italy, or continued the journey or returned to their homes.

In 1991, irregular landings were novelty for Italy but not for Spain. For a decade at least, every now and then, fishermen or walkers would discover corpses washed up on the beaches of Andalusia. They would barely notice the vast majority of migrants who had successfully crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and continued the journey towards the north. So what happened that explains the rise of irregular trans-Mediterranean migration?

It is common sense to state that illegality is a product of how legality is defined and the law enforced, and this applies to migration just as to any other phenomenon. Migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea from south to north at the risk of their lives did not make a significant appearance until the 1970s when, one after the other, Western European States shut the door to legal labour migration by imposing visas on people until then exempted, and sparingly delivering the new visas. The context was an economic crisis triggered by a fourfold increase in oil prices in the few months following the Arab–Israeli war of October 1973. Unemployment was hitting industrial nations for the first time since World War II. In reaction, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and other States terminated bilateral agreements regulating the circulation of migrant workers from North Africa and Turkey.¹² This shift in policy produced two consequences.

First, for fear of not being allowed to re-enter in the future, seasonal migrant workers employed in Europe decided not to return home (even if they had to overstay a visa), but to call in their wives and children who could be admitted in application of European laws on family reunification. The circular migration of male workers would gradually give way to the permanent immigration of mostly inactive family dependants and the subsequent establishment of populations with a migrant background. The second consequence was that trans-Mediterranean labour migration continued but in an irregular manner, at which time clandestine migration and the smuggling business commenced.¹³

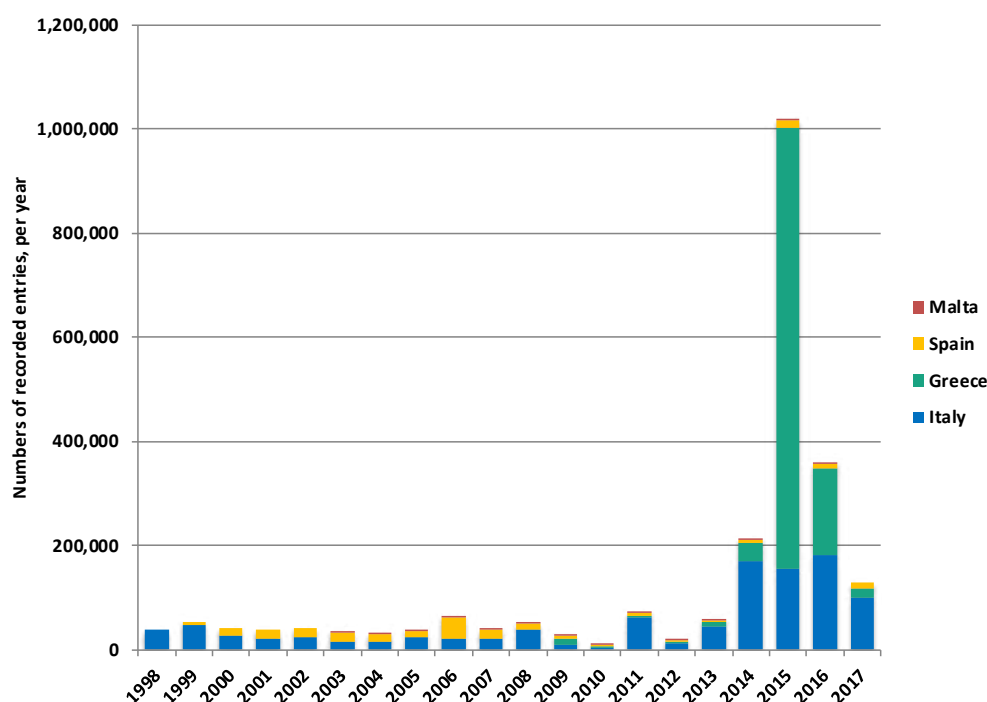
¹⁰ C. Haberman, “Italy moves to stem wave of Albanians”, *New York Times*, 9 August 1991. Available from www.nytimes.com/1991/08/09/world/italy-moves-to-stem-wave-of-albanians.html

¹¹ Council of Europe, Report on the exodus of Albanian nationals, Doc. 6555, 27 January 1992. Available from <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?FileID=6888&lang=EN>

¹² Morocco, for example, had signed bilateral agreements for the recruitment of low-skilled workers with Germany (1963), France (1963), Belgium (1964) and the Netherlands (1969).

¹³ See for example S. Collinson, *Shore to Shore: The Politics of Migration in Euro-Maghreb Relations* (London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996), pp. 7–38; P. Fargues, “Arab migration to Europe: Trends and policies”, *International Migration Review*, 38(4):1348–71 (Winter 2004).

Figure 1. Unauthorized entries by sea into Europe as recorded by police authorities, 1998–2017



Source: Table A.1. in Appendix, Italian Ministry of the Interior, 2017.

Since the 1970s, more than 2.5 million migrants (2,367,821 were recorded between 1 January 1998 and 12 September 2017) have crossed the Mediterranean Sea to enter Europe with no visa. They have travelled from south to north and east to west along three main routes.

3.1. The western route

The first south-to-north route of cross-Mediterranean unauthorized migration was the shortest possible, from the shore of Tangier in Morocco to that of Algeciras in Spain a few miles away. Migrants would cross the less than 15 km Strait of Gibraltar using small rubber dinghies or hiding under trucks ferried from Morocco to Spain. They would then either vanish on the roads of Spain, or be temporarily detained until an amnesty regularized their situation. Others would be sent back to Morocco, but forced return of apprehended migrants was not systematic for lack of clarity on the readmission of migrants in irregular situation, with Morocco refusing to readmit those who were not its citizens.¹⁴

In an attempt to curb the trend, Spain adopted, in 1991, a more restrictive migration policy imposing for the first time a visa on citizens from Maghreb states. As many were not eligible for the visa, clandestine migration started to gain momentum. The first statistics dates back to 1999 and shows a rapid increase in recorded irregular crossings through the Strait of Gibraltar, from less than 5,000 in 1999 to close to 20,000 in 2003 (Table A.1.). The Integrated System of External Vigilance in Spain – created in 1999 in order to control unauthorized migration from Morocco¹⁵ – could not alone stem the flow, unless Morocco would take action to stop irregular migration at departure.

¹⁴ A readmission agreement (Agreement on the movement of people, the transit and the readmission of foreigners who have entered illegally) between Morocco and Spain was only signed in 1992 and did not enter into force until 2012.

¹⁵ J. Carling, “Migration control and migrant fatalities at the Spanish-African borders”, *International Migration Review*, 41(2):316–343 (2007).

And this is what Morocco did in 2003, with a new law criminalizing the exit of undocumented migrants and heavily penalizing both the migrants and those involved in facilitating their travel.¹⁶ Two years later the law was enacted, the short route across the Strait of Gibraltar seemed almost shut. But irregular migration from Morocco to Spain did not necessarily stop. It simply got around the surveillance system and took a longer, more perilous route. In the first place, migrants diversified points of embarkation and disembarkation. However, surveillance extended and a new migration route opened, linking Mauritania, then Senegal to the Canary Islands more than 1,000 km away.

Between 2006 and 2008, around 50,000 migrants embarked on small Senegalese fishing boats towards the Canary Islands, with a high risk of dying at high sea (see section 4 below). The Canary Islands route opened as suddenly as it closed in 2008, as a result of harsh policies at both ends: search and push back at high sea by Spain, control of the shores by Mauritania and Senegal, and readmission agreements signed with Spain. Civil society also played a role by drawing attention on the extreme dangers of the crossing.

During almost six years, migration through the western route remained at low ebb, until a surge started in mid-August 2014 and continued through 2017. Spain, to a lesser extent than Italy and, above all, Greece, became again a destination during the migration “crisis”.

3.2. The central route

The Italian shore, in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, has been an entry point in Europe for migrants arriving from all the countries bordering the sea, from Tunisia to Turkey. From 1991 through 2001, the channel of Otranto, the shortest sea route to Italy, was also the most travelled. Italy is only 40 miles from Albania and can be reached in a few hours. An estimated 150,000 to 250,000 third-country nationals, a majority of them Albanians, made the travel. Numbers of arrivals peaked three times: (a) in 1991, when Italy recognized Albanians as *prima facie* refugees; (b) in 1997, when Albania was gripped by unrest and rebellion; and (c) in 1998–1999, during the conflict in UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo.¹⁷ When the criminal organizations controlling the route were dismantled in 2002, migrant flows across the Otranto Channel almost stopped.¹⁸

The Channel of Sicily has always been a route to Italy, with the islands of Lampedusa and Pantelleria reachable by boat in one day from Tunisia, and two to three days from Libya. Once the Channel of Otranto passed under the full control of the Italian navy, these two islands, as well as the more distant regions of Sicily and Puglia, became a much sought-after destination. From 2003 to 2010, most of the 280,000 undocumented migrants arrived by sea in Italy (Table A.1.), entering through the Channel of Sicily. Many would have departed from Tunisia, though it became more difficult after Tunisia adopted a legislation criminalizing irregular exit similar to that of Morocco,¹⁹ and was later followed by Algeria.²⁰ It is at that time that Libya, which was then a major country of immigration hosting anything between 1 and 2 million migrant workers from the neighbouring countries and further away in sub-Saharan

¹⁶ Loi n° 02-03 du 11 novembre 2003 relative à l'entrée et au séjour des étrangers au Royaume du Maroc, à l'émigration et l'immigration irrégulières. Article 50 prescribes heavy sentences: up to one year imprisonment for the migrant and up to five years for those facilitating the irregular exit, and life sentence in case of death of the migrant. It must be noted that the new law was much debated, opposing human rights activists for whom it was not helping to tackle the root causes of migration in sub-Saharan Africa but marginalizing migrants in irregular situation and potentially exacerbating humanitarian problems, to those defending that it was a first step towards a truly Moroccan policy on migration. The amnesty campaign in Morocco that regularized the vast majority of undocumented migrants in 2015 would eventually support the defenders of the law.

¹⁷ Hereinafter referred to as Kosovo/UNSC 1244.

¹⁸ F. Pastore, P. Monzini and G. Sciortino, “Schengen’s soft underbelly? Irregular migration and human smuggling across land and sea borders to Italy”, *International Migration*, 44 (4):95–119 (2006).

