Amsterdam, 09 April 2019
Commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Tunisia: Education, Labour Market, Migration

Annex C to "Dutch labour market shortages and potential labour supply from Africa and the Middle East" (SEO Report No. 2019-24)

Alexandra Flayols
Dario Jongerius
Françoise de Bel-Air

seo amsterdam economics

Roetersstraat 29 - 1018 WB Amsterdam - T (+31) 20 525 1630 - F (+31) 020 525 1686 - www.seo.nl - secretariaat@seo.nl
ABN-AMRO IBAN: NL14ABNA0411744356 BIC: ABNANL2A - ING: IBAN: NL96INGB0004641100 BIC: INGBNL2A
KvK Amsterdam 41197444 - BTW NL 003023965 B

"Solid research, Sound advice"

SEO Amsterdam Economics carries out independent applied economic research on behalf of national and international clients – both public institutions and private sector clients. Our research aims to make a major contribution to the decision-making processes of our clients. Originally founded by, and still affiliated with, the University of Amsterdam, SEO Amsterdam Economics is now an independent research group but retains a strong academic component. Operating on a nonprofit basis, SEO continually invests in the intellectual capital of its staff by granting them time to pursue continuing education, publish in academic journals, and participate in academic networks and conferences. As a result, our staff is fully up to date on the latest economic theories and econometric techniques.

Information & disclaimer
SEO Amsterdam Economics has not performed any research on the obtained information and data that would constitute an audit or due diligence. SEO is not responsible for errors or omissions in the obtained information and data.

Copyright © 2019 SEO Amsterdam. All rights reserved. Data from this report may be used in articles, studies and syllabi, provided that the source is clearly and accurately mentioned. Data in this report may not be used for commercial purposes without prior permission of the author(s). Permission can be obtained by contacting: secretariaat@seo.nl

Summary

Educational reforms in Tunisia during the late 1980s have significantly improved access to education, but the quality of education has lagged behind. Despite Tunisia's success in increasing secondary and tertiary enrolment rates, the quality of education has not kept up with this rapid expansion of the education system. This is indicated by relatively low international test scores, a high number of repeaters in secondary and tertiary education, and a high dropout rate in secondary education. On the positive side, the student-teacher ratio has declined and the dropout rate in tertiary education is low.

In terms of the type of education, Tunisians seem to have a preference for technical fields. In secondary education, more than half of all A-level students choose to study experimental science or technical studies. In tertiary education, technical fields such as engineering, ICT and natural sciences together account for more than 40 percent. Based on one ICT survey, Tunisian software developers rank highest among others in Maghreb countries.

The labour prospects for young Tunisians are poor, particularly for those with higher education. While overall unemployment is already high at around 15%, the unemployment rate among young Tunisians aged 15 to 24 is around 35%. Moreover, as many as 42% of young Tunisians with tertiary education are unemployed. This is a significant socio-economic and socio-political challenge for the country, particularly as Tunisian youth represent more than 40% of the total population.

Many Tunisians have migrated or aspire to migrate. In 2010, 44% of the country's youth aged 15 to 29 expressed their desire to emigrate in 2010. As of 2017, Tunisians residing abroad numbered 1.4 million, of which most resided in the EU, particularly France. Tunisian migrants in France can be found in all categories of professions: around 40 percent are in the top three as well as in the three lowest-skilled categories. After France, Germany has become the most important destination for Tunisian migrants since 2014, with a rapid growth since 2010. Germany has developed special programs to attract Tunisian engineers. (For more on this, see Annex E on Germany.)

Table of contents

Summary ..... **i**

1 Introduction **1**

2 The challenges of the education system **3**
2.1 Increasingly educated youth 3
2.2 Quality of education 7
2.3 Type of education 13
2.4 Conclusions on education system 15

3 The Tunisian labour market challenge **17**
3.1 Labour market integration of youth 17
3.2 Constraints to youth employability 25
3.3 Vocational training: a solution? 30
3.4 Conclusions on labour market issues 32

4 Migration **33**
4.1 Introduction 33
4.2 Migration stock 34
4.3 Migration flows 42
4.4 Migration Policy 49

References **61**

Appendix A Complete statistics about education **65**

Appendix B Complementary statistics about labour market **71**

1 Introduction

The education system of Tunisia is based on that of France, like several other former French colonies..[1] The key elements are as follows:

- Basic education, which is compulsory from the age of 6 until the age of 16, is composed of two parts: (1) primary education, and (2) general or vocational education.
- The DFEB degree marks the successful conclusion of basic education in the ninth year.
- The A-level degree mark the successful conclusion of secondary education (general course).
- After the seventh year of the basic education, pupils can orientate themselves to technical studies (two years) and obtain a technical degree (a DFEBT).[2]
- Since 2006, tertiary education is based on the 'LMD' system[3] that France has had since 2002.

The current education system reflects the many reforms undertaken since the late 1980s. The main goals of these reforms were to (1) promote greater access to education, and (b) reduce the 'gap' with developed countries. These reforms have led to the organisation of the current school system (see Table A.1). For example, school has become compulsory from six to fifteen years. It has also led to the gradual disappearance of short courses in vocational education and in technical secondary education (except for the technical sciences) and has led to the creation of a vocational training program.

Despite these educational reforms, the employability of young Tunisians is low. The rising level of educational attainment has led to a massive arrival of educated youth on the labour market with better degrees than their elders. However, integrating these youth into the labour market over the past decade has been difficult. While overall unemployment is already high at around 15 percent, the unemployment rate among young Tunisians aged 15 to 24 is around 35 percent. Moreover, as many as 42 percent of young Tunisians with tertiary education are unemployed. Nevertheless, vocational education does have some value: Belghit (2016) found that students who attend vocational training are typically better integrated in the labour market than students who pursue A-level degrees (general training).

The high unemployment rate among Tunisian youth is particularly relevant given their large share in the Tunisian population. People aged 15 to 34 years represent 41% of the total population in Tunisia, compared with around 30% in countries like France and the Netherlands, which have aging populations. However, some other countries in North Africa have even higher rates of youth: 50% in Egypt and 45% in Morocco. (KILM, 2018).

---

1 A schematic presentation is proposed in Appendix A to facilitate comparisons (Table A. 1.).

2 The first year of secondary education is a common year, whilst during the second year students can choose between six subjects: humanities, sciences, economics, services and communication technologies. During the third year of secondary education, students can again choose between six subjects: humanities, mathematics, experimental sciences, technical sciences, economics and management and computer sciences.

3 Licence (Bachelor's degree), Master (Master's degrees) and Doctorat (PhD). See Box A.1 for a presentation of the education system in general, including vocational training.

The high rate of youth unemployment has created a deep dissatisfaction among young Tunisians, especially among the highest educated. Their economic exclusion appears to have been reinforced by a feeling of social and political exclusion. As a result, the generational gap with adults and public authorities, still rooted in a traditional pattern, has rapidly expanded to the point of social tension for countries such as Tunisia and Egypt. Indeed, in December 2010 the opposition movement began in Tunisia before extending to other Arab countries.

The remainder of this Annex is organised as follows. Section 2 presents the evolution and persistent challenges of the Tunisian education system since the reforms undertaken in the late 1980s, notably educational quality. Section 3 presents the labour market, focusing on the situation of youth and their employability. Section 4 provides an overview of migration trends and migration policies relevant to Tunisia.

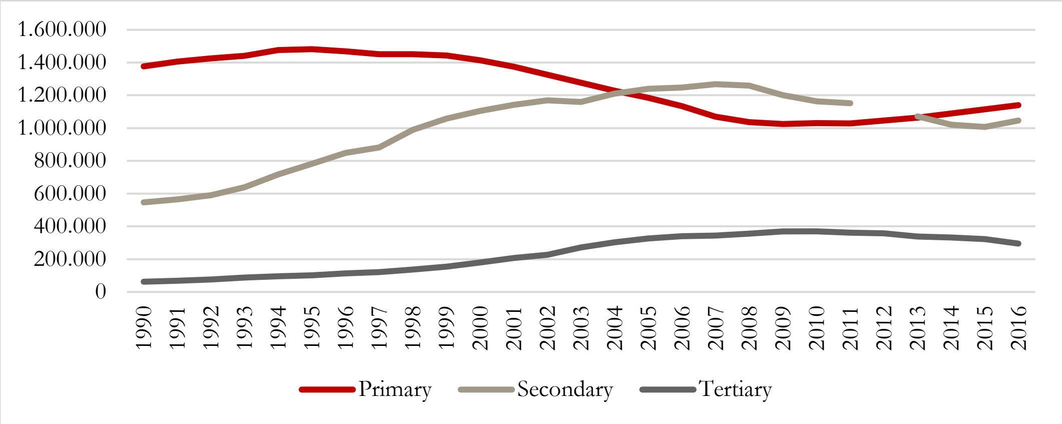
2 The challenges of the education system

Following the reforms of the education system at the end of the 1980s, secondary and tertiary enrolment rates increased in Tunisia. Technical fields such as science, engineering and ICT are popular. However, the quality of education remains an issue.

2.1 Increasingly educated youth

Tunisia's education reforms of the late 1980s made school compulsory until age 16 and created a vocational training curriculum. Combined with efforts to improve access to education, this resulted in a significant increase in the gross enrolment rate[4] in secondary and tertiary education (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). Enrolment in primary education also increased initially but then declined, due to a slowdown in population growth (Flayols, 2016).

Figure 2.1 Following Tunisia's education reforms in the late 1980s, secondary enrolment more than doubled, while tertiary enrolment grew by six times.

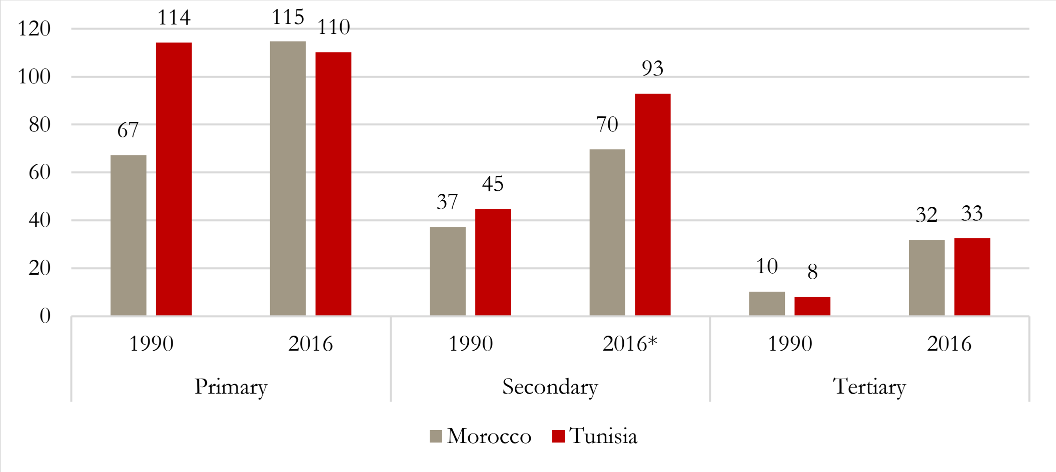


Note: Data for 2012 are not available for secondary education.
Source: UIS database.(numbers of students).

Tunisia initially had higher primary enrolment rates than Morocco, and continues to have higher secondary enrolment rates. Morocco initially lagged behind Tunisia and started later with reforms of its education system. However, Morocco has now caught up and its primary gross enrolment rate exceeded that of Tunisia in 2016. Nevertheless, the Tunisian secondary gross enrolment rate remains higher than that of Morocco. The tertiary gross enrolment rate is approximately the same (around 33%) between the two countries (Figure 2.2). For other differences between the two countries, see Appendix A, Table A.1.

[4] The gross enrollment rate is defined as the number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population. The gross enrollment rate can exceed 100 percent when older, younger and repeating students are included.

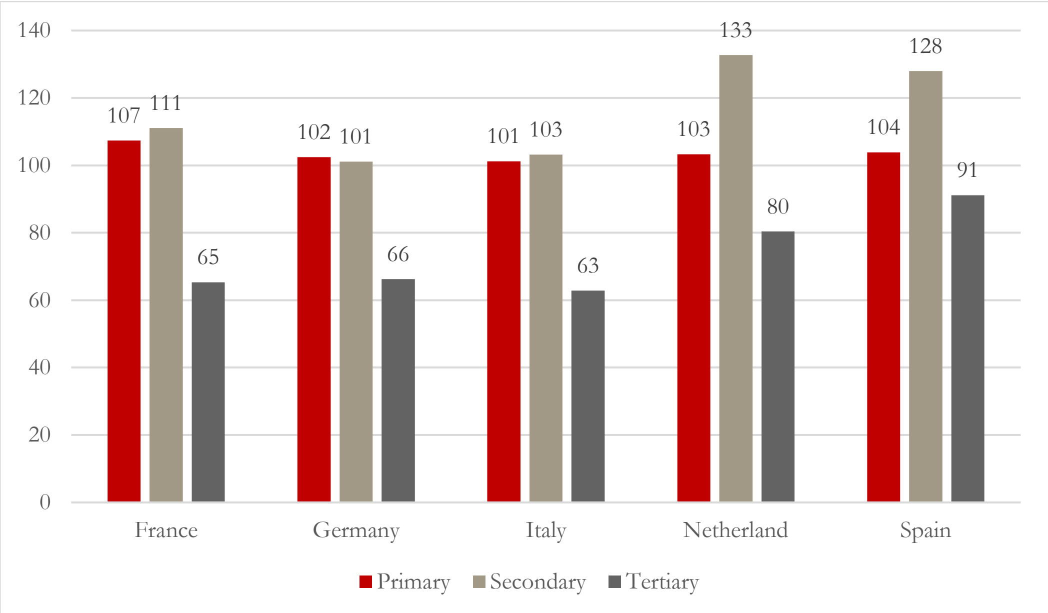
Figure 2.2 Tunisia has higher secondary enrolment rates than Morocco (in %)



Note: * 2012 in Morocco.
Source: UIS database.

Secondary and especially tertiary enrolment rates remain well below European levels, however. In European countries, the gross enrolment rate is on average 103% in primary education and on average 115% in secondary education (Figure 2.3). Particularly high secondary and tertiary enrolment rates are noted in the Netherlands and Spain (133% and 128%, respectively). The gap with European countries is particularly high for the tertiary gross enrolment rate. France, Germany and Italy have a tertiary enrolment rate about twice that of Tunisia.

Figure 2.3 Better access to education in European countries (2016*, in %



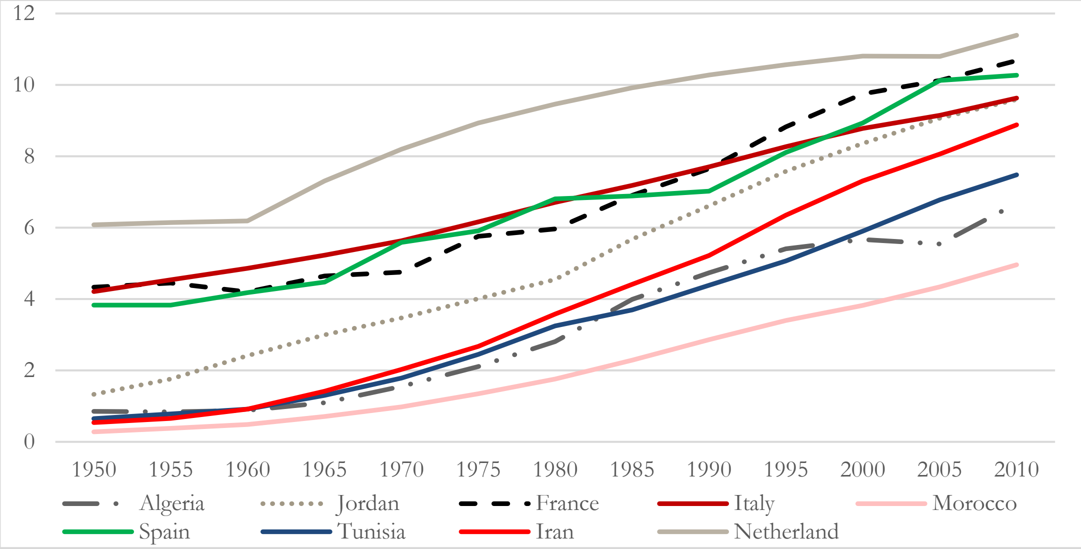
Note: * 2015 in France, Germany and Italy.
Source: UIS database.