¹⁹ Loi organique n° 2004-6 du 3 février 2004, modifiant et complétant la loi n° 75-40 du 14 mai 1975, relative aux passeports et aux documents de voyage. Article 39 prescribes a 4-year sentence for anyone accommodating migrants in irregular situation, and a 5- to 15-year sentence for those involved in the smuggling process.

²⁰ République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire, Ministère de l'Intérieur et des Collectivités Locales Loi 08-11 du 25 juin 2008 relative aux conditions d'entrée, de séjour et de circulation des étrangers en Algérie. www.interieur.gov.dz/index.php/fr/le-ministere/le-minist%C3%A8re/textes-legislatifs-et-reglementaires/59-les-etrangers-et-les-conventions-consulaires/500-loi-08-11-du-25-juin-2008-relative-aux-conditions-d%E2%80%99entr%C3%A9e,-de-s%C3%A9jour-et-de-circulation-des-%C3%A9trangers-en-alg%C3%A9rie.html

Africa, became a hub for cross-Mediterranean journeys, and controlling its shore a bargaining chip in the hands of Colonel Gadhafi at the negotiating table with Italy and the European Union.²¹

Arab revolts starting in December 2010 soon provoked a surge in irregular cross-Mediterranean migration to Europe. Just after the revolution broke out in both countries, Tunisia and Libya became points of departure for migrants smuggled into Italy. In 2011 alone, 62,692 undocumented migrants entered Italy by sea, compared with 4,406 and 9,573 respectively in 2010 and 2009. Most crossings took place in the Spring 2011, when police forces were disorganized and coastal control was inexistent in Tunisia, a fact which suggests that part of the 28,047 Tunisian migrants recorded at entry with no visa in Italy in 2011 decided to cross in response to an opportunity (no border control) more than a structural change (the revolution) that was just starting at that time. Moreover, undocumented migrants who would otherwise have taken the western route seized the same opportunity. Revolution in Tunisia would have, therefore, rerouted existing flows of irregular migration more than stimulated new ones. This interpretation is supported by smaller numbers of arrivals in 2012 (13,267) and 2013 (42,925).

It is later, starting from 2014, that the migration “crisis” could be felt in Italy, with annual numbers of entries by sea jumping to four times their level in 2013 for three consecutive years, and beginning to subside only in 2017. As will be seen in section 5, the surge in irregular migration to Italy is not linked to the massive refugee crisis affecting the Arab countries as much as to migratory pressures in sub-Saharan Africa.

3.3. The eastern route

In the three years between 2014 and 2016, Greece alone received 1,047,939 undocumented migrants by sea, representing 66 per cent of the 1,582,759 sea arrivals recorded in the whole Mediterranean Europe during the same period. From a European perspective, the “Mediterranean migration crisis” was, in the first instance, a Greek crisis. Massive movements of sea arrivals to Greece are neatly bounded by two turning points, however: (a) completion of the fence barring the River Evros, marking the land border between Greece and Turkey in December 2012; and (b) the European Union–Turkey statement in March 2016.

Greece had been an entry point to Europe for undocumented migrants and refugees since it became a member of the European Union in 1981, but they were all taking the simplest, shortest and safest route, which is by land. Turkey is indeed one of the most accessible countries in the world,²² and a hub for nationals from a variety of distant countries trying to reach Europe with no visa through its land border with Greece.²³ In the year 2011 alone, around 55,000 migrants were detected crossing the river.²⁴ The fence was decided with an aim to stop the growing flow. Since the beginning, its construction was a matter of controversy. It was anticipated that it would not stop irregular migration as much as shift it towards a sea route, thereby strengthening the smuggling business. And this is actually what happened. As noted at that time, the fence didn’t work because it was impassable; it “worked” because it was more difficult to cross than the alternative routes.

As soon as the land border shut, undocumented migrants started being smuggled by sea to the Greek Islands, a few miles west of Turkey. The flow started to grow in June 2014 (6,214 recorded arrivals), continued until October 2014 (11,628 arrivals) and took enormous momentum the following year to reach a peak of 217,936 in October 2015, which is more than 7,000 on an average day. Figure 2 clearly shows that Syrians initiated the movement and were followed a few months later by Afghans, then by

²¹ S. Hamood, *African Transit Migration through Libya to Europe: The Human Cost* (Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Program, The American University in Cairo, 2006) and United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, *World Refugee Survey 2007*.

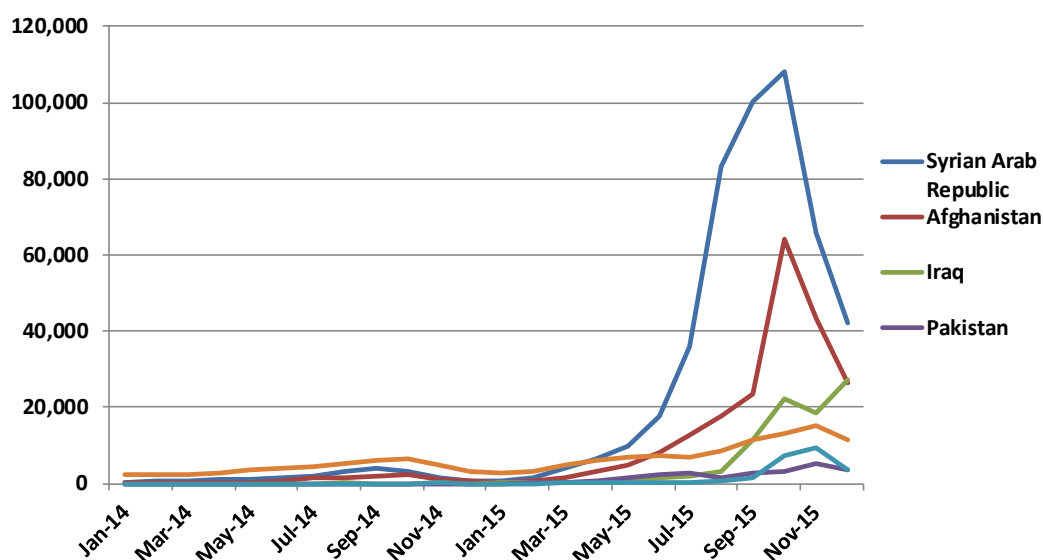
²² Nationals of 78 countries are visa-exempt in Turkey, and nationals of 42 additional countries are eligible for a visa at entry.

²³ See A. İçduygu, *The Irregular Migration Corridor between the EU and Turkey: Is it Possible to Block it with a Readmission Agreement?* (Migration Policy Centre, EU-US Immigration Systems n. 2011/14) (2011), available from <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/17844>. See also A. İçduygu and K. Kirişçi (eds.), *Land of Diverse Migrations: Challenges of Emigration and Immigration in Turkey* (Istanbul Bilgi University Press, Istanbul, 2009).

²⁴ N. Nielsen, “Fortress Europe: a Greek wall close up”, *EUobserver*, 21 December 2012. Available from <https://euobserver.com/fortress-eu/118565>

Iraqis and a few other nationalities. As will be discussed in section 5, asylum seekers comprised the overwhelming majority of the massive waves of migration by sea to Greece.

Figure 2. Monthly arrivals by sea in Greece from 1 January 2014 to 1 December 2015 – Top five nationalities



Source: Greek Police authorities, see Table A.2. in the Appendix, 2016.

Arrivals by sea to Greece stopped as abruptly as they had started, just in a few weeks. In March 2016, a statement on migration was made between the European Union and Turkey, according to which Turkey would stop undocumented migrants embarking to Greece in exchange of a visa liberalization regime for its citizens and financial compensation.²⁵ The agreement has been hailed by some for the 97 per cent drop in irregular migration it produced, but viewed with deep concern by others for its infringing on human rights and refugee law, and for Europe renouncing its founding ethics of protection.

Reflecting on developments along the three cross-Mediterranean routes – to Spain, Italy and Greece – two fundamental questions can be raised.

First, can walls erected on the route of migrants work? On the contrary, closing a route seems to amount to immediately opening an alternative route, often longer and more perilous, and fostering the proliferation of smuggling networks. This was certainly the case when the route through the Strait of Gibraltar was replaced by the longest possible journey from Western Africa to the Canary Islands. But no comparable shift occurred when Turkey barred the route to the Greek Islands. An increase in the number of boats chartered from Libya indeed followed, but a closer look at nationalities shows that migrants travelling the Central Mediterranean route since the spring 2016 are not those blocked in Turkey (see section 5).

Second, which are the countries effectively controlling a route: those from where migrants embark or those where they intend to disembark? The European Union and some of its Member States subcontracting the control of migration and refugee movements to countries with poor human rights records, authoritarian or failed regimes or even countries left to the mercy of militias, is a particularly worrying issue.²⁶

²⁵ See European Commission, EU-Turkey Statement: One year on (n.d.). Available from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/eu_turkey_statement_17032017_en.pdf

²⁶ See for example, Refugees International's blog post, "The anniversary of the EU-Turkey Statement": "The EU should not use the EU-Turkey statement as a blueprint for its cooperation with other countries, particularly with Libya, where severe and widespread abuses against asylum seekers and migrants have been documented (www.refugeesinternational.org/blog/eu-turkey-agreement).

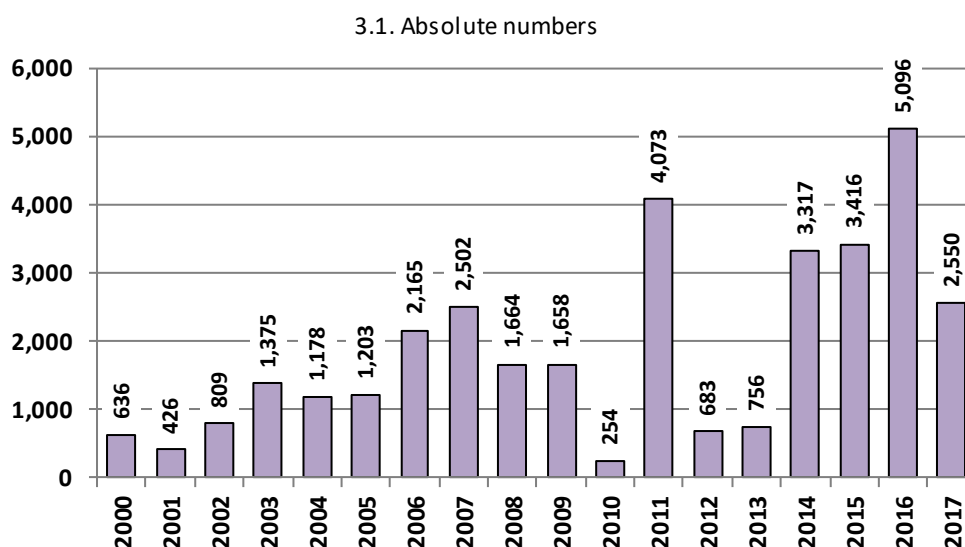
4. Europe’s Mediterranean shore, the world’s most lethal border

“Unprecedented” is the most often-used qualifier in media reports on the Mediterranean migration crisis. While this crisis was unprecedented in many ways, from staggering numbers of both arrivals by sea and asylum claims lodged in Europe to the failure of policy instruments, it must be remembered that what makes this crisis unique is in the first instance an all-time high in mortality at sea. From 2000 to 2017 (30 June), 33,761 migrants drowned in the Mediterranean Sea trying to reach Europe, making Europe’s Mediterranean border by far the world’s deadliest, based on available information.²⁷

As shown by Figure 3.1., it is in 2016 – the year when, at the request of the European Union, Turkey closed the shortest and less risky way, and the longest and most perilous route joining Turkey or even Egypt to Italy became the most travelled – that the highest number of deaths was recorded with as much as 5,096 persons estimated to have drowned. Other peaks were recorded in 2007, when the Canary Islands became the only destination reachable in Spain, and in 2011, the year of uprisings in Tunisia and Libya.

Absolute numbers tell only part of the story. Probabilities of dying during the journey tell the rest. Figure 3.2. shows three peaks: (a) in 2007, linked to high mortality on the route to the Canary Islands; (b) in 2009, when the highest-ever probability of dying corresponds to a marked decrease in numbers of crossings combined with repeated wrecks on the Central Mediterranean route; and (c) in 2011, when the situation in Libya and Tunisia was the most chaotic. On the other side, it is in 2015 – the year of paroxysmal crisis in terms of crossings – that the lowest probability of dying could be recorded: “only” 3.7 per thousand compared with an average 15.4 during the whole period 2000–2017.²⁸

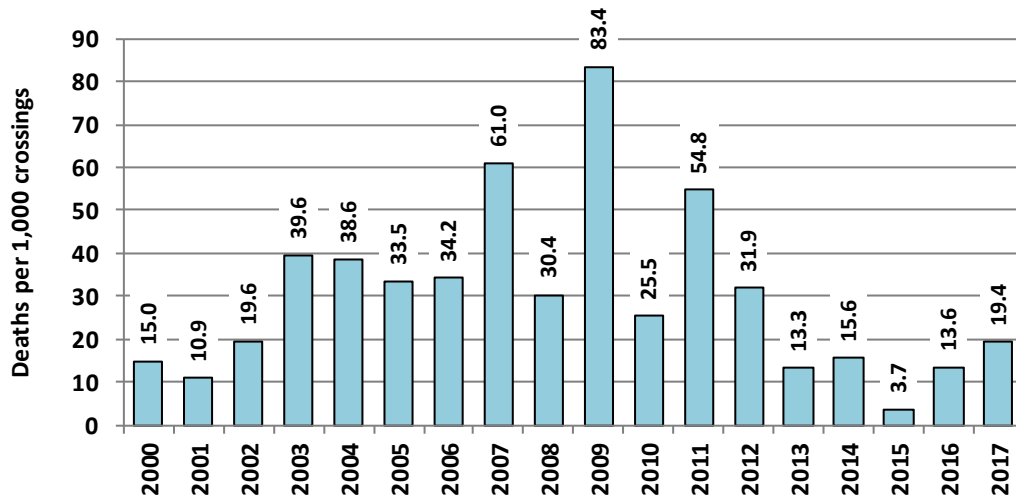
Figure 3. Mortality at sea during the cross-Mediterranean journey to Europe (all routes combined), | January 2000–31 July 2017



²⁷ T. Brian and F. Laczko (eds.), *Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration* (IOM, Geneva, 2014). Available from www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/pbn/docs/Fatal-Journeys-Tracking-Lives-Lost-during-Migration-2014.pdf

²⁸ Author’s calculation. See Table A.3. in the Appendix.

3.2. Probabilities



Source: Author's calculations based on data retrieved from: (a) 2000–2015: Gabriele Del Grande's blog, Fortress Europe (<http://fortresseurope.blogspot.it/>); and (b) 2016–2017 IOM, Missing Migrants Project (<http://missingmigrants.iom.int>). For 2017, data refer only to the first two quarters. See Table A.3. in the Appendix.

An apparent paradox is indeed the significant negative correlation ($r = -0.44$) found between the absolute number of migrants and the probability of dying: the larger the number of cross-Mediterranean migrants, the lowest their probability to drown or, put in other terms, the highest their probability to arrive safely at destination. A lesson must be drawn, that eradicating mortality at sea and stopping migration are distinct, and partly conflicting objectives. Of course, zero migration by sea would result in zero death at sea. But before that point can be reached (if it ever can), a reality must be taken into account: the shortest routes are at the same time the most travelled and the less deadly. Shutting them automatically translates into rising probability of dying.

5. Seeking protection or employment?

There is no doubt that any person making the decision to cross the Mediterranean at the risk of his or her life has imperative reasons to do so. Looking at the mix of despair and hope that motivates the move, the distinction between voluntary and forced migration – the first referring to economic causes and the second to political causes – is helpless. However, once arrived in Europe and apprehended by the police, those who qualify for the status of refugee have a high probability to stay, but those who do not risk being returned.

One notable feature of the crisis is that most migrants, including those fleeing conflict-torn countries, did not apply for asylum at arrival in Greece or Italy even though these are safe countries. They continued the journey through the administrative hurdles and physical barriers of the Balkans and Central Europe to reach Western or Northern Europe where they thought they would find a job. This fact could serve as an argument for allegations that these people were not seeking protection but employment, and therefore they were not refugees but economic migrants whom European States had no duty to welcome. A first question then is how migrants arrived by sea divide up between the two categories of refugees and economic migrants. A second question is whether this dichotomy is fully relevant in the particular circumstances of the crisis.

How many among migrants arrived by sea in Greece and Italy could qualify for the status of refugee? Data are lacking to answer this question. Indeed, registration of migrants at arrival on the one hand and refugee status determination on the other, are two distinct procedures carried out at different moments by different administrations (and often in different countries despite the obligation made by the Dublin Regulation²⁹ to process asylum claims in the country by which claimants have entered Europe). The only characteristic recorded by the Italian and Greek authorities at arrival that makes it possible to indirectly address this issue is the migrant's nationality.³⁰ Combining two independent series – the distribution of migrants by nationality provided by Greek and Italian police authorities (Table A.4.) and the rate of positive decisions on asylum claims lodged in the EU-28³¹ by nationality of the claimant provided by Eurostat (Table A.5.) – the proportion of refugees among people smuggled by sea to each of Greece and Italy can be roughly estimated (Table A.6.).

Table 1 suggests that refugees have been a majority of migrants arrived by sea during the whole period 2009–2016 in Greece, but only in 2013 and 2014 in Italy. In both countries, their proportion has increased from 2011 to 2014, to reach a plateau in Greece and steadily decrease in Italy. Whether the real outcome of refugee-status determination will be different cannot be known, since public statistics on decisions on asylum do not make a distinction between the ways claimants have arrived.

Table 1. Estimated proportion of refugees among migrants arrived by sea in Greece and Italy, 2009–2017

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Greece	55.4%	55.7%	48.1%	59.6%	73.7%	76.7%	75.7%	72.0%	63.9%
Italy	36.8%	31.1%	21.7%	40.0%	62.2%	62.8%	49.5%	35.9%	31.6%

Source: Arrivals, Greek and Italian police. Proportion of positive decisions on asylum, Eurostat. See Table A.6. in the Appendix.

²⁹ See https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/examination-of-applicants_en

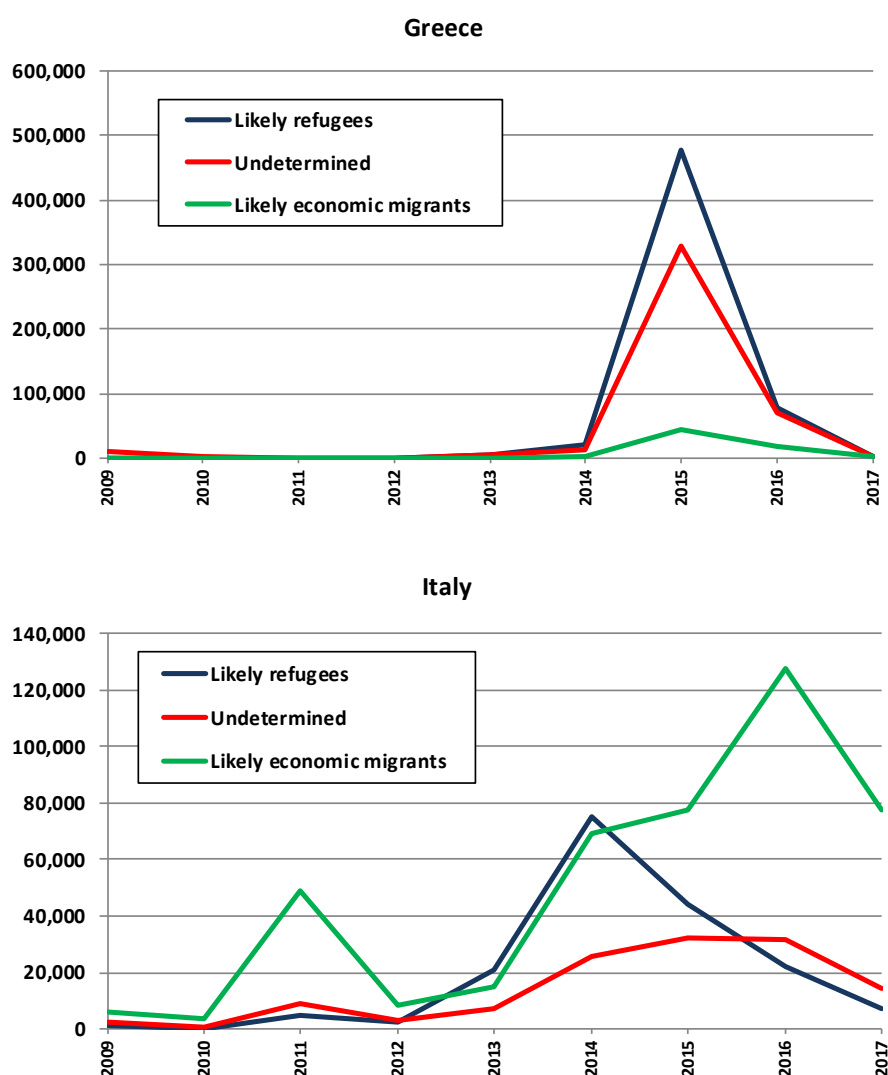
³⁰ The author could obtain annual data on arrivals by detailed country nationality for 1999–2017 in Italy but only for 2009–2016 in Greece.