Along with the improvements in enrolment rates, the average years of schooling[5] has increased as well (Figure 2.4). Students in developed countries attend, on average, more years of schooling. In

5 Number of average years a person of school entrance age spends within the specified level of education.

the Netherlands this number is very high, with an average of 11 years of schooling. In MENA[6] countries we observe some disparities between countries. Morocco is lagging behind with only 4.9 years of schooling on average, whereas Jordan and Iran have an average years of schooling of more than twice that of Morocco (9.6 and 8.9 years, respectively). Tunisia shows moderate performance (7.5 years).

Figure 2.4 The average years of schooling has increased, but not as rapidly as in Jordan or Iran



Source: Barro and Lee, 2018.

Improvements in education require significant education expenditure. In 1992, expenditure on education in Tunisia was 20.7% of total government expenditure against 9.6% in France, which amounts about 6% and 5% of GDP, respectively (World Bank). This budgetary effort has been maintained in 2015 with 23% of total government expenditure in Tunisia, while the share of expenditure in France remained the same. Compared to other MENA countries, expenditure on education in Tunisia is more significant. For example, in Iran and Jordan education expenditure represents 19% and 13% of total expenditure, respectively. However, we can note that with lower expenditure on education, the average year of schooling in these countries is higher (Figure 2.4). This reveals some inefficiencies in the Tunisian educational system.

The literacy rate improved substantially in Tunisia from 48% in 1984 to 79% in 2014 (UNESCO). This rate remains below that of Iran (85% in 2014) and that of developed countries like Spain (98%, 2016), but above that of Morocco (69% in 2012). It is normal that the progress noted is more visible for youth, as they represent the population that has benefitted from the educational reforms. The literacy rate of youth in Tunisia tends to be the same as that of developed countries: 96% compared to 99% in Spain (UNESCO, 2014). While the literacy rate for people aged 65 years or older is around 40%, it is 96% for youth (15-24 years old, UIS, 2014).

However, women's literacy rate in Tunisia is only 72%, although girls' access to education has improved since the reforms (Table 2.1). The participation of girls appears in all levels of education but is more significant in secondary and tertiary education with a raise of 32 percentage points and

6 Middle East and North Africa, generally consisting of: Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Emirates, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, Yemen.

105 percentage points, respectively. Among some MENA countries we can observe a similar result. In Jordan and Lebanon, girl's participation is higher than that of boys in these levels of education. Note that the ratio is even higher than for European countries in secondary education.

Table 2.1 Female enrolment rates have increased for all levels of education (2016, in %)

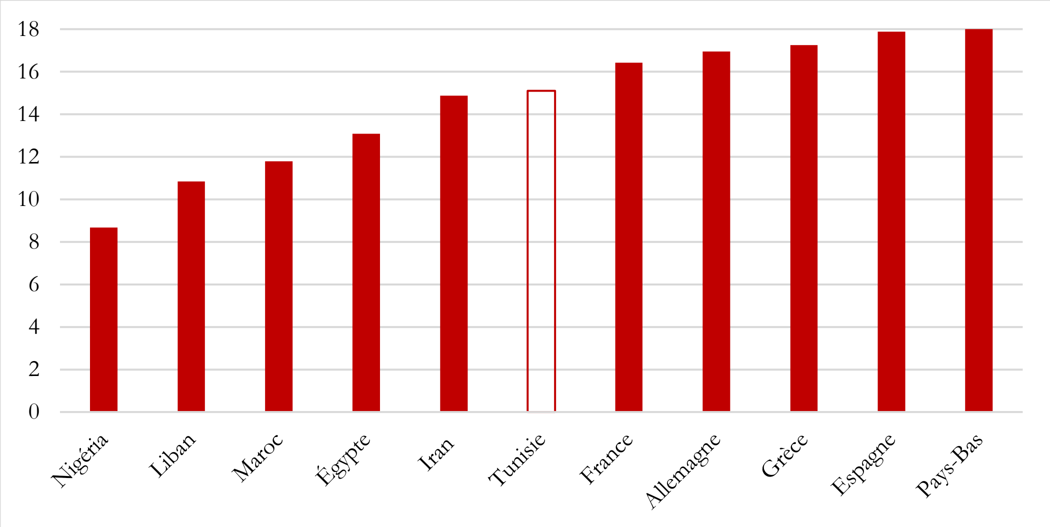
	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
	1990[1]	2016[2]	1990[1]	2016[2]	1990[1]	2016[2]
Egypt	81	94	74	93	52	98
Jordan[3]	93	96	92	101	106	105
Lebanon[4]	99	93	104	105	92	126
Morocco[5]	65	90	69	85	59	89
Tunisia	83	93	74	106	62	167
France	94	95	102	96	111	120
Germany	96	94	93	90	71	92
Greece	94	94	92	90	99	95
Italy	95	94	96	93	93	129
Netherlands	99	95	89	96	79	108
Spain	93	95	101	95	103	114

Note: [1] 1992 for Germany and Lebanon; [2] 2015 for France, Germany, Greece and Italy; [3] 2014 in secondary; [4] 2014 in tertiary; [5] 2012 in secondary.
Source: UIS database, author's calculation.

2.2 Quality of education

Reforms in education have increased enrolment in secondary and tertiary levels of education. Compared to some countries in the region, Tunisia has achieved greater progress. The 'school life expectancy' from primary to tertiary in Tunisia is about 15 years (Figure 2.5). [7] This is close to that of France (16 years) but remains below that of the Netherlands (18 years). The progress made in this area has reduced the gap between Tunisia and developed countries.

Figure 2.5 School life expectancy (from primary to tertiary) is higher in Tunisia than in other Maghreb countries (2016*, in %)



Note: * 2015 for France, Germany, Greece and Iran; 2012 for Morocco and 2011 for Nigeria.
Source: UIS database.

Performance in education depends importantly on the quality of education. The school and its facilities, its organisation of the degree course and even the atmosphere can influence the school experience (Jonosz, 2000, Deming et al., 2014). Low quality education can discourage youth to continue with further studies. School dropouts in turn can have serious consequences: unemployment, job insecurity, delinquency, etc. (Janosz, 2000). Like in Morocco, high dropout rates are associated with lower access to jobs in the formal sector (Flayols, 2018).

Three indicators point to a relatively low quality of secondary education in Tunisia: (1) a low gross intake ratio, (2) a high percentage of repeaters, and (3) a high dropout rate. (Table 2.2)

- The **gross intake ratio** (relative to the last year) is high in primary education, similar to that of European countries, but is only 71% in the last year of secondary education. This is well below European levels and also below the ratio in Algeria (79.1%). Morocco and Jordan have similarly low ratios.
- The **repeater rate** is nearly 20% in Tunisia, the highest rate in the region. The percentages of repeaters is primary education, however is relatively low at 6.8%.
- The **dropout rate** in secondary education is very high at 22%. Only Algeria has an even higher rate at 24.8%. The dropout rate for under16 years old is 8% in the first cycle of secondary education and 32% in the second cycle in 2012. This compares with 0.5% and 4.5% in Netherlands (UNESCO).

[7] Number of years a person of school entrance age can expect to spend within the specified level of education.

Table 2.2 The quality of education is poor in Tunisia

	Gross intake ratio to last grade, 2016[1]		Percentage of repeaters, 2015[2]		Dropout rate, 2015[3]	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary (first cycle*)	Primary	Secondary (first cycle*)
Algeria	105.4	79.1	5.8	18.8	6.4	24.8
Egypt	93.9	83.6	3.1	10.3	-	8.0
Iran	101.5	94.4	1.3	0.8	2.5	3.2
Jordan	-	68.8	1.5	1.7	-	4.5
Lebanon	71.9	51.4	7.4	10.8	15.9	12.1
Morocco	94.8	67.8	9.7	17.4	7.4	16.1
Tunisia	103.2	70.8	0.03	19.7	6.8	22.0
France	-	107.2	-	2.3	-	0.5
Greece	94.6	91.5	0.7	3.8	8.3	0.8
Italy	100.4	100.6	0.4	3.2	0.8	1.3
Spain	97.2	91.9	3.0	10.1	0.7	8.5

Notes: [1] 2015 for Germany, Greece, Iran, Italy and Tunisia in primary; 2015 for France, Germany, Greece, Iran, Italy and Tunisia and 2014 for Jordan in secondary.
[2] 2012 for Egypt and Jordan and 2014 for Germany, Greece, Iran, Italy in primary; 2013 for Egypt and Jordan and 2014 for France, Germany, Greece, Iran, Italy and Tunisia in secondary. [3]: 2012 for Germany, 2013 for Greece, 2011 for Iran and 2014 for Italy and Tunisia in primary; 2013 for Egypt and Jordan and 2014 for France, Germany, Greece and Tunisia in secondary; * See Table A. 1 for a presentation of Tunisian education system.

Source: UIS database.

In tertiary education, the percentage of repeaters is also very high. As Table 2.3 shows, this is especially the case for Bachelor's degrees in general education (35%). Repeaters are more numerous during the first years of tertiary education than during the last year. While this is a common pattern, the percentage remains high even in the last year. It is particularly high in some fields of studies like Humanities and Law (Table A.2).

On the positive side, the dropout rate in tertiary education is only 2.6% (Table 2.3). This could potentially be explained by financial constraints, as continued studies are more expensive than repeating a class. The latter could also be a reason for the high percentage of repeaters, because tertiary students who have sufficient financial resources to study may prefer to repeat a grade rather than leaving school and being unemployed.

Table 2.3 In tertiary education, there are many repeaters but the dropout rate is low

	Percentage of repeaters
Average rate	26.6
Bachelor's degrees, general	36.0
Bachelor's degrees, technical	25.1
First year	30.5
Last year	26.9
	Dropout rate
Average rate	2.6
Bachelor's degrees, general	2.5
Bachelor's degrees, technical	2.8
First year	4.0
Last year	2.6

Source: MESRST.

One indication of improved quality is that the student-teacher ratio has decreased between 1990 and 2016 (Table 2.4). This decrease was particularly significant in primary education: a decrease of 10.2 percentage points.

Table 2.4 The student-teacher ratio has declined over time, suggesting improvements in quality

	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
	1990	**2016**	**1990**	**2016**	**2008**	**2015**
Tunisia	27.8	17.2	20.3	11.9	9.1	6.0

Source: INS.

With regard to student-teacher ratios, Tunisia scores better than neighbouring countries (Table 2.5). In Morocco, the student-teacher ratio did not decline like in Tunisia, and in fact increased (i.e., quality worsened) for all levels of education between 1990 and 2016. In Egypt and Algeria, the ratio improved substantially in this period (i.e., decreased), but still remained above Tunisia's level. Note, however, that a low student-teacher ratio does not guarantee that the quality of student supervision is high.[8]

[8] In Morocco 38% of the schooling population are estimated to be in ‘ cluttered classes’ exceeding 40 pupils per class. The congestion rate, expressing the proportion of cluttered classes, is 16% in primary, 29% in the vocational secondary and 49% in the general secondary. (Source: *Cour des Comptes*, 2017.)

Table 2.5 Student-teacher ratios in Tunisia are low

	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
	1990	**2016**	**1990**	**2016**	**1990**	**2015**
Algeria	27.8	24.2	17.9	14.8	12.6	25.7
Egypt	25.1	23.1	21.3	12.1	-	23.9
Morocco	25.0	26.6	17.8	18.7	25.8	28.5
France	18.5	18.2	12.4	12.9	16.2	21.3
Germany	16.6	12.2	14.9	12.1	7.6	7.5
Italy	12.2	12.0	9.2	11.3	24.9	20.3
Netherland	17.4	11.7	15.5	14.4	12.0	12.9
Spain	23.5	13.2	17.2	12.0	19.7	12.5
Tunisia	**27.8**	**17.2**	**20.3**	**11.9**	**9.1**	**6.0**

Source: UIS.

Compared to other countries in the region, Tunisia has an average performance in international test scores. It is difficult to compare Tunisia to other countries in the region, because Tunisia is only one of the few countries in the region to participate in the PISA survey.[9] The PISA survey is a test conducted among 15-year-olds to assess their performance in mathematics, science and their reading comprehension (Table 2.6). Out of the 73 countries that participated in the PISA survey, Tunisia ranks 58th in mathematics, 52th in reading and 54th in science. In comparison, the Netherlands ranks 11th, 12th and 14th respectively.

In PISA tests, Jordan scores better than Tunisia on every subject. Lebanon has a better score in mathematics, but not in reading and science. Algeria scores worse in all fields. However, the gap with European countries is wide: as Table 2.6 shows, it is between 68 and 145 points, depending on the country and the field. European countries like the Netherlands and Germany perform better in all subjects; especially in mathematics for the Netherlands (with a score of 512).

9 The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems (in mathematics, reading and science) worldwide by testing the skills and nowledge of 15-year-old students.

Table 2.6 The average score for the PISA tests are lower for Tunisia than for other selected countries in 2015

	Mathematics	Reading	Science
France	493	499	495
Germany	506	509	509
Greece	454	467	455
Italy	490	485	481
Netherlands	512	503	509
Spain	486	496	493
Algeria	360	350	376
Jordan	380	408	409
Lebanon	396	347	386
Tunisia	367	361	386
International average (OECD)	490	493	493

Source: OECD.

When analysing the performance gap between boys and girls, it can generally be noticed that boys outperform girls in mathematics in most countries, while girls outperform boys in reading in virtually all countries (Table 2.7). This result is also visible in our selected countries except in Greece and Algeria, where the mathematics scores of boys are lower than those of girls. In science, the results are more uneven, with a better performance of girls in Greece, Algeria and Jordan and worse performance of girls in the other countries. In Tunisia, the gap between boys and girls is highest for reading performance (25 points against 6 and 4 points in mathematics and science, respectively). In neighbouring countries, the gap is especially high for Lebanon for male mathematics performance and for Jordan for female reading and science performance.

Table 2.7 The Tunisian gender gap is lower than in many other selected countries

	Mathematics		Reading		Science	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
France	490	496	514	485	494	496
Germany	498	514	520	499	504	514
Greece	454	454	486	449	459	451
Italy	480	500	493	477	472	489
Netherlands	511	513	515	491	507	511
Spain	478	494	506	485	489	496
Algeria	363	356	366	335	383	369
Jordan	387	373	444	372	428	389
Lebanon	386	408	353	339	386	388
Tunisia	364	370	373	348	385	388
International average (OECD)	486	494	506	479	491	495

Source: OECD (2015)

In science, Tunisia scores below those of most other countries in the region. The average PISA score by level of education shows a better score in upper secondary school (ISCED 3 level) than in lower secondary school (ISCED 2 level; see Table 2.8). However, the Tunisian score remains below those of other countries except for Lebanon. Indeed, whereas the Lebanese performance in mathematics is better, its performance in reading and sciences is lower than in Tunisia. In Europe, Germany has the highest science score in lower secondary education, while the Netherland scores highest in upper secondary education.