³¹ Because most migrants arrived by sea in Greece and Italy actually lodged their asylum claims in countries other their country of arrival, the rate of positive decisions to be taken into account is at the European Union level.

Figure 4 provides a more nuanced picture. Migrants arrived by sea are distributed in three categories defined by the rate of positive decisions on asylum at European Union level by nationality of the claimant: (a) “likely refugees” (rate higher than 67%); (b) “undetermined status” (rate comprised between 33% and 66%); and (c) “likely economic migrants” (rate lower than 33%).

Greece and Italy offer two contrasting pictures: the first as a passageway for mostly Syrian and other Middle Eastern asylum seekers, and the second as a hub for a large variety of mixed migration flows originating mainly in Africa. In Greece, likely refugees are at any point in time between 2009 and 2017³² the largest category, while likely economic migrants are in negligible numbers. As mentioned earlier (Figure 2), the vast majority of migrants arrived by sea in Greece belong to only three nationalities, which are among those with a high rate of positive decision on asylum in Europe: Syrians (95.5% positive decisions), Afghans (53.2%) and Iraqis (60.1%). Italy, by contrast, has received a wide spectrum of nationalities, with those corresponding to likely economic migrants being the largest group except in 2013 and 2014 (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Arrivals by sea to Greece and Italy in 2009–2017, by likely status of the migrants

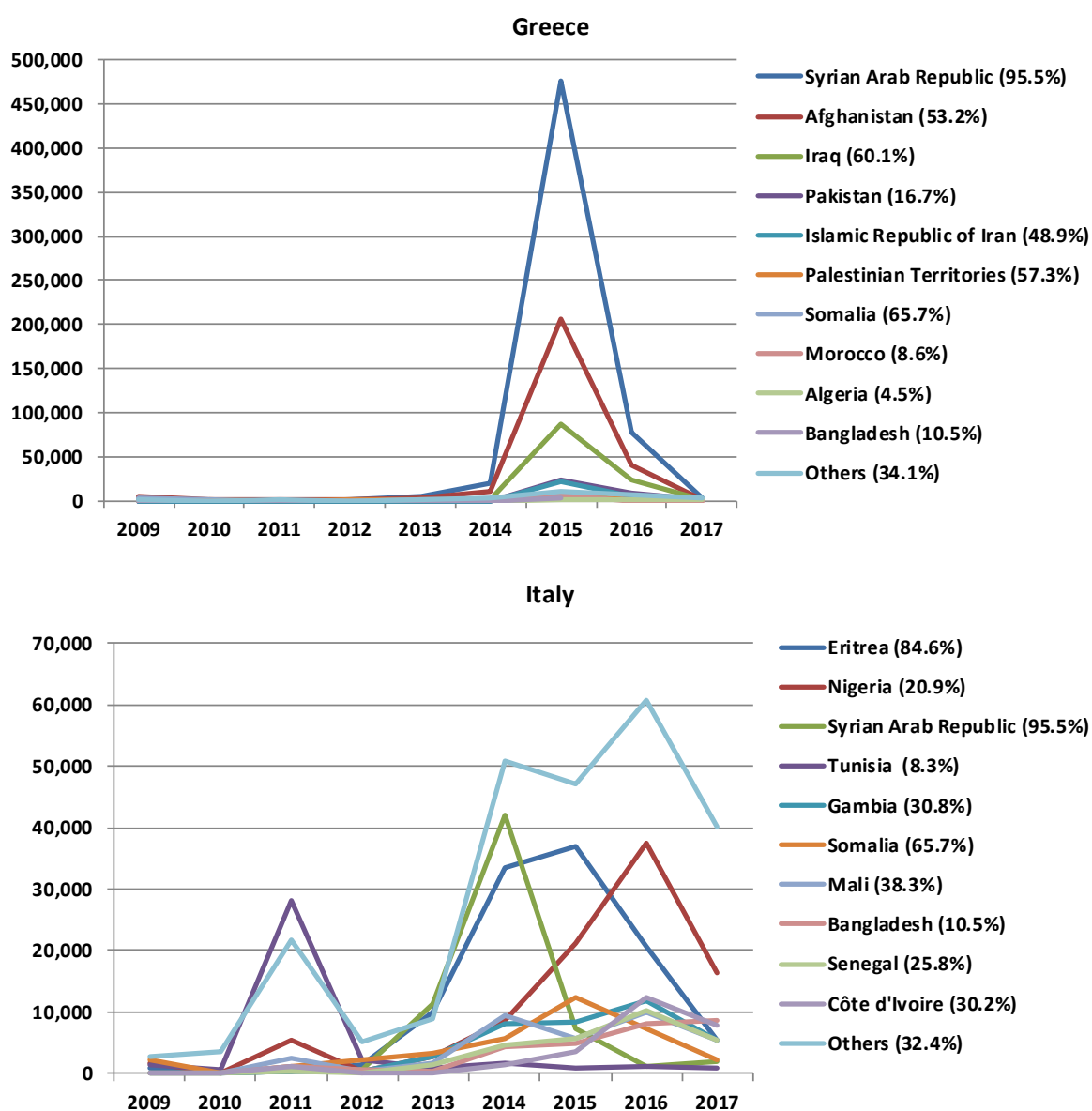


Note: Categories are defined as follows with p being the probability of positive decisions on asylum claims: Likely refugees: $p > 2/3$; Undetermined: $1/3 > p > 2/3$; Likely economic migrants: $p < 1/3$.

Source: Italian Ministry of the Interior, Greek Police and Eurostat. See Tables A.4. and A.5. in the Appendix.

³² The period 2009–2017 are the only years for which there is distribution of migrants arrived at sea by detailed country of nationality in both Greece and Italy.

Figure 5. Top 10 origin of migrants arriving in Greece and Italy by sea, 2009–2017
(between brackets: positive decisions on asylum, %)



Source: Italian Ministry of the Interior, Greek Police and Eurostat. See Tables A.4. and A.5. in the Appendix.

At this point, it must be recalled that nationality does not prejudice the need for protection. Countries whose citizens' asylum claims lodged in Europe have a high probability to be rejected may also produce genuine refugees. Table 2 shows the reasons for leaving their homeland provided by a sample of 1,031 migrants arrived by sea in Italy, interviewed in 2016 in several reception centres and informal settlements across the country.³³ Eighty per cent of the migrants were coming from sub-Saharan Africa. The top five countries of nationality were Nigeria (22.6%), Eritrea (10.6%), Ghana (9.4%), Sierra Leone (8.9%) and the Gambia (8.0%). Apart from Eritreans, nationals of all these countries have relatively low rates of positive decisions on asylum claims. Nevertheless, most interviewed migrants motivated their departure from home by reasons that qualify for asylum or some form of temporary protection (such as insecurity, conflict and discrimination). Economic reasons were mentioned by less than a quarter of the migrants. Had friends or smugglers instructed interviewed migrants to systematically describe themselves as asylum seekers? The level of trust established during the interviews suggests instead that many were just telling the truth.

³³ Achilli et al., 2016.

Table 2. Reasons for leaving the country of origin provided by migrants arrived by sea in Italy, 2016

Reason*	Frequency	Percentage
Insecurity or conflict	609	59.07
Discrimination	441	42.77
Economic or work reasons	243	23.57
Family or friends	218	21.14
Respect for human rights in country of destination	42	4.07
Education reasons	31	3.01
Easy to get asylum in country of destination	19	1.84
No protection in the country of origin	8	0.78

Note: * Each migrant could give more than one reason.

Source: Achilli et al., 2016.

Comparing the distribution by nationality of migrants entered by sea with no visa in Greece and Italy with that of migrants who were refused entry at the land and air external border of the European Union (Table 3) shows a marked bipolar distribution: nationalities that were most recorded at irregular entry by sea on one side, and nationalities that were most represented among people who were refused entry at the external border on the other side, are two separate groups. Put in other terms, most migrants smuggled by sea to Europe belong to nationalities that are not frequently refused entry at the external border, provided that they reach the border. The first group (10 or more arrivals by sea for 1 entry refused at the border) comprises nationals of countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic, Eritrea, Somalia, Afghanistan or Iraq, for whom obtaining a visa for a European State before departing from their country may simply be impossible, for example if no consulate is accessible. So how does the situation vary between countries from where migrants embark to Europe and with what impact on subsequent migration?

Table 3. Numbers of migrants entered by sea with no visa compared with numbers of migrants refused entry at the external border (land and air) by nationality, 2009–2016

Ratio arrivals by sea/refused entries	Consolidated numbers		Country/territory/region
	Arrivals by sea	Refused entries	
10 or over	1,224,571	44,665	Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Gambia, Iraq, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Palestinian Territories
1 to 10	379,422	112,245	Bangladesh, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tunisia
0.1 to 1	19,212	105,455	Algeria, Benin, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Rwanda, Togo, Uganda, Yemen
Less than 0.1	20,517	2,892,835	Albania, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belize, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, China, Taiwan Province of the People's Republic of China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Georgia, Haiti, India, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Oman, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Western Balkan States, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kosovo/UNSC 1244,

Source: Italian Ministry of the Interior and Greek Police for arrivals by sea (Table A.4. in the Appendix); Eurostat for entries refused at the external border.

6. Turkey and Libya are not the same

The Eastern Mediterranean route – now almost entirely closed or at least on hold – has mostly been travelled by asylum seekers, a fact that invites to reflect on irregular migration for the purpose of protection-seeking.

Almost all migrants arrived by sea in Greece had departed from Turkey. They had left behind war-torn countries (Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, Iraq and a few others) from where they had reached Turkey, either directly or after a stay in another country, such as Lebanon, Jordan or Iraq. Growing numbers starting from 2013 coincided with two major developments: (a) rise of the so-called Islamic State, triggering new exoduses from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic; and (b) deterioration of the refugee situation in countries where they had first found shelter, particularly Jordan and Lebanon, as well as Turkey.

These three countries have among the world's largest refugee populations, but they are not parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention or party, in the case of Turkey, but with a geographic limitation to Europe excluding the refugees from non-European countries. It must be noted, however, that a Turkish law of 2014 established a status of “conditional refugee” applicable to non-Europeans and providing them with a number of Convention-like guarantees.³⁴ These three countries have a charity-based, as opposed to a rights-based, approach to refugees, who are admitted as “guests”: they enter legally, but for a limited period of time during which they have little social and economic rights. Access to income-generating activities is restricted and mostly informal. Once their entry visa expires, they lose the right to stay, and they must choose between falling into limbo and trying to leave. Moreover, once their savings dry up, they have no choice but to leave.

The situation in host countries started to deteriorate when refugee flows gained enormous momentum in 2014. Rising pressure on health and education services, as well as on local labour markets, and also potentially destabilizing consequences of refugee flows on the political stability of host States, gradually created an untenable situation in countries of first asylum. Seeking asylum further away, in Europe, became the only way out for many refugees. But Europe offers almost no resettlement opportunities, by which the status of refugee is recognized before the person can safely travel to Europe. In the same vein, humanitarian visas allowing people to travel legally to a European Union State in order to lodge an asylum claim at arrival are never delivered by European embassies, though they exist in European law. In order to reach the territory of Europe and lodge an asylum claim, refugees have no choice but to do what migrants do: either obtain a visa for any other purpose (work, study, family reunion or tourism) or travel with no visa and resort to the services of a migrant smuggler.

Table 4 shows that the second option was the only one left to 77.5 per cent of the 830,000 Syrian refugees who were able to enter the European Union between the beginning of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and the enforcement of the European Union–Turkey agreement. But once in Europe, 96.6 per cent of them were granted refugee status or temporary protection. So, was it necessary to put so many hurdles on their way? The only reason one can see is the anti-migration sentiment that grows in most of the developed world, including Europe, in parallel with flourishing populism and neo-nationalism. Should have resettlement and humanitarian visas been used, refugee movements to the European Union would have taken place in a legal, orderly manner, at lower costs but not necessarily larger scale, and Europe would have respected its founding principles of human rights and protection.

³⁴ Turkey (Republic of), Ministry of Interior, Directorate General of Migration Management, Law on Foreigners and International Protection (Ankara, 2014). The conditional refugees shall be allowed to reside in Turkey temporarily until they are resettled to a third country.

Table 4. Syrian nationals smuggled by sea and granted asylum once in Europe between April 2011 and the European Union–Turkey statement of March 2016

(1) Syrians smuggled by sea to Greece and Italy		641,502
(2) First-time asylum applicants from the Syrian Arab Republic in the EU-28		827,500
(3)=(2)/(1) Proportion of Syrian asylum seekers entered in Europe through Greece and Italy		77.5%
(4) Decisions on asylum applications lodged by Syrians	All decisions	564,875
	Positive decisions	545,470
	% Positive	96.6%
(5)=(1)×(4, % positive) Expected number of Syrians smuggled by sea who would have obtained a humanitarian visa before travelling to the European Union		619,465

Source: Author's calculation on the basis of Greece and Italian Police data on persons smuggled by sea and Eurostat data on asylum claims and decisions.

The situation in the Central Mediterranean route differs in many regards. Since the closure of the eastern route, the central route has become the relatively most travelled. What worked for the eastern route – i.e. subcontracting the closure with Turkey, a strong State capable of efficiently controlling its shore – cannot work the same way for the central route. Most migrants arriving by sea in Italy are now departing from Libya, and exceptionally Egypt and Tunisia. By contrast with Turkey, in Libya, the State failure and proliferation of militias give the smuggling business free rein to operate. Making a deal with factions ruling over part of Libya's territory, or with militias, or directly with the smugglers, would not only bring disgrace to European States abdicating their founding principles and closing their eyes on people knocking at their door from one of the most dangerous places on Earth, but also bring no guarantee that boats will not continue to depart from just a few kilometres away.

There were very few Libyan nationals among migrants who departed from the Libyan shore in 2016 and 2017. All were already international migrants in the country. While Libya is no longer the major destination for migrant workers it was before its dictator was removed in 2011, the job opportunities it still offers continue to attract migrants from neighbouring countries and further away in Africa, despite the high level of insecurity in the country. They are all migrant workers, but in addition, some of them are at the same time asylum seekers and migrants in vulnerable situations, such as victims of human trafficking. Indeed, Libya is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and it does not recognize the status of refugee. Colonel Gadhafi used to claim his country had not a single refugee. In reality, however, not providing refugees with a status does not mean that there are no people among migrants in Libya who would qualify for this status should it be available to them. Migrants originating from the Horn of Africa and Sudan may well be de facto refugees in Libya.

Other foreign nationals may have entered Libya with the aim of reaching Europe but found themselves stuck in the country. Some are kept in detention centres where they are exposed to all sorts of abuse, from sexual slavery to assassination, and others are informally employed waiting for a passage to Europe.

Would the two above-mentioned groups of migrants, those attracted by the Libyan labour market and those in transit for Europe, be one single population of candidates to the perilous cross-Mediterranean journey to Europe? Data available, whatever scanty they are, seem to indicate that they do not overlap much. Table 5 shows that the top five foreign nationalities among migrants estimated to be presently in Libya (representing 61.8% of all nationalities in Libya according to IOM estimates³⁵) are

³⁵ IOM, Displacement tracking matrix (DTM): Libya's migrant report, Round 11, June–July 2017, available from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-qpxdvn9nlW0E5wU3VQOVlqQWM/view>. DTM reports provide the only information one can find in the absence of any administrative records, census or population survey in Libya today.

only 10.1 per cent of the nationalities recorded at arrivals in Italy. The majority of migrants estimated to be present in Libya come from four neighbouring countries (Egypt, the Niger, Chad and Sudan), but these countries represent only 7 per cent of nationalities recorded among migrants smuggled by sea to Italy. The idea that migration should be monitored (and stopped?) before it reaches Libya if Europe wants to shut the central Mediterranean route seems simplistic and wrong.

Table 5. Distribution by nationality of foreign population in Libya and migrants smuggled by sea from Libya to Italy

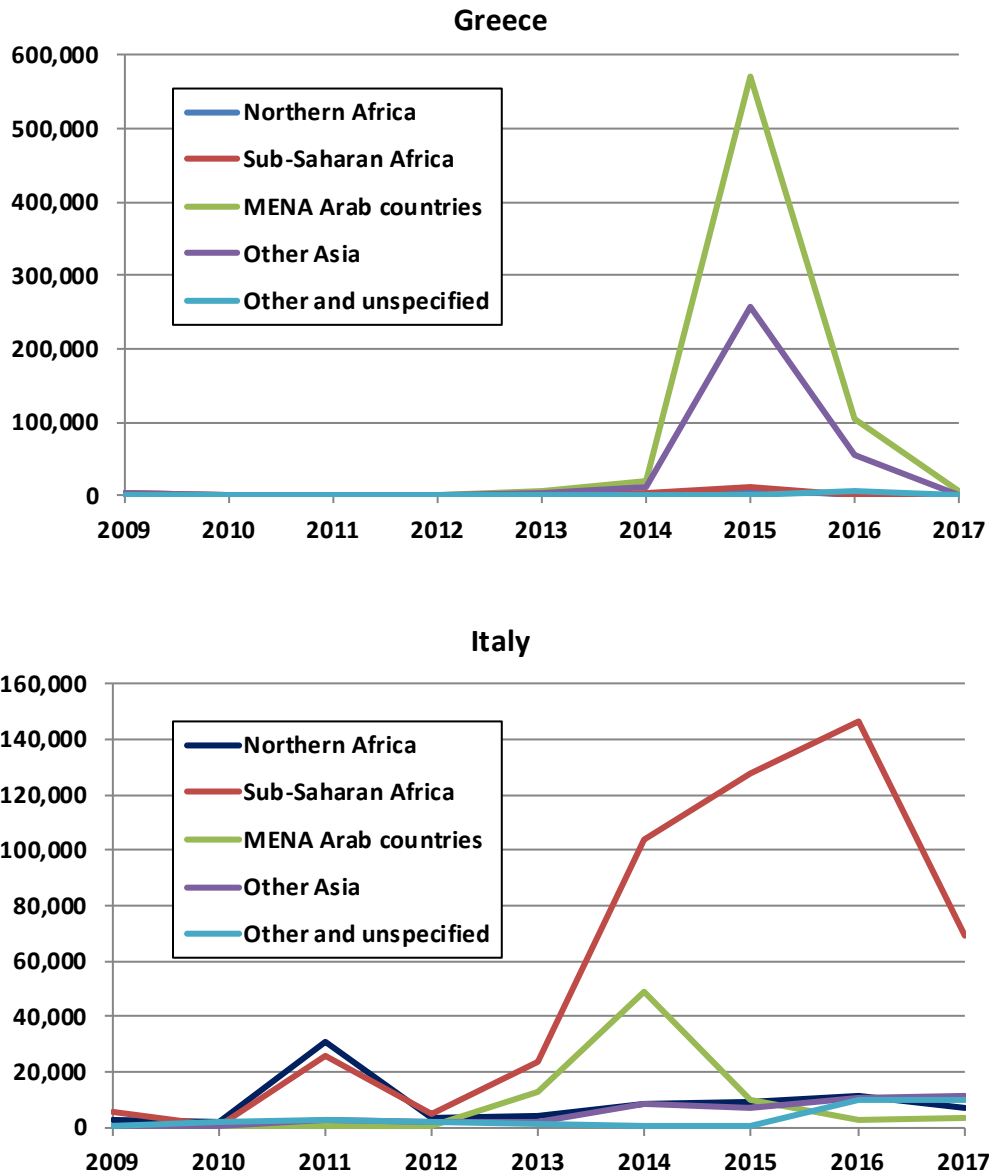
Country of nationality	Egypt	Niger	Chad	Sudan	Ghana	Others	Total	
							%	N
1. Foreign population present in Libya (2017)	17.9%	16.4%	12.9%	8.8%	5.8%	38.2%	100.0%	393,652
2. Migrants smuggled by sea from Libya to Italy (2015–2017)	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	5.2%	3.1%	89.9%	100.0%	435,022

Sources: 1 – IOM; 2 – Italian Police. See Table A.4. in the Appendix, 2017.