Table 2.8 Tunisia scores below other countries in the region in mathematics and science

	Mathematics		Reading		Science	
	ISCED 2	ISCED 3	ISCED 2	ISCED 3	ISCED 2	ISCED 3
France	400	522	389	534	395	527
Germany	505	523	509	524	509	522
Greece	360	458	365	472	356	460
Italy	366	491	364	486	372	482
Netherlands	479	592	467	590	472	597
Spain	486	N/A	496	N/A	493	N/A
Algeria	342	417	332	409	359	433
Jordan	380	N/A	408	N/A	409	N/A
Lebanon	332	422	274	376	330	409
Tunisia	314	395	301	393	341	410
International average (OECD)	451	510	450	512	452	514

Note: ISCED 2 denotes lower secondary education and ISCED 3 denotes upper secondary education. In case of N/A, reporting standards were not met.
Source: OECD (2015)

In some international reading scores, Tunisia scores better than some countries in the region. While Tunisia did not participate in the PIRLS survey[10], the score of its surrounding countries and the comparison of the Tunisian PISA results for reading could be used as an indicator of performance. We note that Iran's score is closer to the result of developed countries, whilst Morocco and Egypt score lower than Tunisia (Table 2.9). For Morocco, this could potentially be explained by language related issues, since all scientific teaching is done in French (Flayols, 2016).[11]

Table 2.9 Better reading achievement in European countries than in Maghreb countries (2016)

	Average Scale Score
Italy	548
Netherlands	545
Germany	537
Spain	528
France	511
Iran	428
Morocco	358
Egypt	330

Source: IEA.

TIMSS test scores confirm the previous results (Table 2.10). [12] While Tunisia did not participate in the 2015 TIMSS round, its scores in the 2011 round indicate a poor performance in Grade 4 compared to other countries in the region, but a better performance in Grade 8. Assuming that the

10 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study.
11 Since 1970 Tunisia has adopted a reform of 'Arabisation' of education. The 1991 reform reintroduced French from the third year of the basic cycle (foreign optional language). But the language of teaching in the technical, scientific and mathematical fields is French, which can constrain the orientation of students.
12 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

Grade 4 students of 2011 became the Grade 8 students in 2015, Tunisian test scores likely deteriorated over time. European countries scored much better in mathematics and science.

Table 2.10 Tunisia scored lower in math and science than other countries in the region for Grade 4, but higher for Grade 8

	Mathematics		Science	
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 4	Grade 8
Netherlands	530	-	517	-
Germany	522	-	528	-
Italy	507	494	516	499
Spain	505	-	518	-
France	488	-	487	-
Iran	431	436	421	456
Jordan	**388**	**386**		
Morocco	377	384	352	393
Egypt	-	392	-	371
Lebanon	-	-	-	398
Tunisia	**359**	**425**	**346**	**439**

Note: * 2011 for Tunisian (did not participate in 2015).
Source: IEA.

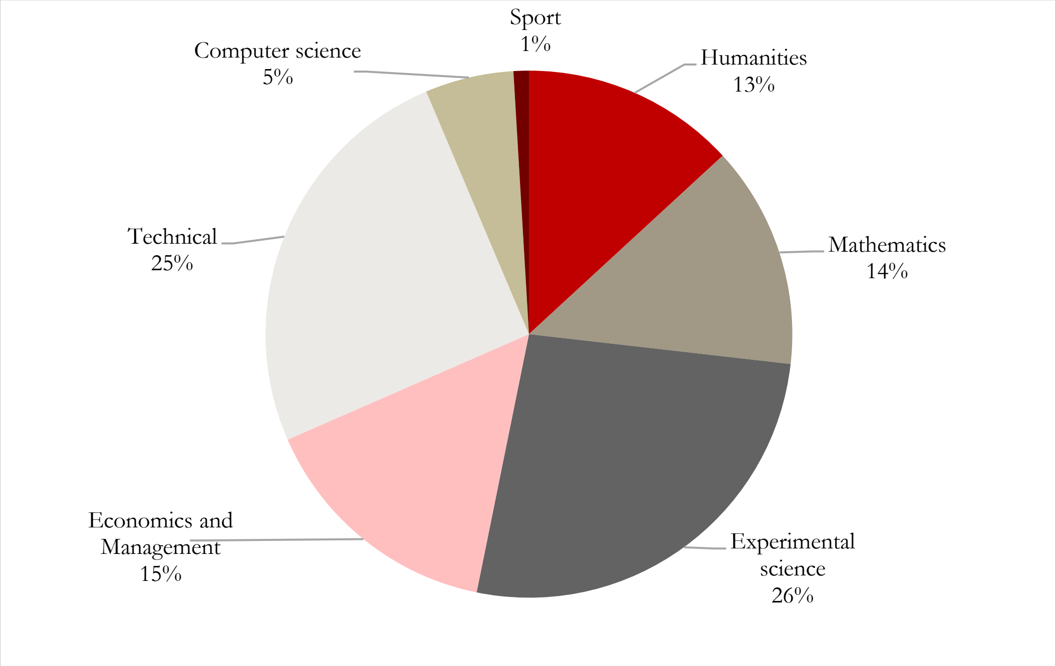
The relatively low level of 'well-being' of students may be another factor that affects educational performance. For example, for the question "Are students satisfied with their lives?" Tunisia scored far below the OECD average, whereas the Netherlands ranked first (OECD, 2015). This is important as it is related with the quality of education. Indeed, a French study shows a relationship between truancy and dropout and between truancy and well-being (Cristofoli, 2015).

2.3 Type of education

Tunisian secondary students tend to have a preference for technical and scientific subjects. As Figure 2.6 shows, more than half of all A-level students choose to study Experimental science (26%) or Technical studies (25%). The share of graduates in Experimental science, which includes subjects such as biology and physics, fell only slightly from 32% in 1995 to 26% of in 2016. In addition, Mathematics accounts for around 15% of A-level graduates, whilst Computer science accounts for 5%. At the same time, the share of A-level graduates in Humanities, fell from 40% in 1995 to 13% in 2016.

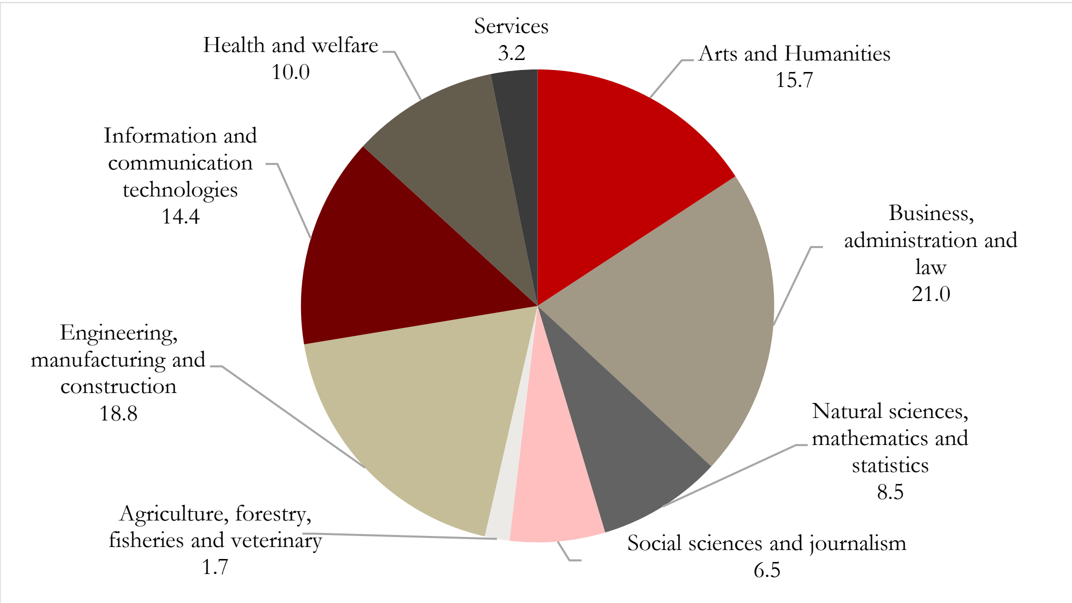
In tertiary education, the most popular subjects are (a) Business, administration and law, (b) Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction; and (c) ICT. As Figure 2.6 shows, technical fields (engineering, ICT and natural sciences) together account for more than 40 percent.

Figure 2.6 Experimental science and technical studies are most popular among A-level graduates



Source: INS (2016)

Figure 2.7 In tertiary education, technical fields account for more than 40 percent.



Source: UIS database (2016).

The preference for fields like business, administration and law could potentially be explained by the attractiveness of public sector jobs for graduates. Despite having declined, the number of workers in civil service is still around 15% in Tunisia, against around 12.5% in Algeria and less than 12% in Morocco (OECD, 2018). These public sector jobs offer many advantages, such as job protection, access to a social security fund, advantageous retirement system, etc. However, there are not sufficient public sector jobs for all graduates. As a consequence, there are 'queues' to enter the public sector, just as in Morocco. In the meantime, young Tunisians often prefer to work in the informal sector until they can get a job in the public sector (ILO, 2015). Similarly, many graduates in Humanities end up being unemployed. In 2013, they represented 43% of the unemployed. This could be partly explained by a lack of information and guidance in terms of study choice.

Tunisia appears to be relatively strong in the field of information technology. This field is chosen by around 14% of tertiary students (Figure 2.7). Based on a recent survey (SkillValue), Tunisia ranks first among Maghreb countries (Table 2.11). These test scores are based on the performance of software developers when executing coding exercises or dealing with technical issues.

Table 2.11 Tunisia ranks highest in information technology test scores among Maghreb countries

Rank	Countries	Score index
1	Slovakia	100.00
7	Spain	92.12
10	Germany	90.70
13	Netherlands	89.09
15	Greece	88.91
18	Italy	87.52
30	France	80.47
38	Tunisia	76.61
39	Albania	76.21
40	Egypt	75.75
43	Morocco	74.95

Source: SkillValue (Lasnier, 2018).

2.4 Conclusions on education system

Educational reforms have increased literacy rates and vast improvements in access to education for younger generations. This is reflected in a substantial increase in enrolment in secondary and tertiary levels of education. There has also been an improvement in parity between girls and boys regardless of the level of education, and an increase in the average duration of study.

However, the quality of education remains an issue. This is indicated by relatively low international test scores, a high number of repeaters in secondary and tertiary education, and a high dropout rate in secondary education. On the positive side, the student-teacher ratio has declined, is lower than in neighbouring countries, and the dropout rate in tertiary education is low.

In terms of the type of education, Tunisians seem to have a preference for technical fields. In secondary education, more than half of all A-level students choose to study experimental science or technical studies. In tertiary education, technical fields such as engineering, ICT and natural sciences together account for more than 40 percent. Based on one ICT survey, Tunisian software developers rank highest among others in Maghreb countries.

3 The Tunisian labour market challenge

The arrival on the job market of an increasingly educated youth represents a challenge for Tunisia, which must absorb this new workforce. The higher unemployment rate, especially for young graduates, highlights challenges and the progress that still needs to be made.

3.1 Labour market integration of youth

The labour force participation rate in Tunisia is lower than in Europe, and even lower than MENA countries on average. As Table 3.1 shows, the average participation rate is 56.5% in the euro area, versus 47% in Tunisia. Countries with higher participation rates are countries like Germany and the Netherlands (60.5% and 63.5%, respectively). Countries with lower participation rates are Greece, where just over one in two people participate in the labour market (53%), and Italy, where less than one in two people participate (48.6%). The countries south of the Mediterranean sea have a lower rate, in particular Jordan and Algeria (39% and 41%, respectively). Tunisia's labour force participation rate remains below the average of MENA countries (Table 3.1). Moreover, it is below the (observed) participation rate in countries like Nigeria (55%) and Libya (53%).

At 24%, the Tunisian female participation rate is well below that of women in European countries. In Europe, with the exception of e.g. Greece and Italy, at least one woman in two participates in the labour market (Table 3.1). However, according to Moisseron et al. (2017), female participation in labour market is countries like Tunisia is probably underestimated, due to the relative importance of the informal sector—both in general and for female employment.

When assessing the participation rate for youth (15-24 years old), a slightly different picture emerges. As Table 3.1 shows, the labour force participation rate of Tunisia is higher than the MENA average (34% compared to 30%). Moreover, Tunisia's rate is higher than that of its neighbourhood countries. So, although participation in the labour market is low in Tunisia, the situation of youth in fact seems to be better than in other Mediterranean countries.

Table 3.1 Tunisian women participate more in the labour market compared to other countries in North Africa and the Middle East (in %, 2017)

	15 years and older			15-24 years old		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Algeria	67.3	15.2	41.4	42.1	8.5	25.6
Egypt	73.7	22.2	48.0	42.3	19.8	31.3
Jordan	63.7	14.0	39.1	36.9	8.8	22.9
Lebanon	71.1	23.2	47.2	43.0	17.9	30.1
Libya	79.0	25.8	52.5	47.4	18.8	33.4
Iran	71.4	16.8	44.2	42.4	11.0	27.4
Morocco	74.1	25.0	49.0	50.3	16.9	34.0
Tunisia	70.6	24.3	46.9	46.3	21.9	34.3
Nigeria	59.8	50.4	55.1	25.6	20.7	23.2
Middle East & North Africa	73.9	20.6	48.3	44.8	14.4	30.1
France	60.1	50.6	55.2	40.8	34.5	37.7
Germany	66.2	55.0	60.5	51.3	47.7	49.6
Greece	60.6	45.5	52.9	26.2	23.3	24.8
Italy	58.3	39.5	48.6	29.7	22.3	26.1
Netherlands	69.2	58.0	63.5	66.9	69.1	68.0
Spain	63.8	52.2	57.8	34.6	31.2	32.9
Euro area	62.9	50.4	56.5	42.0	37.3	39.7

Source: WDI.

An analysis of the participation by level of education offers further insights. As Table 3.2 shows, the participation rate is higher for men for all education levels, apart for Germany and Greece. The difference in participation between men and women is much smaller among the higher educated. This suggests that better access to education (Table 2.1) could facilitate the employability of women.

The Tunisian labour participation rate for those with basic education is higher than that of other Mediterranean countries, whereas for intermediate education it is slightly below that of Morocco, although still being among one of the highest. However, the rate in advanced education is higher than Iran but lower than Egypt.