Finally, now that the main route for refugees has been barred and Europe is left with dealing with flows arriving mostly from the Libyan shore, a nagging question must be addressed: Are recent flows in the Channel of Sicily an early warning of the long-announced mass migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe? This paper is not the right place to discuss the scenario according to which the demography of sub-Saharan Africa (characterized by rapid population growth and rising proportion of young adults soon leading to a peak, “the youth bulge”), combined with the closure of African nations to further flows of immigration, will radically overhaul the map of global migration.

Figure 6 representing migrants arrived by sea to each of Greece and Italy by region of nationality highlights the contrast between the two routes: (a) eastern route with migrants arrived from Asia and the Middle East; and (b) central route characterized by the momentum gained by migration from sub-Saharan Africa. During the years 2009–2017, the Italian police counted 507,240 arrivals from sub-Saharan Africa representing 68.7 per cent of all arrivals by sea to Europe. From 1 January 2015 to 30 June 2017 alone, arrivals from sub-Saharan Africa were 343,380, representing 79 per cent of the total. The trend is undoubtedly rising.

Figure 6. Arrivals by sea to Greece and Italy by region of origin, 2009–2017



Source: Italian Ministry of the Interior and Greek Police, 2017.

How numbers of irregular entries by sea compare with regular entries from sub-Saharan African countries becomes then a question. Table 6 comparing sea entries with first permits of residence issued in the EU-28³⁶ shows two groups of countries. The first group, in which nationals in Europe have mostly entered irregularly by sea, comprises only four countries that are all major sources of refugee movements. All other countries belong to the second group in which first permits outnumber irregular entries by sea. All African countries but one (Eritrea) belong to that group. Africa’s largest nationalities represented in Europe are not those recorded at irregular arrival by sea. On the contrary, the bulk of Africa’s migration to Europe mostly corresponds to legal admission procedures.

³⁶ First permits of residence are used as a proxy for regular entries of migrants. Such statistics are systematically provided by Eurostat.

Table 6. Distribution by nationality of migrants arrived by sea in Greece and Italy and first permits issued in the European Union, 2009–2016

Origin of nationality	Arrivals by sea	First permits of residence	Ratio arrivals/ Permits
I – Irregular entries by sea outnumber first permits			
Afghanistan	265,782	161,336	1.65
Palestinian Territories	20,668	13,645	1.51
Eritrea	106,294	105,071	1.01
Syrian Arab Republic	640,327	637,244	1.00
II – First permits outnumber irregular entries by sea			
Gambia	31,939	35,883	0.89
Sudan	22,472	31,016	0.72
Iraq	115,346	188,643	0.61
Mali	29,894	62,196	0.48
Guinea	18,172	49,897	0.36
Somalia	42,831	122,294	0.35
Côte d’Ivoire	19,275	67,312	0.29
Nigeria	78,354	279,987	0.28
Ethiopia	7,255	37,211	0.19
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	28,744	157,365	0.18
Tunisia	37,160	213,513	0.17
Senegal	22,652	151,386	0.15
Ghana	15,448	108,196	0.14
Bangladesh	23,488	223,380	0.11
Egypt	18,975	185,536	0.10
Pakistan	44,564	462,900	0.10
Cameroon	5,821	89,204	0.07
Algeria	6,415	280,052	0.02
Morocco	20,107	934,730	0.02

Note: * Arrivals recorded in Greece and Italy.

Source: Italian Ministry of the Interior and Greek Police for arrivals by sea to Italy and Greece, respectively; Eurostat for first permits of residence issued.

7. By way of conclusion: For a data collection and research agenda

A number of questions remain unanswered for lack of reliable data, accurate knowledge on what happened, why, how and with what consequences. Deficits of knowledge are detrimental to all the involved parties, in the first place the migrants themselves, as well as their hosts and all those who strive for finding solutions, from civil society actors to governments, not forgetting the media who convey messages that have proved to foster all possible sentiments, from compassion to rejection and intolerance. Not only more data must be collected and better organized and disseminated, but also creative conceptual frameworks must be developed since numbers hardly speak by themselves.

7.1. Collecting the experience of migrants

Understanding the circumstances in which migrants decided to do the journey in relation to their individual situation and their broader environment, then capturing the problems they faced and the responses they brought throughout the journey from the homeland to Europe, and eventually figuring out their future plans, are keys for taking informed action. Questions such as the following must be answered:

- Why did migrants resort to smugglers and embark for the most costly and dangerous journey, risking death at sea or forced return at arrival? Had they tried to obtain and been refused a visa? Were they properly informed about the risks? Had they no other choice?³⁷
- Who are they in terms of demographic, family, economic and educational profiles?
- How long was their journey and what were the hurdles and solutions, in particular in the last leg of the journey before they embarked for Europe?
- What was their situation in their home country? And in the country from where they departed for Europe?
- What is their situation at destination?
- What future do they see for themselves?

These or similar questions are routinely asked by administrations in charge of instructing asylum claims. But information collected in this framework is never systematically organized and made public. If the objective is to go beyond anecdotal information offered by media stories and build systematic knowledge, ad hoc surveys should be conducted, although interviews are difficult to conduct in this particular context. Moreover, surveys should cover migrants in various situations, from persons detained and to be returned, to persons successfully settled at destination through asylum or other channels.

³⁷ Two recent reports from IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre attempted to answer some of these questions; see <http://gmdac.iom.int/iom-niger-2016-migrant-profiling-report> and <http://gmdac.iom.int/risks-migration-nigeria-iraq>

7.2. Measuring the impact of measures taken by governments and non-governmental actors

Monitoring immediate action (e.g. and rescue at high sea, border control, “hotspots”, detention) and broader policies (e.g. bilateral agreements, regulations on asylum, aid to development, “hotspots”) requires detailed statistics on the targeted phenomenon (e.g. monthly interceptions at high sea and arrivals by sea by country of nationality, country of departure and country of destination), as well as on related phenomena (e.g. origin and destination matrices of regular migration, interceptions and returns, distribution of population by nationality in countries of departure). Data collection is already made by different administrations in different countries (origin and destination countries), but what is missing is a framework for processing and harmonizing the data.

Assessing longer-term action – for example measures regarding migrants’ integration and their particular impact on those arrived by sea – requires data routinely collected by administrations to be specifically requested and processed. For example, monitoring health and access to health among Syrian or other refugees arrived by sea can be made using data routinely collected by health facilities, provided that these are specifically requested to produce statistics by nationality (a variable systematically recorded). A list of the most pressing topics and the corresponding requests to relevant administrations and organizations should be established.

7.3. Assessing the situation of migrants stranded in Turkey and Libya

Has the European Union–Turkey statement affected the situation of migrants who were waiting for a passage to Europe and in what manner, and the situation of their Turkish hosts?

Similar questions must be asked about Libya in order to anticipate what consequences an effective closure of the sea border resulting in migrants stranded in the country could produce.

In both cases, fieldwork has to be conducted. Given the difficulties interviewers may face in conducting face-to-face surveys among migrants in Turkey and particularly in Libya, alternative methodologies such as focus group discussions carried out in places where migrants gather must be considered. The important point is collecting evidence about the risks migrants are exposed to as a result of governmental deals between Europe and the countries where they are stranded.

Appendices

Table A.1. Unauthorized entries by sea into Europe as recorded by police authorities, 1998–2017

Year	Italy	Greece	Spain	Malta	All sea routes
1998	38,142				38,142
1999	48,161		4,859		53,020
2000	26,817		15,025		41,842
2001	20,143		18,517		38,660
2002	23,719		16,670		40,389
2003	14,170		19,176	520	33,866
2004	13,635		15,675	1,388	30,698
2005	22,939		11,781	1,822	36,542
2006	22,016		39,180	1,720	62,916
2007	20,455		18,057	1,702	40,214
2008	36,951		13,424	2,775	53,150
2009	9,573	10,165	7,285	1,475	28,498
2010	4,406	1,766	3,632	47	9,851
2011	62,692	757	5,443	1,579	70,471
2012	13,267	1,627	3,804	1,890	20,588
2013	42,925	9,357	3,237	2,008	57,527
2014	170,099	34,441	4,552	568	209,660
2015	153,844	847,924	15,422***	104	1,017,294
2016	181,436	165,574	9,467	25	356,502
2017*	100,325	17,304	10,362		127,991
Total**	1,025,715	1,088,915	235,568	17,623	2,367,821

Notes: * 1 January–12 September

** Sum of available data. Total number would also include missing data.

*** In 2015, arrivals to Spain include sea as well as land arrivals to the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. This may also be the case of some of the previous years if separate data for sea arrivals are not provided.

Sources: Italy: Italian Ministry of Interior (Internal request at unimonitoraggioimmigrazione@interno.it); Greece: Hellenic Police, Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=24727&Itemid=73&lang=EN); Spain: Ministry of Interior; Malta: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (www.unhcr.org/mt/charts/), retrieved on September 2017).