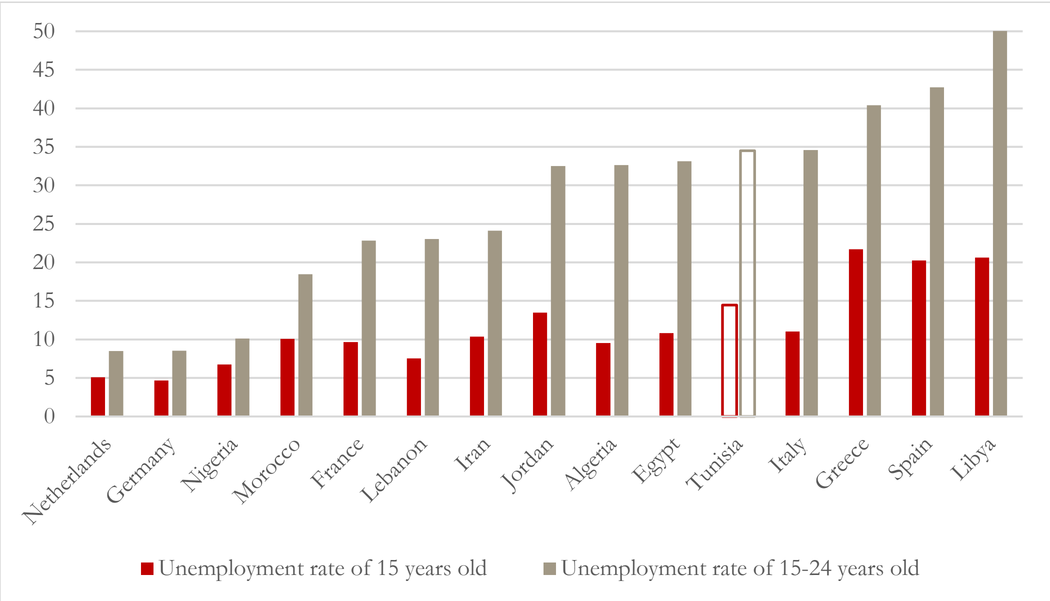
Table 3.2 The level of education increases participation to labour market (in %, 2016*)

	Basic education			Intermediate education			Advanced education		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Egypt	26.7	40.6	10.6	52.5	74.3	26.6	77.8	87.1	65.7
Iran	48.8	80.9	10.8	47.9	81.4	13.0	67.8	83.6	50.6
Morocco	54.4	80.1	18.7	47.3	60.2	30.9	-	-	-
Tunisia	52.6	80.2	20.3	52.8	70.6	30.2	63.5	67.2	59.7
Italy	34.4	46.6	22.6	64.2	72.1	56.3	74.8	77.2	72.9
France	30.2	37.6	24.3	61.8	65.4	58.1	77.3	78.9	75.9
Germany	38.0	50.5	29.4	64.6	68.5	61.0	73.8	73.4	74.3
Greece	33.9	44.3	24.0	61.0	69.0	53.0	76.2	75.8	76.6
Netherlands	44.8	56.1	35.4	69.8	72.8	66.8	80.0	80.4	79.7
Spain	53.1	62.4	43.3	67.9	72.4	63.6	83.0	83.9	82.2
Euro area	37.2	47.5	28.6	64.8	69.6	60.0	76.7	77.6	76.2

Note: * 2017 for Spain, 2013 for Tunisia and 2012 for Morocco.
Source: WDI.

The comparison between the total unemployment rate and the youth unemployment rate highlights the difficulties of youth. In most countries, the youth unemployment rate is higher, but it is particularly high in Libya, Spain, Greece, Italy and Tunisia (Figure 3.1). Where around one in two are unemployed in Libya, there are around one in three in Tunisia. Finally, note the low unemployment rates in the Netherlands and Germany, both for the total population (around 5%) as for youth (8.5%).

Figure 3. 1 The Tunisian youth face a high unemployment rate (in %, 2018)



Source: KILM.

Although labour force participation of women is lower, the employment rate of women is typically higher than that of men, especially in Libya and Iraq (Table 3.3). Note the rates in Greece and Spain (27.9% and 23.2%) where the access to the labour market for women seems as constrained as that of some Mediterranean countries like Iraq, Jordan or Egypt. These two European countries also have the highest unemployment rate (Figure 3.1).

Table 3.3 Women have a higher unemployment rate (15 years and older, in %, 2018)

	Total	Male	Female
Algeria	9.5	8.0	15.9
Egypt	10.8	7.0	23.2
Iran	10.4	9.0	16.5
Jordan	13.5	11.2	23.8
Lebanon	7.5	6.3	11.2
Libya	20.6	17.2	30.1
Morocco	10.1	9.9	10.6
Nigeria	6.7	6.1	7.6
Tunisia	14.5	12.8	19.0
France	9.7	9.8	9.6
Germany	4.7	4.9	4.4
Greece	21.7	16.8	27.9
Italy	11.0	9.9	12.6
Netherlands	5.1	5.0	5.2
Spain	20.3	17.7	23.2

Source: KILM.

With a focus on youth, the situation of women seems worse. For example, more than one in two women is unemployed in Algeria, Jordan and in Egypt (Table 3.4). We can assume that in countries where access to education is worse for women, not only do they have more difficulty acquiring the skills to get a job but they also have more difficulty gaining experience.

There are less gender differences in Tunisia than in other MENA countries. Indeed, the unemployment rates of male and female youth are similar: 34.1% and 35.3%. We observe the same situation in Morocco with a lower rate of youth unemployment. This situation points out again the specifics difficulties of youth on the labour market especially in Tunisia. The share of female youth in total unemployed is higher in Tunisia than in Morocco: 29.6% against 23.9% (Table B.2). In European countries, the youth unemployment rate is particularly high in France, whereas Germany and the Netherlands again perform well.

Table 3.4 The unemployment rate is the same for young men and for young women in Tunisia (15-24 years of age, in %, 2018)

	Total	Male	Female
Algeria	32.6	28.6	51.1
Egypt	33.1	24.2	58.0
Iran	24.1	21.2	36.7
Jordan	32.5	27.5	53.1
Lebanon	23.0	22.0	25.2
Libya	50.5	41.9	70.0
Morocco	18.5	18.9	17.1
Nigeria	10.1	8.0	12.7
Tunisia	34.5	34.1	35.3
France	22.8	22.8	22.9
Germany	8.5	9.3	7.7
Greece	40.4	35.2	46.8
Italy	34.6	32.0	38.2
Netherlands	8.5	8.2	8.8
Spain	42.7	41.0	44.7

Source: KILM.

The situation of youth in the labour market can be highlighted by the NEET indicator (Not in Education, Employment or Training, Table 3.5). The youth that are not in education, employment or training are more numerous in the south of the Mediterranean (Table 3.5). In the European countries this share is between 4.6% and 19.8%, whereas it's more than 20% in MENA countries. More worrying, in Tunisia this rate increases with age. According to the ILO (2015), the NEET accounted for 10.8% of 15-19 years old, 16.7% of 20-24 years old and 25.1% of 25-29 years old. The recent OECD report (2018b) underlines the importance of the number of out-of-school and unemployed youth: just over 25%.

Table 3.5 An important share of the Tunisian youth are not in education, employment or training (% of youth population)

	2016*
Algeria	21.2
Egypt	27.6
Iran	34.3
Jordan	24.6
Tunisia	25.4
France	11.8
Germany	6.7
Greece	15.8
Italy	19.8
Netherlands	4.6
Spain	14.6

Note: * 2015 for Algeria, 2010 for Irand, 2013 for Nigeria and Tunisia, 2012 for Jordan.
Source: WDI and KILM.

The duration of unemployment is important; the longer the unemployment, the harder it is to find a job. Tunisia and Egypt have high long term youth unemployment rates (13.6% and 28.9%), whereas the European countries have lower rates. However, in some European countries there are also high long-term unemployment rates, like in Greece, Italy and Spain (Table 3.6). Moreover, in Tunisia the youth aged 15-29 years old more frequently have a period of unemployment between one to two years (20%) or more than two years (38%, Table 3.7). Indeed, the study of Assaad and Krafft (2016) shows that over time, long-term unemployment has become an serious problem for women in Egypt.

Table 3.6 The Tunisian youth experience high long term unemployment (in %, last year available*)

	15 years and older	15-24 years old
Algeria	7.1	-
Egypt	11.7	28.9
Iran	5.3	9
Morocco	5.5	-
Tunisia	7.7	13.6
France	4.2	6.5
Germany	2.2	1.8
Greece	19.5	31.5
Italy	7.7	24.8
Netherlands	2.7	1.9
Spain	12.9	21.5

Note: * 2010 for Iran, 2011 for Algeria, 2012 for Tunisia, 2013 for Egypt and Morocco and 2014 for other countries.
Source: KILM.

Table 3.7 A duration of unemployment often exceeds one year in Tunisia (all ages, 2013)

	Sample	%
Less than a week	17 925	4.3
1 week to less than one month	23 493	5.6
1 month to less than 3 months	32 835	7.8
3 months to less than 6 months	24 905	5.9
4 months to less than 1 year	76 074	18.1
1 year to less than 2 years	84 596	20.1
2 years and more	158 547	37.7
Not available	1 727	0.4
Total	420 102	100

Note: people aged 15 to 29 years old.
Source: ETVA, 2013.

The positive relation between level of education and professional integration is one acknowledged by economic theory (Becker (1975), Arrow (1973)) as well as by empirical studies (Béduwé and al., 2009, Maguain, 2007). One commonly accepted result is that a higher level of education increases the probability of having a job and thus reduces the probability of being unemployed. Given the differences already observed in the labour market between the European countries and the southern Mediterranean countries, we can analyse whether this situation will remain in the near future.

Projections of labour force participation rates do not predict large changes (Table. 3.8) for the population aged 15 years and older. This rate will only increase a little in 2019 in Arab countries. In contrast, in Europeans countries the projection forecasts a slight decrease of labour participation rate, whilst the female participation rate remains below that of men.

For youth the situation is similar, except in Nigeria where a larger increase than in other Arab countries is expected (38% in 2019 against 23% in 2017, see Tables 3.8 and 3.1). This increase is mainly due to an increase in male participation (40.7% in 2019 against 25.6% in 2017). The projection of the participation rate for men is increasing, whereas a downward projection is planned for women, which will thus widen the gender gap.

Table 3.8 The participation in the labour market will not improve in Tunisia in the years to come

	15 years old and more			15-24 years old		
	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**
Algeria	43.9	70.6	17.1	27.6	44.6	10.1
Egypt	49.8	76.1	23.3	32.7	47.1	17.7
Iran	44.8	73.2	16.2	29.4	45.8	11.6
Jordan	40.3	64.5	14.8	23.8	37.4	9.6
Lebanon	47.6	71.0	24.1	30.3	41.9	19.1
Libya	52.7	78.0	27.7	35.6	48.7	22.0
Nigeria	56.7	64.6	48.7	38.0	40.7	35.2
Morocco	49.6	74.5	25.8	35.3	51.9	17.9
Tunisia	47.6	71.1	25.1	34.3	45.5	22.6
France	54.3	58.9	49.9	37.2	40.5	33.7
Germany	59.8	65.6	54.3	50.3	52.4	48.2
Greece	51.9	60.2	44.2	28.5	30.6	26.4
Italy	47.9	57.4	39.1	26.9	30.7	22.9
Netherlands	63.0	69.2	57.0	68.5	68.3	68.7
Spain	57.4	63.5	51.7	35.8	37.6	33.9

Source: KILM (2019)

The projection concerning the unemployment rates does not change the situation for the Arab and European countries (Table 3.9). The countries with the lowest unemployment rate will remain the same, just like those with the highest rates of unemployment. Of course, projections must be interpreted with caution.

Table 3.9 The unemployment rate will continue to be high (2019 and 2020, in %)

						15 years old and more
		Total		Male		Female
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Algeria	9.2	8.9	7.8	7.5	15.3	14.8
Egypt	10.6	10.4	6.8	6.7	22.9	22.6
Iran	10.3	10.3	9.0	9.0	16.3	16.1
Jordan	13.6	13.6	11.3	11.3	23.9	24.0
Lebanon	7.6	7.6	6.3	6.3	11.2	11.1
Libya	20.6	20.6	17.2	17.2	30.2	30.2
Morocco	10.1	10.1	9.9	9.9	10.7	10.7
Nigeria	6.8	6.9	6.2	6.2	7.7	7.8
Tunisia	14.5	14.5	12.8	12.8	19.1	19.2
France	9.4	9.1	9.4	9.1	9.3	9.1
Germany	4.6	4.4	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.3
Greece	20.3	19.2	15.1	13.9	26.9	25.9
Italy	10.7	10.5	9.5	9.2	12.4	12.2
Netherlands	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.5	5.1	5.0
Spain	19.5	18.9	16.7	16.0	22.6	22.2

Source: KILM.

Finally, projections of the youth unemployment rate suggest the same situation as before (Table 3. 10). Some rates see slight positive developments, like the male youth unemployment rate (34.1% in 2018, Table 3.4 against 35% in 2015), whilst others will realise negative development, like in Morocco (18,9% in 2018 against 18.6%). We can observe the same situation in European countries.

Table 3.10 Youth unemployment is still worrying (2019 and 2020, in %)

						15-24 years old
		Total		Male		Female
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Algeria	33.2	33.5	29.1	29.5	51.8	52.2
Egypt	32.7	32.3	23.7	23.3	57.6	57.2
Iran	24.1	24.0	21.2	21.2	36.3	36.1
Jordan	32.4	32.4	27.4	27.4	52.6	52.4
Lebanon	23.3	23.4	22.2	22.4	25.4	25.5
Libya	50.5	50.4	41.9	41.8	70.3	70.3
Morocco	18.3	18.2	18.8	18.6	16.9	16.8
Nigeria	10.2	10.3	8.1	8.1	12.9	13.0
Tunisia	34.7	35.0	34.4	34.6	35.5	35.7
France	22.3	21.9	22.2	21.7	22.5	22.2
Germany	8.9	9.1	9.7	10.0	7.9	8.1
Greece	38.5	37.4	33.4	32.5	44.7	43.5
Italy	33.4	32.5	30.8	29.9	37.0	36.2
Netherlands	8.4	8.3	8.2	8.1	8.7	8.6
Spain	41.6	40.9	39.5	38.5	44.1	43.7

Source: KILM.

3.2 Constraints to youth employability

A degree does not guarantee employment for Tunisian youth (Table 3.11). The unemployment rate of people with only basic education is 10%, against 18.5% for people with intermediate education and 42% in advanced education. We can also see a positive relationship between unemployment rates and educational attainment in Egypt and Iran. While lower than in Tunisia, the youth unemployment rate for advanced education remains high for these countries: around 30%. In Morocco, the unemployment rate for youth with an intermediate and advanced education is similar and higher compared to youth with basic education.

In European countries we generally observe a negative relationship between the unemployment rate and the level of education. Thus, people that received better and more education are better protected against unemployment.

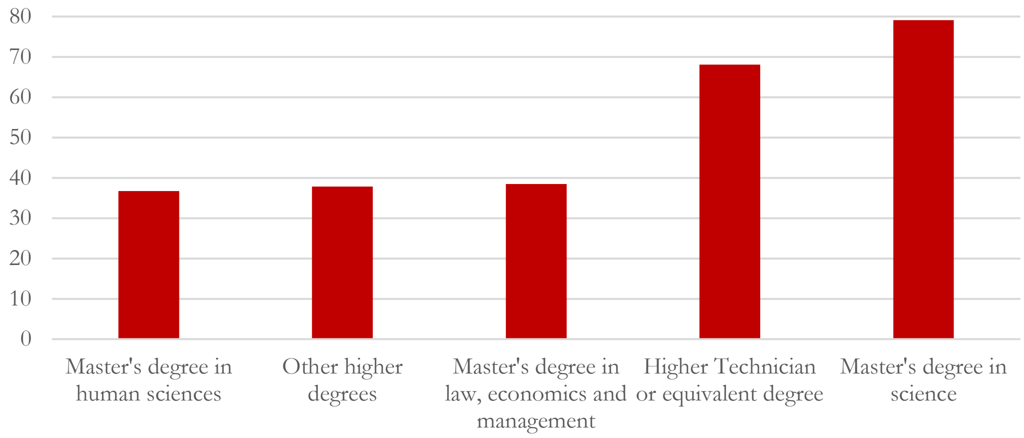
Table 3.11 Tertiary graduates in Tunisia have higher unemployment rates

	Basic education			Intermediate education			Advanced education		
	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**
Egypt	8.0	8.5	8.7	32.7	15.9	10.8	30.8	20.6	14.8
Iran	8.3	8.9	9.0	23.0	13.2	11.8	31.0	20.0	13.8
Morocco	12.4	10.3	10.0	27.0	18.1	14.5	26.0	-	-
Tunisia	10.3	9.9	9.8	18.5	16.3	15.5	42.0	30.2	20.1
France	17.0	17.8	18.5	11.0	10.7	10.4	5.8	5.7	5.5
Germany	8.7	10.1	11.2	3.3	3.7	4.1	2.3	2.2	2.1
Italy	17.3	15.5	14.6	12.8	11.1	9.7	8.0	6.8	5.2
Netherlands	10.7	9.7	9.0	6.7	6.0	5.4	3.8	3.5	3.3
Spain	28.8	25.0	22.5	19.8	17.0	14.4	11.5	10.0	8.3

Note: 2017 for Spain, 2013 for Tunisia and 2012 for Morocco (2013 in advanced education).
Source: WDI and HCP.

The labour market performance of tertiary graduates varies by type of degree. Young Tunisians with a Master's degree in science are more often unemployed than those with a Master's degree in human sciences (Figure 3.2). This can be explained particularly by the continued attractiveness of public sector jobs for graduates, who offer many advantages (job protection, access to a social security fund, advantageous retirement system). Master' s degrees in humanities and social science provide theoretically more job opportunities in the public sector. According to ILO (2015), 65% of youth Tunisians would like to work in public sector. But since 2014, employment prospects in the public sector have declined significantly.

Figure 3. 2 Tunisian students with Master's degree in science are more often unemployed



Source: INS (2018, first quarter, in %)

If employment in the public sector is not possible, young people prefer to work in the informal sector (ILO, 2015). This choice can be explained by more attractive informal sector wage levels, with which the formal sector cannot compete. According to ILO (2015), Tunisia was the North-African country with the lowest employment rate in the non-agricultural informal economy (Table 3.12). While this rate is below that of most other MENA countries, it remains high and is unlikely to fall in the short term.

Table 3.12 Lower employment in the non-agricultural informal economy in Tunisia than in other North African countries, 1975-2015

	1975-1979	1980-1984	1985-1989	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014
North Africa	39.6		34.1	47.5	47.3	53.0	50.2
Algeria	21.8		25.6	42.7	41.3	45.6	40.7
Morocco		56.9		44.8	67.1	78.5	70.1
Egypt	58.7		37.3	55.2	45.9	51.2	49.6
Tunisia	38.4	35.0	39.3	47.1	35.0	36.8	40.2

Source: OIL, 2015.

Given the high youth unemployment rate among the highly educated in Tunisia, the absorption potential of the Tunisian economy appears limited. Since 1970, Tunisia has adopted a model of development led by the public sector, in which the government has an important role in hiring. This is translated into the importance of the services sector in the Tunisian economy (Table 3.13), of which 'Education, Health and Administrative services' comprise a significant portion (36.5%).

Table 3.13 The service sector is important in the Tunisian economy (First quarter, in %, 2018)

Sector	Share in employed labour force	Share in employed labour force sector
Agriculture and Fisheries	14.7	
Manufacturing industries	18.2	
Agri-food industry		15.0
Building materials, ceramics and glass		5.9
Mechanical and Electrical Industries		23.9
Chemical Industries		4.3
Textile, Clothing and Footwear		37.6
Other manufacturing industries		13.3
Non-Manufacturing Industries	14.9	
Mines and Energy		6.67
Construction and Public Works		93.3
Services	52.0	
Commerce		25.8
Transport and Telecommunication		10.5
Hotel and catering industry		7.4
Banks and Insurance		2.0
Repair services, Property market and Other Institutional Services		9.8
Social and Cultural Services		8.0
Education, Health and Administrative Services		36.5

Source: INS, author's calculations.

According to World Bank (2014), Tunisia did not have sufficient job creation due to low productivity. Moreover, following the development of tertiary education, the economy was unable to advance beyond low-skill, low-wage activities. This explains the high youth unemployment for those with tertiary education, (Table 3.11) reflecting a structural mismatch between labour market demand for unqualified personnel and a supply of skilled workers. Indeed, where the number of job vacancies has decreased in some sectors, such as agriculture and fisheries or in mines and energy (Table 3.14), this number has raised in the sector of administration. According to World Bank (2014), the Tunisian public authorities are imposing barriers to entry in large segments of the economy. Industrial policy and agricultural policy introduce distortions and deepen regional disparities. "Laws meant to encourage competition and investment were circumvented, and ultimately rents extraction by the few closest to political power undermined the economy's ability to take off and bring prosperity and good jobs to all." There is a lack of competition and a large bureaucracy. Labour rules seem to promote exploitation and job insecurity. "Tunisia does not have a strong social security system and notably lacks an effective loss of employment insurance. In order to protect workers from sudden job loss, Tunisian labour regulations compensated with rigid firing rules for open-ended contracts."

Table 3.14 The number of job vacancies is decreasing in many sectors in Tunisia

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Agriculture and Fisheries	15,880	3,412	3,412	4,776	4,064	5,146	3,874
Mines and energy	1,576	2,170	1,142	1,415	1,348	1,495	1,075
Manufacturing Industries	70,990	63,116	63,116	64 349	61,660	6,5343	51,857
Public buildings and works sector	9,825	11,955	4,810	8,863	5,612	5,598	4,978
Tourism	13,976	15,518	6,493	9,225	8,103	7,549	6,144
Trade	15,078	21,533	16,497	19,225	1,9415	19,821	17,272
Transport and Telecommunication	3,755	4,167	3,956	3,789	3,391	3,944	3,160
Administration	7,079	12,003	7,473	7,959	9,419	9,644	8,458
Other services	2,1734	38,582	32,977	36,143	36,573	37,659	34,125
Total	159,893	219,848	139,876	155,744	149,585	156,199	130,943

Source: ONEQ.

Moreover, the number of job applications has decreased between 2011 and 2015 (Table 3.15). This result is difficult to explain as it stands, but one of the hypotheses is that the attractiveness of the informal sector leads to a fall in the number of job applications. From a theoretical point of view, the decline in formal job applications can be explained by the desire to escape unemployment (Turnham et Jaeger, 1971). As Tunisia does not have an effective system of unemployment insurance, informal employment is therefore seen as a solution. Working in the informal sector may thus be a choice (Hart, 1973 ; Field, 1990) that contributes to the decline in formal job application. As a result, the statistics about job vacancies and job applications are probably underestimated.

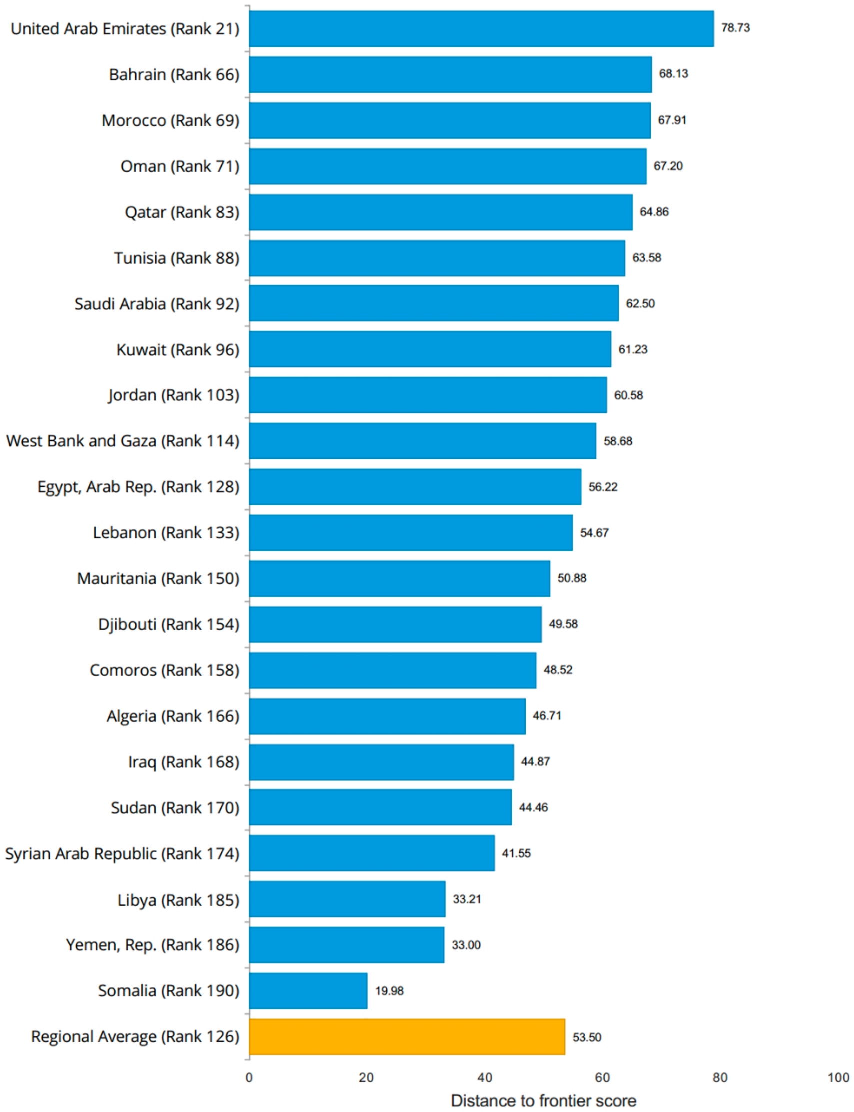
Table 3.15 The number of job applications and job placement are decreasing in Tunisia

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Newly registered jobseekers	128,101	153,363	201,700	193,318	158,187	136,615	129,276
Job applications at the end of the month (end of December)	105,377	121,730	280,022	273,461	202,507	169,215	175,491
Job placements	131,403	123,421	46,471	53,643	58,165	61,484	55,374

Source: ONEQ.

To complete this study, we analyse the ease of doing business indicator (Box 3.1). Tunisia's score is relatively high compared to that of other Arab countries, ranking 88th, whereas Jordan ranks 103rd, Egypt 218th and Algeria 166th. However, it is easier to do business in Morocco, as it ranks 69th. Despite Tunisia faring relatively well among the Arab countries, European countries rank much higher. For example, Germany ranks 20th, France 31st and the Netherlands 32th. Finally, with a rank of 46 and 67 respectively, Italy and Greece are among the countries where it's the least easy to do business in the EU.

Figure 3. 3 Doing business is easier in Tunisia than to other countries of the Arab world in 2018



Note: Economies are ranked on their ease of doing business, from 1–190. The distance to frontier (DTF) measure shows the distance of each economy to the "frontier," which represents the best performance observed on each of the indicators across all economies in the Doing Business sample since 2005. An economy's distance to frontier is reflected on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 represents the lowest performance and 100 represents the frontier.

Source: Doing business.

Finally, the indicators on employment protection legislation do not show surprising results (Table 3.16). Contrary to the European countries, Tunisia scores poorly on most indicators, thereby exhibiting low levels of job protection. In particular, there is little protection of permanent workers against individual and collective dismissals, the specific requirements for collective dismissal are absent and regulation on temporary forms of employment is poor. The poor performance on these indicators could be a reason for why the informal sector is large, as the formal sector offers not only unattractive wages but also very low job security.

Table 3.16 Employment protection legislation is relatively low in Tunisia (2013)

	Protection of permanent workers against individual and collective dismissals	Protection of permanent workers against (individual) dismissal	Specific requirements for collective dismissal	Regulation on temporary forms of employment
France	2.82	2.60	3.38	3.75
Germany	2.84	2.53	3.63	1.75
Greece	2.41	2.07	3.25	2.92
Italy	2.89	2.55	3.75	2.71
Netherlands	2.94	2.84	3.19	1.17
Spain	2.36	1.95	3.38	3.17
Tunisia	1.95	2.73	0.00	0.54
South Africa	2.01	2.06	1.88	0.58

Note: Scale from 0 (least restrictions) to 6 (most restrictions), last year available.
Source: OECD.

3.3 Vocational training: a solution?

Vocational training could be a stepping stone for youth to access employment, as it provides the skills that companies demand. While universities developed their technical and vocational fields during the 2000s, vocational programs outside the university are also developed. For example, in Tunisia, flows of new registrations doubled between 2002 and 2011 (ILO, 2014) in vocational training centres. However, with one hundred thousand apprentices these centres represent only 6% of the workforce of the education and training system (ILO, 2014). The number of vocational schools is higher in the private sector than in the public sector (Table 3.18). We note that the number of students in vocational training decreased since 2012 (ONEQ, 2017) and equalled 97.547 students in 2015 (Table 3.17).

There are several reasons for the relatively low participation rate in vocational training programs.[13] First, vocational training tends to have a negative image in Tunisian society due to the low perception of their value and the lack of communication about vocational training (lack of information on training courses, outlets, etc.). Second, parents tend to be more eager to see their children advance studies in tertiary education. Third, technical education is associated with school failure, since students in these branches are mainly repeaters or dropouts in the 7th or 8th year of general basic education (ONEQ, 2013a). Fourth, there is a lack of reorientation classes between vocational and higher education (vocational baccalaureate is not implemented). Finally, the low responsiveness to vocational training schemes makes it difficult to adapt them to changing business needs.

[13] ONEQ (2013a and 2013b).

Table 3.17 The public vocational training is more developed than private vocational training in Tunisia

	Students in public vocational training	Students joining the public vocational training
Tunisian Agency of Vocational Training	72,999	45,791
Tunisian National Tourist Office	1,139	724
Ministry of National Defence	1,407	1,182
Agricultural Extension and Training Agency	784	529
Total	76,329	48,226
	Students in private vocational training	**Students joining the private vocational training**
Training leading to degree	11,681	7,285
Training leading to uncertified degree	9,535	7,714
Total	21,216	14,999

Source: ONEQ, 2017 (data for 2015).

Table 3.18 The number of vocational schools is higher than in private sector

	Public vocational training
Tunisian Agency of Vocational Training	136
Tunisian National Tourist Office	8
Ministry of National Defence	13
Agricultural Extension and Training Agency	39
Total	196
	Private vocational training
Training leading to degree	179
Training leading to uncertified degree	859
Total	1,038

Source: ONEQ, 2017 (data for 2015).

The success rate of vocational training is similar in both the public and private sector (around 33%). In 2015, training with the company was 86% in the public sector, of which 80% in alternation mode and 6% in apprenticeships (ONEQ, 2013b). Alternation is a training system that consists of alternating periods of theoretical instruction in a training institution and periods of practice in the company. However, over a third of young unemployed people aged 15-29 thinks that education and training are not necessary for obtaining a job (OIL, 2014). So, despite the implication of companies in vocational training, the negative image of the latter persists.

The largest share of vocational students is in the electricity and electronics sector (Table 3.20), followed by the building and public works sector and the textile and clothing sector. However, one in three students drop out of vocational training every year (ONEQ, 2011). The reasons quoted by youth for dropping out suggest that most of them do not drop out of school due to getting a job. Indeed, about one-third of young dropouts in vocational training are employed. However, the majority of them work in a sector different than in which they receive training (ONEQ, 2011). Moreover, 43% of the youth quote the training as a reason for dropping out, which brings back into question the quality of vocational training (ONEQ, 2011).

Table 3.20 The number of students in training is higher in the electricity and electronic sector (2015)

Electricity and electronics	18,020	34.1%
Building, public works and others	6,605	12.5%
Textile and clothing	5,815	11.0%
General mechanics and metal construction	5,080	9.6%
Transport, Driving and Maintenance of Vehicles and Public Works and Agricultural Machinery	4,800	9.1%
Office, Trade and Computer Jobs	4,732	9.0%
Tourism and Hotels	3,459	6.5%
Services and Miscellaneous Industries	2,462	4.7%
Fisheries and aquaculture	439	0.8%
Art and craft	419	0.8%
Agrifoods industries	409	0.8%
Agriculture	337	0.6%
Leather and shoes	261	0.5%

Source: ONEQ, 2017.