Table A.2. Monthly arrivals by sea in Greece from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015 – Top five nationalities

Date/Nationality	Syrian Arab Republic	Afghanistan	Iraq	Pakistan	Islamic Republic of Iran	All nationalities
January 2014	355	213	2	0	1	3,031
February 2014	496	212	2	0	2	2,977
March 2014	824	199	1	0	1	3,533
April 2014	877	298	0	0	0	3,812
May 2014	920	391	3	1	7	4,904
June 2014	1,602	788	2	8	10	6,214
July 2014	1,763	1,306	12	1	11	7,599
August 2014	3,073	1,634	21	14	11	9,865
September 2014	3,822	1,741	17	0	5	11,575
October 2014	3,157	2,171	15	0	4	11,628
November 2014	1,435	1,195	185	1	33	7,494
December 2014	658	532	16	4	2	4,531
January 2015	657	429	24	9	6	4,001
February 2015	1,387	525	55	19	9	4,920
March 2015	4,051	1,327	193	153	23	10,567
April 2015	6,571	3,010	393	658	32	16,684
May 2015	9,915	4,762	663	1,415	51	23,497
June 2015	17,838	8,289	1,374	2,148	145	36,881
July 2015	36,075	12,524	1,855	2,545	280	60,176
August 2015	83,173	17,607	3,216	1,578	435	114,430
September 2015	100,243	23,305	11,550	2,634	1,598	150,957
October 2015	108,219	63,990	22,238	3,218	7,079	217,936
November 2015	65,733	43,518	18,402	5,150	9,165	157,321
December 2015	42,038	26,572	27,020	3,733	3,453	114,101

Source: Greek Police.

Table A.3. Mortality at sea during the cross-Mediterranean journey to Europe (all routes combined), 2000–2017

Year	Arrivals	Dead and missing	Probability of dying (deaths per 1,000 crossings)
2000	41,842	636	15.0
2001	38,660	426	10.9
2002	40,389	809	19.6
2003	33,346	1,375	39.6
2004	29,310	1,178	38.6
2005	34,720	1,203	33.5
2006	61,196	2,165	34.2
2007	38,512	2,502	61.0
2008	53,079	1,664	30.4
2009	18,217	1,658	83.4
2010	9,717	254	25.5
2011	70,295	4,073	54.8
2012	20,721	683	31.9
2013	55,986	756	13.3
2014	209,663	3,317	15.6
2015	908,558	3,416	3.7
2016	368,980	5,096	13.6
2017	105,808	2,253	20.8
2000–2017	2,138,999	33,464	15.4

Source: Author's calculation based on data retrieved from: (a) 2000–2015: Gabriele Del Grande's blog, Fortress Europe (<http://fortresseurope.blogspot.it/>); and (b) 2016–2017 IOM, Missing Migrants Project (<https://missingmigrants.iom.int>). For 2017, data refer only to the first two quarters.

Table A.4. Arrivals at sea by country or territory of origin, 1 January 2009–30 June 2017

4.1. Greece

Country/territory/region of origin	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Afghanistan	4,048	593	259	582	3,490	10,680	205,858	40,272	538	266,320
Albania	0	15	2	3	10	5	1			36
Algeria	19	9	0	158	82	12	1,353	1,678	507	3,818
Angola	0	0	0	0	0	0	6			6
Armenia	1	0	0	0	0	0	9			10
Azerbaijan										0
Bangladesh	40	8	0	3	4	0	3,598			3,653
Belize										0
Benin	0	0	0	0	0	4	5			9
Bulgaria										0
Burkina Faso	0	0	0	1	0	2	32			35
Burundi	0	1	0	0	0	0	12			13
Cambodia										0
Cameroon	2	0	0	0	13	285	861	650	219	2,030
Canada										0
Central African Republic	0	0	0	0	1	51	31			83
Chad										0
China	0	0	0	0	0	0	52			52
Taiwan Province of the People's Republic of China										0
Colombia	0	0	0	0	0	0	2			2
Comoros	0	0	0	0	0	117	53			170
Democratic Republic of the Congo	5	0	0	0	2	116	1,217	362	631	2,333
Côte d'Ivoire	0	0	0	0	1	47	231			279
Croatia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0			1
Cuba	0	0	0	0	0	2	2			4
Djibouti										0
Dominican Republic	0	0	0	0	3	0	0			3

Country/territory/region of origin	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Egypt	56	4	238	1	9	307	541			1,156
Eritrea	422	76	5	11	484	735	895			2,628
Ethiopia	0	1	1	5	3	22	71			103
Western Balkan States										0
France										0
Gabon	0	0	0	0	0	8	5			13
Gambia	0	0	1	0	2	17	185			205
Georgia	8	0	0	11	18	0	3			40
Ghana	0	0	0	1	4	41	281			327
Greece										0
Guinea	1	0	0	0	0	3	36			40
Guinea-Bissau	0	0	0	0	0	0	28			28
Haiti										0
Hungary										0
India	6	11	0	3	3	0	177			200
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	75	66	18	33	92	87	22,276	5,306	226	28,179
Iraq	216	71	25	20	32	276	86,983	23,823	1,248	112,694
Israel										0
Jamaica	0	0	0	0	0	0	5			5
Jordan	0	0	0	0	0	0	48			48
Kazakhstan	0	0	0	0	0	0	3			3
Kenya	0	0	0	0	0	0	4			4
Kuwait	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	21	208	279
Kyrgyzstan										0
Latvia										0
Lebanon	341	5	0	2	2	7	1,974			2,331
Lesotho										0
Liberia	0	0	0	0	0	4	12			16
Libya	16	0	0	1	1	0	405			423

Country/territory/region of origin	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Lithuania										0
Madagascar										0
Malawi										0
Malaysia										0
Maldives										0
Mali	0	0	0	0	28	163	357			548
Malta										0
Mauritania	3	0	0	0	0	1	38			42
Mauritius										0
Morocco	4	4	1	33	48	18	7,368	0	0	7,476
Mozambique										0
Myanmar	6	0	0	3	9	4	174	0	0	196
Nepal	1	0	0	0	0	0	252			253
Niger	0	0	0	0	1	0	9			10
Nigeria	5	0	0	0	0	99	686			790
Oman										0
Pakistan	120	6	0	20	25	29	23,260	8,457	427	32,344
Peru										0
Philippines	4	0	0	0	0	0	4			8
Poland										0
Qatar										0
Republic of Korea										0
Republic of Moldova	4	0	0	3	0	0	2			9
Romania										0
Russian Federation	0	0	0	0	0	14	2			16
Rwanda	41	0	0	0	2	5	16			64
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0	0	1	20			21
Senegal	3	0	0	0	0	1	143			147
Sierra Leone	2	0	0	1	0	49	64			116
Slovenia										0

Country/territory/region of origin	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Somalia	2,316	178	4	4	406	1,500	4,418			8,826
South Africa	0	0	0	0	0	12	15			27
Sri Lanka	55	1	0	0	1	4	195			256
Sudan	37	0	0	0	39	145	376	0	0	597
Syrian Arab Republic	29	22	83	513	4,313	18,982	475,900	77,572	3,388	580,802
Tajikistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	7			7
United Republic of Tanzania										0
Thailand										0
Togo	0	0	0	0	0	12	53			65
Tunisia	2	1	0	5	14	1	129			152
Turkey	102	32	35	27	2	17	46	0	0	261
Turkmenistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	3			3
United Arab Emirates										0
Uganda	0	0	0	0	0	15	185			200
Ukraine	0	0	0	0	0	1	3			4
United Kingdom										0
Uzbekistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	15			15
Viet Nam	2	0	0	0	0	0	0			2
Yemen	0	0	0	0	7	19	341			367
Zambia	0	0	0	0	0	1	6			7
Zimbabwe										0
Kosovo/UNSC 1244										0
Palestinian Territories	2,172	662	85	182	205	469	6,115	1,714	383	11,987
Horn of Africa (not specified)										0
Sub-Saharan (not specified)										0
Unspecified/Others	1	0	0	1	0	51	417	5,720	1,116	7,306
Total	10,165	1,766	757	1,627	9,357	34,441	847,924	165,574	8,891	1,080,502

Source: Greek Police, 2017.

4.2. Italy

Country/territory of origin	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Afghanistan										0
Albania	0	5	3	2	2	0	9			21
Algeria	521	297	328	42	160	188	343	1,225	828	3,932
Angola	0	0	3	0	1	0	2			6
Armenia										0
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	2	0	0	0			2
Bangladesh	157	12	1,279	622	323	4,358	4,953	8,131	8,687	28,522
Belize	0	0	0	0	0	1	0			1
Benin	1	0	63	1	14	106	383			568
Bulgaria	0	0	1	0	0	2	0			3
Burkina Faso	43	0	589	4	20	233	460			1,349
Burundi	0	0	0	0	0	1	1			2
Cambodia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Cameroon	7	0	121	1	19	115	648	3,099	1,991	6,001
Canada	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Central African Republic	0	0	3,987	27	2	29	31			4,076
Chad	0	0	678	1	14	87	166			946
China	2	0	0	0	0	0	0			2
Taiwan Province of the People's Republic of China	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Colombia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Comoros	0	0	0	0	0	6	192			198
Democratic Republic of the Congo	3	0	106	0	4	142	149	0	0	404
Côte d'Ivoire	126	16	1,232	8	93	1,484	3,641	12,396	7,905	26,901
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Cuba										0
Djibouti	0	0	0	0	0	1	2			3

Country/territory of origin	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Dominican Republic										0
Egypt	424	551	1,989	1,221	2,728	4,091	2,585	4,230	524	18,343
Eritrea	925	55	386	1,428	9,834	33,451	36,869	20,718	5,325	108,991
Ethiopia	22	2	42	115	547	553	2,424	3,447	640	7,792
Western Balkan States	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
France	0	0	1	0	0	0	0			1
Gabon	0	0	7	0	2	2	3			14
Gambia	94	1	315	348	2,619	8,159	8,269	11,929	5,465	37,199
Georgia	0	3	2	0	0	1	1			7
Ghana	210	0	2,655	22	375	2,027	4,196	5,636	3,520	18,641
Greece	0	4	7	0	1	2	2			16
Guinea	42	4	526	28	326	1,197	2,664	13,345	8,631	26,763
Guinea-Bissau	3	0	30	5	59	203	412			712
Haiti	0	0	1	0	0	0	0			1
Hungary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
India	25	0	16	74	43	34	20			212
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	57	206	153	111	80	65	119	0	0	791
Iraq	171	207	183	143	67	678	996	1,455	1,156	5,056
Israel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Jamaica	0	0	0	1	0	0	0			1
Jordan	0	0	0	0	0	12	10			22
Kazakhstan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Kenya	1	0	1	0	0	4	13			19
Kuwait	0	0	0	0	0	0	1			1
Kyrgyzstan	0	0	0	0	0	4	0			4
Latvia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0			1
Lebanon	2	1	1	0	3	19	11			37
Lesotho	0	0	1	0	0	0	0			1
Liberia	8	0	49	2	25	28	129			241
Libya	9	14	228	22	6	205	511			995