A reform of the vocational training system was undertaken in 2014 and was extended to 2018 (ONEQ, 2013b). The main objectives of this reform were: (a) increase the intake capacity; (b) promote the skills approach to better identify the needs of the productive system; (c) strengthen relationships with companies to ensure professional integration; (d) improve training of trainers; and (e) improve the match with the labour market. However, it is still too early to evaluate this new reform.

3.4 Conclusions on labour market issues

Given that Tunisian youth represent 41% of the population (KILM), the challenges of providing quality education and the employability of skilled workers are urgent matters for the sustainability of the Tunisian economy.

A mismatch between the education system and the job market leads young graduates of higher education to experience significant employability difficulties. The overall unemployment rate is around 15% for people aged 15 and above, but it is around 35% for youth (KILM, 2018) and around 42% for youth with an advanced level of education (WDI, 2013). It would seem, therefore, that the economy is currently unable to absorb all skilled workers. Whether this is largely a cyclical or structural factor is difficult to say.

The concerns over the quality of education and its mismatch with the labour market seems to require a reorientation of educational policies as well as labour market policies to promote the creation of skilled jobs by the private sector. These recommendations are in line with the recent OECD report that suggested Tunisia is returning to a path of inclusive growth (OECD, 2018a). Moreover, the low participation of women in the labour market offers significant growth potential.

4 Migration

4.1 Introduction

Since the French Protectorate ended in 1956, Tunisian emigration has responded mostly to labour needs in Western Europe. In the framework of bilateral labour agreements Tunisians emigrated to France, and elsewhere in Europe. After 1973-74, as limitations were put on legal labour migration to the West, the main pathway to traditional European destinations became family reunion. Irregular immigration developed in parallel, especially to Southern Europe where informal activities in labour-intensive sectors were sustaining the economy until the financial crisis of 2008. Migration to oil-producing states started also in the 1970s, mainly to Libya, an outlet for pendular, short-term migration of low-skilled labourers. Smaller numbers of skilled migrants turned to North America and to the Gulf in the 2000s, as an alternative to Europe.

The history and patterns of Tunisian migration highlight the policies underpinning the movements and stakes of migration. The ruling regime's policy has always been to encourage Tunisian citizens to emigrate, and to monitor them while abroad. To that effect, a wide array of high-profile governmental bodies and regime-controlled associations have been set up to place Tunisian workers abroad, and manage the economic, cultural political relations with the Tunisian diaspora. Since 2011 and the toppling of the Ben Ali regime, pressures to migrate have intensified: high levels of unemployment (15% in 2017), especially among the youth and university graduates (above 30%), coexist with expanding inactivity and school drop-outs: 32 percent of Tunisia's youth aged 15-29 were "neither in employment nor in education or training" (NEET) in 2013 (Elder, 2015: 5). Additional reasons for migration include the lack of attractive opportunities in a congested labour market comprised primarily of low-skill, low-paid activities since the drastic structural adjustment measures of the 1990s; economic stagnation and a GDP falling by 2% in 2017; and the stalling of the political reform process and the deterioration of the security situation.

Tunisia is currently put under strong international (mostly European) pressure to accommodate growing numbers of immigrants, many of whom are refugees from the war in neighbouring Libya. Of the 53,500 foreign residents recorded during the census of 2014, about 70% are Sub-Saharan African and Arab nationals; among these are growing numbers of registered (Syrians) and unregistered refugees (hundreds of thousands of Libyans). Tunisia finds itself a country of transit and immigration; yet, as its experience has been with emigration, the country has no legal and protection apparatus.

The EU has put strict conditionality on its aid to Tunisia, which include controls on irregular migration from the Tunisian territory; readmittance of Tunisian irregulars, as well as the promotion of voluntary returns. Various agreements were passed since 2011, including the highly unpopular Mobility Partnership signed in 2014.

As of 2017, Tunisians made up less than 1% of irregular migrants captured in Europe. Despite these low numbers, the country is a strategic partner for EU member states that aim to solve the European "migration crisis". This is done by incentivising Tunisia and other neighbouring countries to take over the processing of refugees' status determination on their territory, offer protection to, and readmit asylum seekers whose requests have been denied – including those who are returned from Europe.

Recent field inquiries underlined that, compared to other issues, migration and mobility were not perceived as a priority, neither by the Tunisian society as a whole, nor by Tunisian decision-makers (Roman and Pastore, 2018: 20, Abderrahim, 2017). These are more concerned with the context spurring migration, namely, the economic, security and political stalemate in the country. Moreover, the revolutionary process has empowered Tunisian civil society, which cannot be repressed as it was under Ben Ali's regime. Imposing measures of EU border-externalisation and readmission is seen not only as unethical, but also as a security hazard. Moreover, the measures of visa liberalisations promised to Tunisia, as an incentive to signing the many agreements and partnerships, have not yet materialised.

This discrepancy in expectations and stakes attributed to migration (between EU Member States on the one hand, and Tunisian stakeholders on the other hand) could explain the relative stagnation of concrete policy steps and reforms expected from Tunisia. Neither the asylum law nor the migration policy have been formally adopted so far. In the eyes of many Tunisians, the presence of refugees illustrates an asymmetry in commitments and requirements between the EU and Tunisia.

4.2 Migration stock

4.2.1 Stocks of Tunisians abroad

As of 2017, Tunisians residing abroad numbered 1.4 million,[14] compared to a total population of nearly 11.5 million.[15] Tunisians residing abroad include first, second as well as third generation Tunisians. First-generation, Tunisia-born migrants numbered around 775,500, of whom 75% were in Europe. Table 4. 1 illustrates their distribution by country of residence.

---

14 1,377,851, of which 511,200 females and 866,651 males. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Consular records: http://data.migration.nat.tn/fr/data/portal.

15 11,446,300, based on the latest available data as of October 2018 (http://www.ins.nat.tn/fr/themes/population).

Table 4. 1 Estimates of Tunisian migrants' stocks by region and selected countries of residence (c. 2016): Europe and France dominate as a destination, followed by Gulf States.

	Source	Def.	Number	% of all emigrants
Europe 28+Switzerland+Norway			**585.190**	**75%**
France			393.937	51%
Italy			104.936	14%
Germany	(2)		32.000	4%
Belgium		(A)	14.445	2%
Switzerland			11.575	1%
UK	(1)		7.000	1%
Sweden	(2)		4.996	1%
Netherlands			4.555	1%
Arab countries			**95.000**	**12%**
Gulf countries	**(3)**	**(B)**	**88.812**	**11%**
Of which the UAE			39.283	5%
Saudi Arabia	(3)	(B)	21.086	3%
Qatar			17.750	2%
Other Arab countries	(4)	(B)	**6.600**	**1%**
Of which Libya	(4)	(B)	3.084	0%
North America			**30.265**	**4%**
USA	(5)	(A)	18.500	2%
Canada			11.765	2%
Other countries			**65.000**	**8%**
Of which Israel	(2)	(A)	28.320	4%
Total emigrants (est.)			**775.455**	**100%**

Sources: (1) receiving countries' statistics, 2017; (2) OECD-International migration database, year 2016 (31/12); (3) Tunisian Consular records (4) UN/DESA, rev. 2017; (5) OECD-DIOC database, 2011 revision. Definition of migrant: (A) country of birth; (B) country of nationality."Others" refers to non-Arab African and Asian countries, Oceania, South America, other European countries.

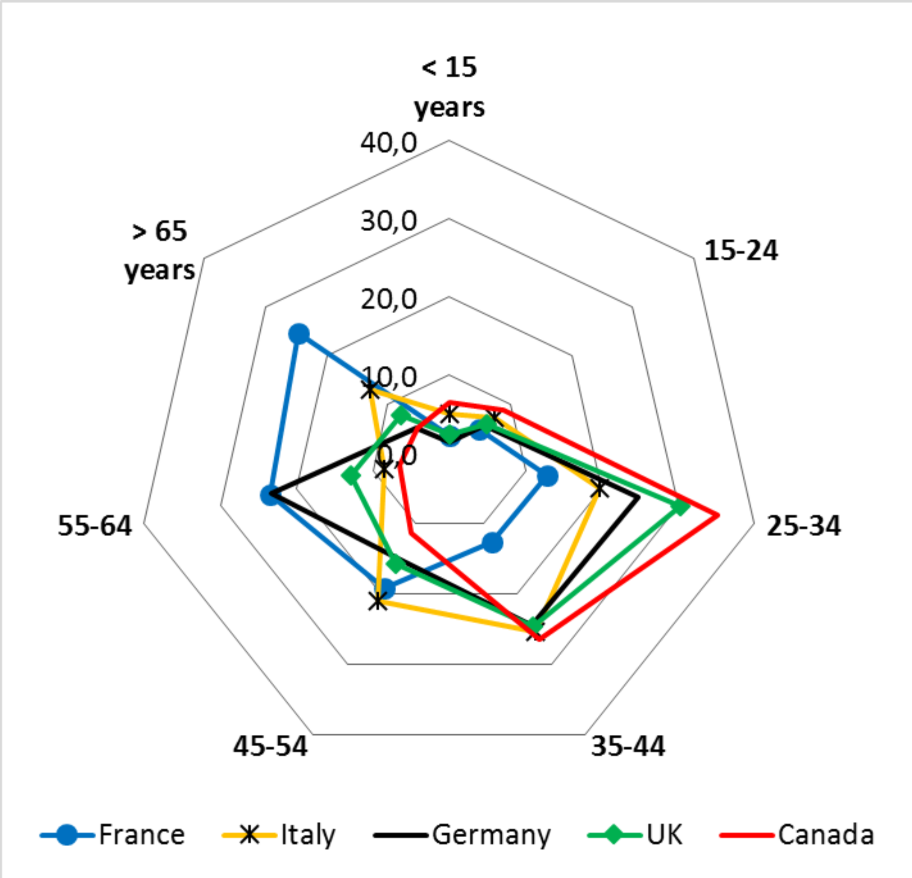
With regard to Tunians abroad, the following statistics are of interest:

- The majority of Tunisian expatriates live in the EU (around three quarters), and France remains a major host country.
- Since the war in Libya, Libya ceased to be a major destination for Tunisian migrants. Ten percent of Tunisian migrants now live in Gulf countries, especially the UAE and Saudi Arabia.[16] Some of these are believed to be experts sent by the Tunisian technical cooperation agency, which mainly works with Gulf States, as well as labourers sent in the framework of bilateral agreements (see below).
- About 220,000 holders of Tunisian citizenship were naturalised in their European host countries between 2000 and 2016. Of these, 63 % (138,633) were naturalised in France, 14 % (31,174) in Italy and 8 % in Germany.

16 The figures are taken from the Consular records, for lack of more recent estimates from the receiving countries themselbves, which do not discloset he distribution of expatriates by region, or country of nationality. Therefore, the data could be underestimated (Tunisian residents do not register at the Embassy), or overestimated (some Tunisian nationals are born in the country of residence, for example).

- Most migrants from Tunisia are males (57 % of all migrants in OECD countries); 77 % are in working age groups (15 to 65 years and 32 % in the 25 to 44 age category).
- Tunisian migrants display diverse demographic and socio-economic profiles by country of destination (Figure 4. 1). France hosts older age groups: almost half (48 %) of the Tunisian-born there are 55 and above, and 25 % in the age group 65 and above. France has also the most balanced sex ratio: 54 % of men on average. This suggests a low turnover of migrants and a relative closure to new entries.
- Child migrants (aged below 15) are rare everywhere. This indicates that Tunisian family migration is uncommon, except, to a certain extent, in Canada where 6 % of all migrants are children.

Figure 4. 1 Percentage distribution of Tunisian migrants by age group (selected OECD countries, 2011): A working-age population, few migrant families.



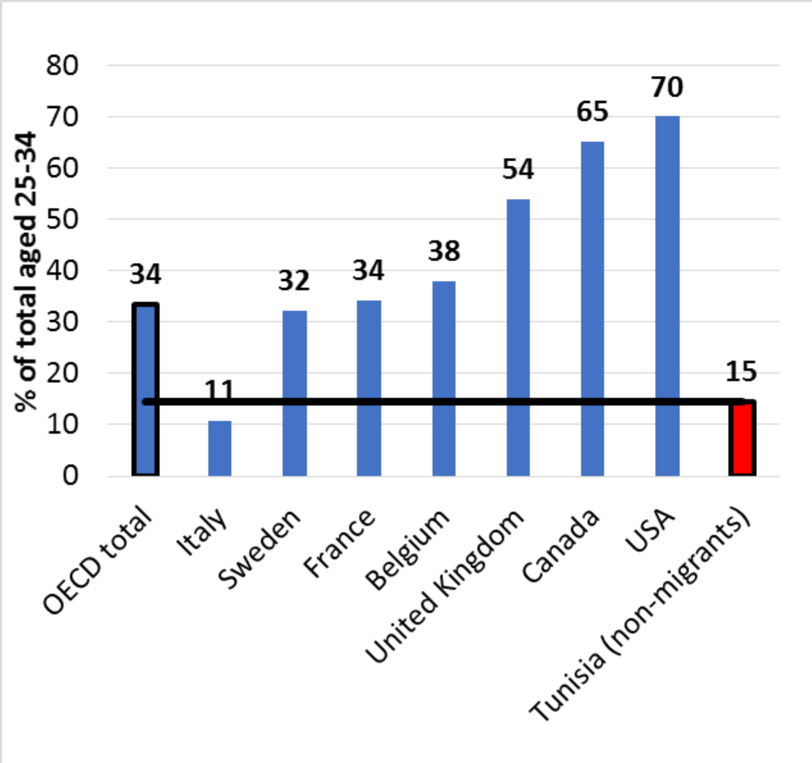
Source: OECD DIOC database, 2011 revision

- In Canada and in the UK, the 25-44 years age group predominates and sex ratios are particularly skewed: 65 and 70 males for 100 females, respectively. This suggests that Tunisian expatriates may be families, as well as students and young male professionals who moved alone. In the UK, 20 % of recent migrants (first permit holders) were effectively residing for education-related purposes in 2015, while 80 % of all migrants (recent, first permit holders and older settlers) were residing for employment purposes.[17]

[17] Eurostat, 2015 data, first permits delivered during the year and all permit (first and renewals) holders as of December 31.

- In Germany, Belgium, Sweden and Italy, migrant age distribution was also skewed towards active age groups and males outnumbered females: 61 % males in Italy, 66 % in Sweden. Family reunion was the prime pathway to residency in these countries: 66 to 78 % of all first permit holders; 58 to 79 % of all permit holders. This indicates that migrants have come as young adults to these countries, most of them for marriage with an EU citizen.[18] Besides the many migrants in family reunion schemes, Germany also hosted some Tunisians for humanitarian reasons, while 40 % of those in Italy (all permit holders) were labourers.

Figure 4. 2 The selectivity of migration: Percentage of highly-educated Tunisian migrants in age group 25-34 years, various destination countries (2011)



Source: OECD-DIOC 2010-11

- In Tunisia, migration is a selective process: migrants are twice as educated as non-migrants (Figure 4. 2)
- The education level plays a role in the distribution of migrants by host country: the UK's and Canada's points-based immigration system mostly channel highly-educated, post-graduate students and young highly-skilled professionals. Most Tunisians in Canada were indeed in highly-skilled professions: the three top categories of professions (the "managers", "professionals" and "technicians and associate professionals") employed 60 percent of them (38 percent in Britain).
- In the rest of Europe, the immigration policies and socio-economic setup channeled less educated Tunisians. Tunisian migrants in Italy are even less educated than non-migrants in

[18] Eurostat data, 2015, first permits delivered for family-related purposes, detailed results. Of the 14,122 family-related permits delivered that year in the EU-28, 7,111 concerned a "spouse/partner joining an EU citizen". The share ranged from 26 (Italy) to 58 % (France) of all permits granted for family related purposes. Only UK and Sweden had most migrants joining non-EU citizens. In Belgium, France and Sweden, 55 to 58 % of family-reunion related permits are granted to males, while in Italy, females use such schemes more than males.

Tunisia (11% of highly-educated only), as compared to 15% in Tunisia among non-migrants (Figure 4. 2). Low-skilled Tunisian migrants were attracted to Italy by the development of labour-intensive activities (in construction, agriculture and services) in the 1990s; 76 percent of employed Tunisian migrants in Italy were in the three lowest categories of occupations.[19]. Only 7 percent were in managerial or highly-skilled positions in this country.

- Tunisian migrants in France can be found in all categories of professions: 39 percent are in the top three as well as in the three lowest-skilled categories. Those in Belgium displayed a relatively similar, diverse profile.[20] Tunisians also often worked in services and trade related professions.

4.2.2 Stocks of Migrants in Tunisia

Migrant population and demographic characteristics

Table 4. 2 Foreign population residing in Tunisia by country of nationality (2004; 2014): A gender-balanced immigration, dominated by the Algerians, Libyans and French.

	2004		2014			
Country of nationality	**Total**	**% total**	**Males**	**Females**	**Total**	**% total**
Arab countries	**21,200**	**60**	**14,273**	**14,715**	**28,988**	**54**
Of which Algeria	9,612	**27**	3,546	6,450	9,996	**19**
Libya	1,738	**5**	4,866	3,906	8,772	**16**
Morocco	6,363	**18**	3,024	2,541	5,565	**10**
Egypt	672	**2**	N/A	N/A	1,093	**2**
Syria	416	**1**	N/A	N/A	1,024	**2**
Iraq	0	**0**	N/A	N/A	550	**1**
European countries	**9,667**	**27**	**6,452**	**8,635**	**15,087**	**28**
Of which France	4,612	**13**	3,527	4,757	8,284	**15**
Italy	1,560	**4**	1,145	973	2,118	**4**
Germany	1,000	**3**	590	802	1,393	**3**
Non-Arab African countries	**3,017**	**9**	**4,822**	**2,672**	**7,494**	**14**
Of which Mali	222	**1**	N/A	N/A	958	**2**
Cameroon	0	**0**	N/A	N/A	689	**1**
Ivory Coast	609	**2**	N/A	N/A	607	**1**
Senegal	360	**1**	N/A	N/A	394	**1**
Niger	129	**0**	N/A	N/A	522	**1**
Other countries	**1,308**	**4**	**713**	**1,208**	**1,921**	**4**
Of which USA	261	**1**	237	347	584	**1**
Total	**35,192**	**100**	**26,260**	**27,230**	**53,490**	**100**

Sources: Tunisian population censuses (2004;2014)

[19] According to the ISCO 08 classification, in the categories of "craft and related trades workers"; "plant and machine operators and assemblers," and "elementary occupations".

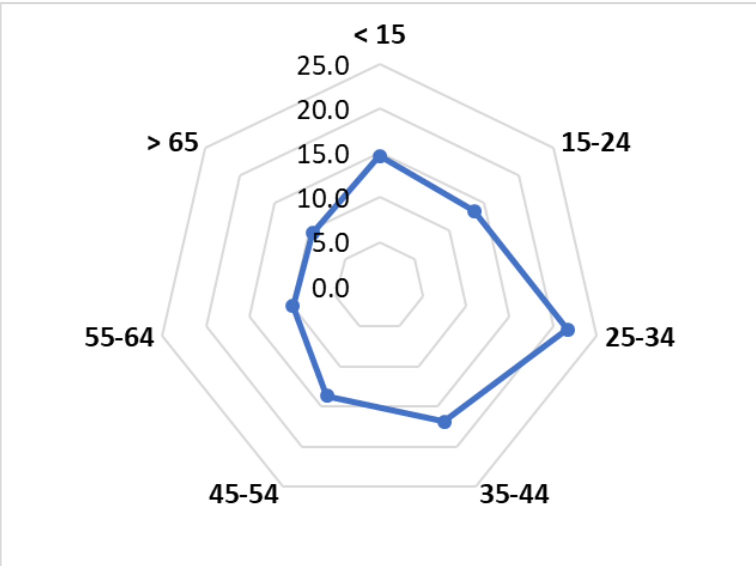
[20] OECD-DIOC data, 2011 revision. Data on Tunisians in Germany were unavailable.

Census 2014 data (last available as of October 2018)[21] indicate the following:

- The total stocks of foreigners[22] grew by 52% during the decade 2004-2014
- Arab nationals dominate in absolute share (54 % al all foreign residents)
- Foreign nationals from Algeria, Libya and France dominate in numbers and make up 50% of all foreign residents.
- The number of Libyan residents grew five times since 2004.
- Non-Arab Africans more than doubled in numbers: their relative share jumped from 9 to 14% of all foreign residents, as they numbered 7,500 in 2014.
- Foreign nationals are relatively balanced gender-wise, except among nationals from African countries (mostly males), and among Algerians and nationals from "Other countries" (mostly females).

However: the census underestimates the number of foreign residents, especially the ones (1) not perceiving themselves as settled (3 months and longer); (2) Foreign residents in irregular situations. Libyans, in particular, are considered to be underestimated in the census. As of September 2014, the Tunisian Minister of Commerce stated that the country was hosting over one million Libyan refugees,[23] while the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs estimated that these numbered between 800,000 and 1.5 million.[24] Libyans' net migration rates[25] have indeed been positive between 2004 and 2016 (last available data) and culminated in 2013, to reach 868,000 (2016: +174,200). These flow data indicate that the number of Libyans entering has constantly been higher than the number of those exiting and suggests growing stocks of Libyans in Tunisia.

Figure 4. 3 Age distribution of foreign nationals in Tunisia (2014): A relative balance between age groups, suggesting the presence of workers, students and families.



[21] No recent data is available on foreign residents in Tunisia. The NMO (National Migration Observatory) data portal provides data on foreign immigrants to Tunisia (source: INS), which do not make sense. In the absence of metadata explaining which population they describe, we had to decide not to process them. Census' published results only provide figures disaggregated by nationality (selected nationalities). We had to use unpublished data on the gender and age group distribution of foreign nationals in the census, available in Labidi, et. al, 2017 (annexed tables).

[22] Tunisia classifies migrants as foreign nationals, not by their place of birth.

[23] http://observers.france24.com/en/20141001-libyan-refugees-stigmatised-tunisia-reputation

[24] http://libyabusiness.tv/video/no-visas-for-libyans-says-tunisian-government

[25] Measured from the inflows and outflows at Tunisia's borders.

- The age distribution of foreign nationals at the time of census 2014 suggests a population mostly in working age (22% in age-group 25-34 and 17% in age group 35-44)
- The age distribution also suggests the presence of families: 15% aged 15 and less, 10% aged 65 and above.[26]
- The age structure suggests the presence of students (10% in age group 15-24). Students from Sub-Saharan African countries, especially, used to number 12,000 in 2010 but their numbers decreased markedly (4,000 in 2017) (ministry of Higher Education figures).
- Foreign residents were mostly concentrated in Tunis and on the West Coast; 34% were in Tunis 15% in Ariana governorates, and 10% in Sousse governorate.

Foreign workers

The census did not disaggregate foreign residents' figures by status (workers, family members, etc.).

- In 2015 (last available data), foreign workers holding a work permit (new or renewed) numbered 6,174, down from 8,099 in 2009.[27] This would suggest that workers make up around 11% of legal residents in Tunisia.
- Most legal labourers came from France, Italy and Morocco: 3,122 workers, or 50.6% of all employed foreigners. These nationals have been ranking first among employed foreigners since 2009. Despite their large numbers, Algerian nationals made up less than 1% of all permit-holders in 2015. Sub-Saharan Africans were almost absent from statistics of permit holders. Libyans numbered only 374.
- The relative share of Europeans decreased among legal workers (French; 2,020 in 2010; 1,229 in 2015), when that of Arab labourers increased (Moroccans from 756 to 1,093 labourers in 2015).
- 25% of permit holders are managers ("chefs d'entreprise") or work for export-led businesses (20%)
- Two sectors of activity absorb the bulk of the legal foreign work force: services and industry, which employ, respectively, 64% et de 35.65% of all workers. Most of them were in manufacturing industries (Labidi et al. 2017: 43-53).
- No data was available on education or skill levels of immigrants.

Refugees

Table 4. 3 Refugees and asylum seekers registered by UNHCR in Tunisia, by nationality (October 2018): Syrians dominate vastly.

Country or origin	Persons of concern
Syria	780
Palestine	38
Yemen	31
Sudan	26
Iraq	21
Others	152
Total	**1,048**

26 No data disaggregated by nationality.
27 Source: Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (MFPE) (unpublished).

- From January to August 2018, 310 new asylum-seekers were registered (197 men and 113 women), bringing the number of persons of concern to 1,048 (909 registered refugees and 139 asylum-seekers).
- Most individuals registered in 2018 are from Syria (75%), Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, Yemen and 16 other countries.
- Around 25 % of persons of concern live in and around Tunis, while the majority live further south. Some 30 % are living in the central governorates of Gabes and Gafsa, and 16 % living in Medenine, where the Zarzis office and the UNHCR-Tunisian Red Crescent shelter are located.
- Since January 2018, Tunisian authorities referred 628 cases for profiling in the context of mixed migration. Three-quarters of the referred individuals were profiled by UNHCR, the Tunisian Red Crescent and IOM, of whom a third expressed interest in seeking asylum. 18 were from Senegal; 22 from Cameroon; 24 from Mali and 142 from Ivory Coast.[28]

Irregular immigrants

No reliable data exist to assess the number and profile of irregular migrants in Tunisia. Nationals from Sub-Saharan African states, staying irregularly in Tunisia on their way to the EU are usually estimated at around 10,000.[29]

- Figures of Syrian refugees in Tunisia as of mid-2015 (last available data) quoted by Tunisian officials and social workers are usually much higher than the ones quoted by UNHCR (registered refugees) and in the census results. Estimates of Syrians in Tunisia range from between 4,000[30] and as many as 9 to 12,000.[31] This cannot be convincingly assessed; yet, IOM estimated that some 10,000 Syrians had entered Tunisia from the Algerian border up to December 2014,[32] on their way to Libya.[33]
- Libyans might also be grossly underestimated in official figures (see above). Their numbers are difficult to come by since they do not register as refugees, as indicated in Table 4. 3. According to a survey, 82% of Libyans were in irregular situation (Moulay, 2016: 85) and Libyan schools in Tunisia were schooling 1,916 Libyan children in 2014-2015 (data from Libyan embassy in Tunis). The Tunisian Ministry of Education stated that Tunisian private primary schools hosted 520 Libyan children. 500 more Tunisian pupils were admitted in Tunisian public establishments in 2015-2016 (Moulay, 2016: 53-54).
- Immigrants in Tunisia, and employment figures are equally elusive. Immigrants in an irregular situation, from Sub-Saharan African countries and from other countries in the Maghreb, survive in clandestine, low-skilled and low-pay economic activities.[34] A large number of vulnerable, irregular workers are employed in domestic services. Some are also brought in as high-level athletes, who later fall into irregularity when they cannot be enrolled in a Tunisian team (cf. a survey by Boubakri, 2015).

---

28 Data are taken from UNHCR. Operational Unpdate-Tunisia, October 2018.
29 Natter, 2015.
30 http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2015/09/15/belgacem-sabri-le-nombre-des-refugies-syriens-atteint-4-mille/.
31 http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2015/08/14/enquete-sur-la-situation-des-refugies-syriens-et-libyens-en-tunisie/.
32 Until December 2014, Algeria was not imposing entry visas on Syrians.
33 Altaï Consulting, 2015: 71.
34 Kriaa et al.,2013: 33.

4.3 Migration flows

Currently, Tunisia does not represent a key country of origin or transit of irregular migrants to the EU. In 2016, only 0.5% of irregular migrants arriving in Europe through the Central Mediterranean route departed from Tunisia. Moreover, the number of Tunisians who cross irregularly to the EU has continuously decreased over the past few years. While in 2011 this number reached 28,047 due to political instability which led to a lax security situation, this figure decreased to 2,025 in 2012.

4.3.1 Migration outflows

The propensity to migrate is high in Tunisia: 44 % of the country's youth aged 15 to 29 expressed their desire to emigrate in 2010.[35] The Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES) published a study late 2016 on "Irregular Migration in Tunisia", which stated that 54,6 % of the 1,168 young Tunisians interviewed (of whom two-third were aged 20 et 29 years) wanted to emigrate while 31% declared they were ready to do so irregularly.[36]

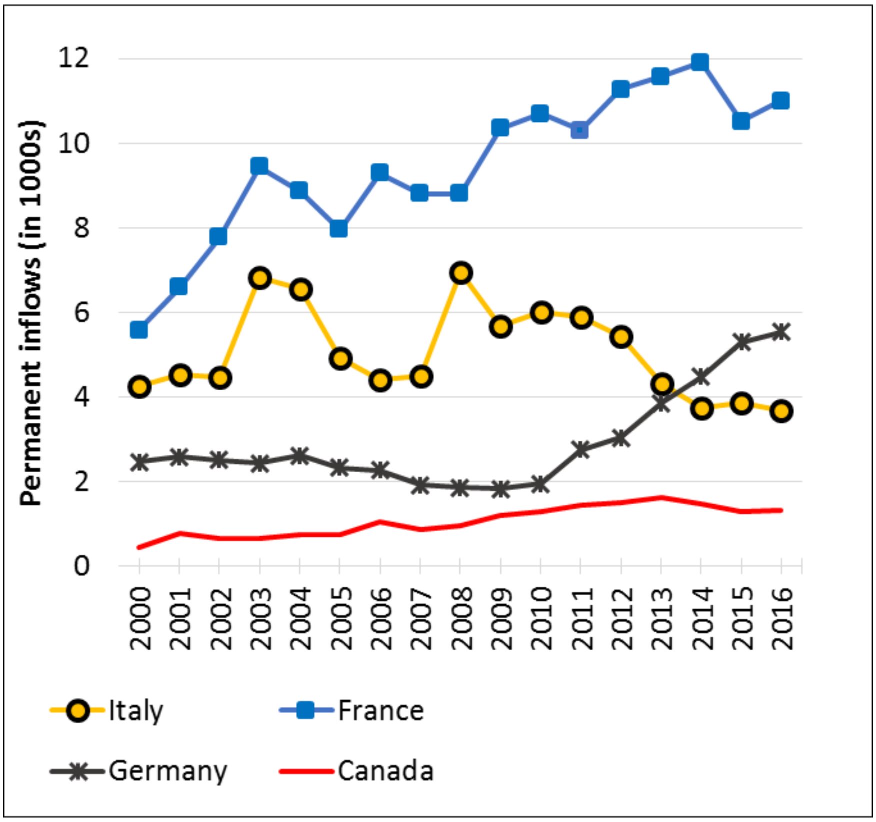
Outflows and purposes of emigration
Outflows to Europe (first permits, all purposes), amounted to 26,424 in 2017, down from a high of 34,823 in 2011. Most permits were valid for one year or more: 84 % for the EU as a whole, 90 % for France and Italy. In Germany, by contrast, only 53 % of the first permits were valid for more than one year.