Country/territory of origin	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	0	1	0			1
Madagascar	0	0	0	0	0	0	25			25
Malawi	0	0	0	0	3	0	0			3
Malaysia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Maldives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Mali	125	1	2,393	218	1,675	9,314	5,610	10,010	5,526	34,872
Malta	3	0	0	0	0	0	0			3
Mauritania	2	0	52	0	5	37	84			180
Mauritius	0	0	0	0	0	0	1			1
Morocco	456	54	299	87	225	2,451	4,505	4,554	4,632	17,263
Mozambique	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Myanmar	0	6	3	0	3	2	1	0	0	15
Nepal	1	2	0	1	7	50	47			108
Niger	21	1	603	3	26	94	135			883
Nigeria	1,663	0	5,480	358	2,680	8,570	21,262	37,551	16,317	93,881
Oman	0	0	0	0	0	2	0			2
Pakistan	1	55	1,423	1,238	1,753	3,678	1,726	2,773	2,390	15,037
Peru	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Philippines	0	0	2	0	0	3	6			11
Poland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Qatar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Republic of Korea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Republic of Moldova	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Romania	0	0	0	1	0	0	0			1
Russian Federation	0	1	2	1	1	3	0			8
Rwanda	0	0	2	0	0	0	1			3
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0	0	2	0			2
Senegal	11	0	448	48	1,314	4,652	5,705	10,327	5,366	27,871
Sierra Leone	9	0	70	5	51	160	217	1,468	1,030	3,010

Country/territory of origin	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Somalia	2,245	61	1,092	2,179	3,263	5,644	12,240	7,281	2,327	36,332
South Africa	0	0	2	0	0	1	1			4
Sri Lanka	6	3	22	0	4	6	0			41
Sudan	19	4	683	15	217	3,101	8,509	9,327	4,991	26,866
Syrian Arab Republic	40	191	328	580	11,307	41,941	7,326	1,200	1,939	64,852
Tajikistan										0
United Republic of Tanzania	0	0	2	9	0	0	1			12
Thailand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Togo	11	0	178	6	45	119	334			693
Tunisia	1,522	650	28,047	2,259	833	1,621	869	1,207	846	37,854
Turkey	172	160	87	55	9	9	3	0	0	495
Turkmenistan										0
United Arab Emirates	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Uganda	0	0	3	0	2	1	2			8
Ukraine	0	11	17	7	4	8	22			69
United Kingdom	0	1	0	0	0	0	0			1
Uzbekistan	0	0	0	0	0	1	0			1
Viet Nam	0	0	0	0	0	0	1			1
Yemen	0	0	0	0	3	29	46			78
Zambia	0	0	0	0	0	5	1			6
Zimbabwe	0	0	2	1	2	1	1			7
Kosovo/UNSC 1244	0	0	0	0	7	0	0			7
Palestinian Territories	46	128	137	37	1,075	6,024	1,617			9,064
Horn of Africa (not specified)	0	0	4,157	189	0	0	0			4,346
Sub-Saharan (not specified)	0	0	0	0	80	24,297	13,213			37,590
Unspecified/Others	367	1,699	2,175	1,739	964	784	118	10,127	9,706	27,679
Total	9,573	4,406	62,692	13,267	42,925	170,099	153,844	181,436	99,742	737,984

Source: Italian Ministry of the Interior, 2017.

Table A.5. Percentage of positive decision on asylum claims by country or territory of origin, 2008–2016

Afghanistan	53.2%
Albania	4.6%
Algeria	4.5%
Angola	18.5%
Armenia	8.5%
Azerbaijan	19.1%
Bangladesh	10.5%
Belize	0.0%
Benin	15.4%
Burkina Faso	28.4%
Burundi	41.8%
Cambodia	25.0%
Cameroon	23.2%
Canada	14.8%
Central African Republic	65.3%
Chad	31.0%
China	20.9%
Taiwan Province of the People's Republic of China	9.1%
Colombia	14.0%
Comoros	12.1%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	20.6%
Côte d'Ivoire	30.2%
Cuba	46.3%
Djibouti	43.3%
Dominican Republic	2.0%
Egypt	25.7%
Eritrea	84.6%
Ethiopia	39.7%
Gabon	24.4%
Gambia	30.8%
Georgia	4.2%
Ghana	28.1%
Guinea	29.8%
Guinea-Bissau	23.0%
Haiti	6.8%
India	2.4%
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	48.9%
Iraq	60.1%
Israel	11.5%
Jamaica	21.8%
Jordan	22.6%
Kazakhstan	14.4%
Kenya	14.7%
Kuwait	45.8%
Kyrgyzstan	14.8%
Lebanon	12.4%
Lesotho	0.0%
Liberia	26.4%
Libya	39.4%
Madagascar	10.9%
Malawi	15.2%
Malaysia	22.1%
Maldives	100.0%
Mali	38.3%
Mauritania	14.9%
Mauritius	8.6%
Morocco	8.6%
Mozambique	14.3%
Myanmar	48.3%
Nepal	11.4%
Niger	30.9%
Nigeria	20.9%
Oman	12.5%
Pakistan	16.7%
Peru	14.2%
Philippines	5.6%
Qatar	16.7%
Republic of Moldova	4.2%
Russian Federation	23.0%
Rwanda	38.2%
Saudi Arabia	51.2%
Senegal	25.8%
Sierra Leone	27.4%
Somalia	65.7%
South Africa	10.0%
Sri Lanka	24.6%
Sudan	47.5%
Syrian Arab Republic	95.5%
Tajikistan	23.6%
United Republic of Tanzania	14.5%
Thailand	11.8%
Togo	25.9%
Tunisia	8.3%
Turkey	16.8%
Turkmenistan	24.8%
United Arab Emirates	30.0%
Uganda	41.4%
Ukraine	23.4%
Uzbekistan	19.4%
Viet Nam	7.0%
Western Balkan States	0.9%
Yemen	57.8%
Zambia	20.0%
Zimbabwe	30.1%
Kosovo/UNSC 1244	4.6%
Palestinian Territories	57.3%

Source: Eurostat, 2017.

Table A.6. Top ten places of origin of migrants arrived by sea in Greece and Italy and estimated proportion of refugees 2009–2017

6.1. Greece

Country/territory of origin	Arrivals by sea by nationality and year										Positive decisions
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total	
Syrian Arab Republic	29	22	83	513	4,313	18,982	475,900	77,572	3,388	580,802	95.5%
Afghanistan	4,048	593	259	582	3,490	10,680	205,858	40,272	538	266,320	53.2%
Iraq	216	71	25	20	32	276	86,983	23,823	1,248	112,694	60.1%
Pakistan	120	6	0	20	25	29	23,260	8,457	427	32,344	16.7%
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	75	66	18	33	92	87	22,276	5,306	226	28,179	48.9%
Somalia	2,316	178	4	4	406	1,500	4,418			8,826	65.7%
Morocco	4	4	1	33	48	18	7,368	0	0	7,476	8.6%
Algeria	19	9	0	158	82	12	1,353	1,678	507	3,818	4.5%
Bangladesh	40	8	0	3	4	0	3,598			3,653	10.5%
Palestinian Territories	2,172	662	85	182	205	469	6,115	1,714	383	11,987	57.3%
Others	1,126	147	282	79	660	2,388	10,795	6,752	2,174	24,403	34.1%
Total	10,165	1,766	757	1,627	9,357	34,441	847,924	165,574	8,891	1,080,502	
Estimated % refugees*	55.4%	55.7%	48.1%	59.6%	73.7%	76.7%	75.7%	72.0%	63.9%	74.8%	

Source: Arrivals: Greek Police, 2017; Proportion of positive decisions on asylum: Eurostat, 2017.

6.2. Italy

Country/territory of nationality	Arrivals by sea by nationality and year										Positive decisions
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total	
Eritrea	925	55	386	1,428	9,834	33,451	36,869	20,718	5,325	108,991	84.6%
Nigeria	1,663	0	5,480	358	2,680	8,570	21,262	37,551	16,317	93,881	20.9%
Syrian Arab Republic	40	191	328	580	11,307	41,941	7,326	1,200	1,939	64,852	95.5%
Tunisia	1,522	650	28,047	2,259	833	1,621	869	1,207	846	37,854	8.3%
Gambia	94	1	315	348	2,619	8,159	8,269	11,929	5,465	37,199	30.8%
Somalia	2,245	61	1,092	2,179	3,263	5,644	12,240	7,281	2,327	36,332	65.7%
Mali	125	1	2,393	218	1,675	9,314	5,610	10,010	5,526	34,872	38.3%
Bangladesh	157	12	1,279	622	323	4,358	4,953	8,131	8,687	28,522	10.5%
Senegal	11	0	448	48	1,314	4,652	5,705	10,327	5,366	27,871	25.8%
Côte d'Ivoire	126	16	1,232	8	93	1,484	3,641	12,396	7,905	26,901	30.2%
Others	2,665	3,419	21,692	5,219	8,984	50,905	47,100	60,686	40,039	240,709	31.4%
Total	9,573	4,406	62,692	13,267	42,925	170,099	153,844	181,436	99,742	737,984	
Estimated % refugees	36.8%	31.1%	21.7%	40.0%	62.2%	62.8%	49.5%	35.9%	31.6%	44.5%	

Source: Arrivals: Italian Police, 2017; Proportion of positive decisions on asylum: Eurostat, 2017.



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