---

35 According to the Silatech Index, a representative yearly survey of young people in the League of Arab States. Silatech-Gallup. *The Silatech Index: Voices of Young People,* 2010, p. 18. Available at: http://css.escwa.org.lb/sd/1382/SilatechMasterinteractive.pdf. By comparison, during the same survey, 20 % of young Egyptians and 37 % of young Moroccans expressed their wish to migrate. Another recent survey by the Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux (FTDES) similarly emphasised young Tunisians' propensity to migration, even by irregular means: http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2016/12/03/45-des-jeunes-tunisiens-se-disent-prets-a-emigrer-meme-illegalement/

36 http://www.citoyensdesdeuxrives.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6222:un-rapport-de-linstitut-tunisien-des-etudes-strategiques-ites--l-immigration-clandestine-un-trafic-qui-rapporte-400-milliards-de-dollars-par-an-r-&catid=216:migrants-en-tunisie&Itemid=196

Figure 4. 4 After France, Germany has become the most important destination for Tunisian migrants since 2014.



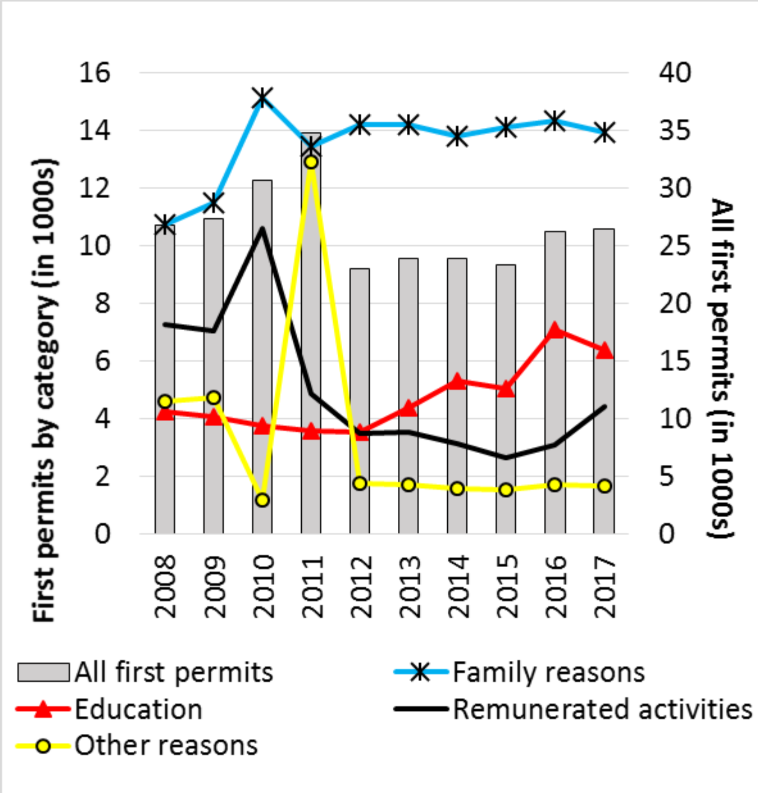
Source: OECD-International Migration database (2000-2014)

The key messages in Figure 4. 4 are the following:

- Figures for the period 2000-2014 show a hike in outflows to Germany after 2010.
- Movements of Tunisians into Italy reveal the effects of regularisation campaigns in 2002-2004 and 2009 in that country, reflected in the hikes in entries observed in 2003-2004 and in 2008-2010. Yet, the sharp drop in numbers after 2012 suggests that Italy is a less favoured destination since the economic crisis of 2008 decreased opportunities in sectors (formal and informal) where low-skilled Tunisian used to be employed (eg. construction).
- France remained the major outlet for Tunisian migrants, especially since 2008. Outflows directed to France went up slowly but steadily throughout the period.
- Eurostat data on first residency permits ([migr_resfirst] from 2008 to 2017 confirm that the numbers of permits delivered by France rose slightly from 10,000 in 2008 to 16,000 residencies in 2017 (all purposes), making up 60% of all new permits attributed to Tunisian new migrants (up from 38% in 2008). Germany channelled increasing numbers (from 856 to 3,000 permits granted). The figures of first residencies granted by Italy fell from 13,000 in 2008 (47% of all permits granted to Tunisians) to 3,500 in 2017 (13% of permits granted to Tunisians).
- France, now the major receiver of new Tunisian migrants, issued 70 % of all student permits in the EU in 2017, up from 60 % in 2008. This is a sign of the growing French and EU preference

for skilled and highly-skilled migrants from Tunisia,[37] which leaves less legal outlets for the less skilled ones.

Figure 4. 5 Numbers and purposes of first permits granted to Tunisians in the EU-28 (2008-2017): decrease in the number of first permits granted after 2011 and most migrants come to the EU for family reasons



Source: Eurostat

- The total number of first permits granted decreased after 2011
- The upsurge in first permit issuances observed in 2011 concerned permits issued for "other reasons". These are the six-month temporary protection status permits granted by Italy to Tunisian migrants who arrived in Italy between 1 January and 5 April 2011, under the heading "Extraordinary reception measures for exceptional events".38
- Since 2010, first permits issued for family-related reasons increased in relative share (53% of all first permits in 2017, up from 40% in 2008), but have been stagnating in numbers (15,000 in 2010; 13,000 in 2017). Numbers of permits issued for "remunerated activities" fell from 10,597

37 See: http://www.ambassadefrance-tn.org/Office-francais-de-l-immigration-et-de-l-integration#flux-migratoires-economiques-entre-2. However, the same source (the French OFII) also indicated that 55 % of Tunisian labourers received in France in 2015 were seasonal workers, holding a three-year residency document.

38 As per article 20 of the country's Consolidated Immigration Act providing for 'Extraordinary reception measures for exceptional events'. Conversely, Tunisians arriving in Italy after 5 April 2011 were returned to Tunisia. Temporary protection permits were valid for six months (then renewed for other six months) and granted the holder the possibility of working and travelling in the Schengen area. Tunisian immigrants largely used these temporary visas to move on towards France. This came together with a hike in the numbers of Tunisian asylum seekers to Europe in 2011, mainly directed to Italy, Switzerland and to a much lesser extent, to Germany, France and Sweden. The asylum applicants from Tunisia in the EU-28 numbered 620 in 2008, 6,810 in 2011 and 2,255 in 2015 (Eurostat data, migr_asyappctza).

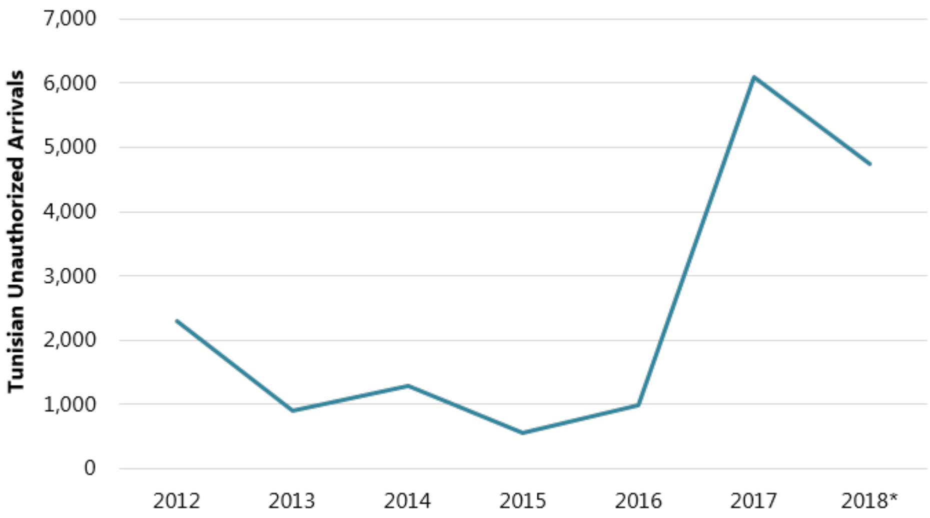
in 2010 to 2,651 in 2015, rising to 4,439 in 2017. Since 2012, slightly more Tunisian migrants arrive for education-related purposes.

- Reasons for the fall in work-related permits: the lower-skilled professions employing most Tunisian migrants in Italy (fishing, agriculture and construction for instance) suffered from the economic crisis of 2008 and from the ensuing economic reforms. As of 2017, Italy only supplied 126 permits to Tunisian labourers for the purpose of "remunerated activities", down from 6,000 in 2008 and a hike of 9,000 in 2010 (84% of all permits granted for that purpose in the EU).
- France picked up as a destination for workers, from 934 "work-related" permits in 2008 to 3,500 in 2017 (78 % of the "remunerated activities" permits granted to Tunisians in the EU that year.

Labour placements are also organised by the ACTC (cooperants and experts) and by the Ministry of Manpower (all skill levels). Placements by ACTC amounted to 3,379 in 2014, up from 1,221 in 2005. Mid-2018, 1,667 experts had been placed by ACTC since the beginning of the year. Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE absorbed the bulk of these experts with, respectively, 500, 306 and 196 recruitments during the six months, followed by France (151), Canada (119) and Germany (48). Half of the experts were directed to posts in the education sector, followed by the health sector.
The Ministry of Employment has been operating placements in the framework of bilateral conventions with various countries, including France Switzerland, Germany, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, since the 2000s. These reached 3,300 in 2012 (last available data) (Kriaa et al, 2012: 22).

Outflows of irregular migrants

Figure 4. 6 Tunisian Unauthorized Arrivals in Italy, 2012–18*: a hike in the outflows of irregulars from Tunisia in 2017 and 2018.



* Data for 2018 are year-to-date _figures as of October 9, 2018. Source: Author analysis of Italian Interior Ministry data compiled for the 2011–16 period, as well as data from Italian Interior Ministry, Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, "Cruscotto statistico giornaliero," updated October 10, 2018, **available online**. **(Figure and caption are taken from Lixi, 2018).**

- The start of the Arab uprisings, in December 2010, spurred an immediate surge in emigration from Tunisia through irregular channels, as police forces were disorganised and coastal controls proved inexistent. Between January and September 2011, 42,807 persons were recorded as entering Italy illegally by sea, compared with fewer than 5,000 in 2010 and fewer than 10,000 in 2009. Of these, about 20,000 were Tunisians, 47 % were non-Tunisians (18,451 persons), including 17,342 Sub-Saharan Africans (Fargues and Fandrich, 2012: 4).
- Tunisian migrants who arrived in Italy between 1 January and 5 April 2011 were granted temporary protection status but Tunisians arriving in Italy after 5 April 2011 were returned to Tunisia. An accelerated repatriation agreement signed between Italy and Tunisia at the time curbed Tunisian emigration to the European Union (EU) by 92 % in 2012.[39]
- In 2017, however, departures quickly rose from a few hundred in the first months of the year to reach more than 6,000 by the end of the year, as estimated from the figures of irregular migrants arrested on Italian coasts (Figure 4. 6).
- The Tunisian Forum for Social and Economic Rights (FTDES) confirms the hike in the numbers of irregulars departing from Tunisia to Europe as of early 2017: the number of irregulars intercepted at Tunisian borders (on their way to Europe) on the first trimester of 2017 was a 446% increase if compared to the the first trimester of 2015.[40] 86% of irregulars arrested by Tunisian authorities were Tunisian nationals and 14% were Sub-Saharan African nationals. 95% were males.
- According to Frontex,[41] and to the Italian statistics of those apprehended on Italian coasts (see figures up to October 2018), the number of Tunisians migrating irregularly to Europe may be contained (not increasing) in 2018.

4.3.2 Migration inflows

Traditionally a country of emigration, Tunisia started experiencing already in the 1990s an increasing in-flow of migrants of Sub-Saharan origin – a phenomenon indirectly linked to the pan-African policies adopted by Libya, as well as to civil wars and the ensuing economic instability in some Central and West African countries. In the 2000s, the establishment of the headquarters of the African Development Bank in Tunis and the privatisation and internationalisation of Tunisian universities led to an increase in the inflows of highly-skilled migrants from sub-Saharan African countries to Tunisia.

While such trends continued into the first decade of the 2000s, they saw a sudden acceleration in 2011. Beginning with the revolutionary events, Tunisia witnessed several waves of migration in connection to events taking place both internally and in Libya. Moreover, the conflict upsetting Libya since 2014 drove many Tunisians, third-country nationals as well as Libyans to cross from Libya into Tunisia. While many sub-Saharan Africans returned to their country of origin, others remained in Tunisia or went back to Libya, an element which points at Tunisia's double nature as country of transit and destination.

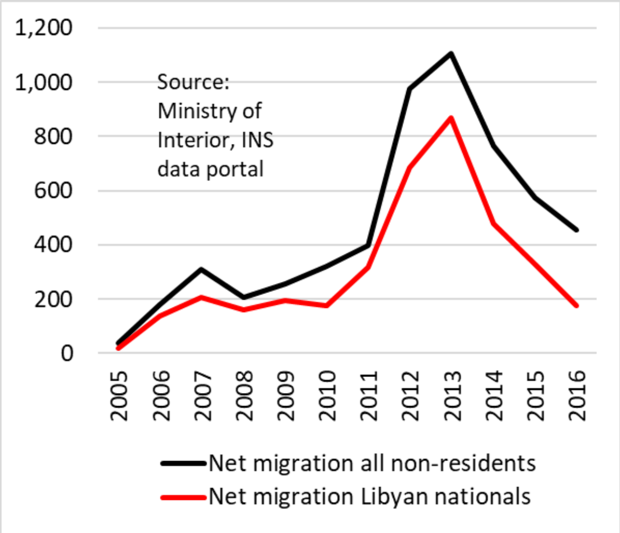
[39] Frontex data, 2013 in: https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/africa/tunisia.
[40] https://ftdes.net/rapports/fr.omm1.2017.pdf
[41] https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news-release/migratory-flows-in-september-total-down-by-a-third-spain-sees-significant-rise-nGctjY

Inflows at border

Tunisia experienced an upsurge in immigration since the start of the Libyan crisis in February 2011. The first three months of the crisis witnessed massive cross-border movements, reaching a peak at 7,000 daily arrivals on 7 March 2011. Estimates of those having reached Tunisia over the course of 2011-2012 stood at around 1 million persons. These broke down into 97,000 Tunisian returnees, 660,000 Libyans and 220,000 persons of thirty different nationalities, mostly Eritreans, Somalis and Sudanese, who had been residing in Libya (UNGA, 2013: 5; Baba, 2013).

In order to deal with the growing numbers of refugees, several camps were installed between February and May 2011, to accommodate up to 20,000 third-country nationals. As flows were decreasing rapidly by mid-2011, the Choucha camp run by UNHCR remained the only and biggest camp with over 3,700 refugees and asylum seekers. As of 31 January 2012, the vast majority of third-country nationals who came from Libya had either returned to their country of origin or had been resettled in third countries as refugees.[42] Since the closure of the camp by UNHCR in June 2013, around 1,000 migrants, especially sub-Saharan Africans, have been left without support and survive by begging.[43]

Figure 4. 7 Net migration of Libyan nationals and all non-residents (2005-2016): remains positive.



Waves of refugees from Libya experienced ebbs and flows; various upsurges in fighting sporadically forced new refugees to cross the border. Increasing numbers of families with children were also said to have arrived in Tunisia, while the father kept commuting between the two countries. IOM Tunisia reports that over July and August of 2014, up to 6,000 people per day were moving over the border from Libya to Tunisia. Among these were Sub-Saharan Africans, escaping the conflict in Libya or transiting through Tunisia on their way home. Non-Libyan migrants needed to present valid travel documents and proof of an onward journey and were only permitted to stay in Tunisia for 72 hours (Altaï Consulting, 2015: 86). Figure 4. 7 illustrates the rapid expansion of the net migration inflows to Tunisia (more entries than exits), from libyan nationals as well as from all foreign non-residents. The rate is still largerly positive, even if the surplus has been decreasing.

42 https://www.iom.int/countries/tunisia#fm
43 http://mediterraneanaffairs.com/tunisia-the-humanitarian-emergency-of-the-choucha-refugee-camp/

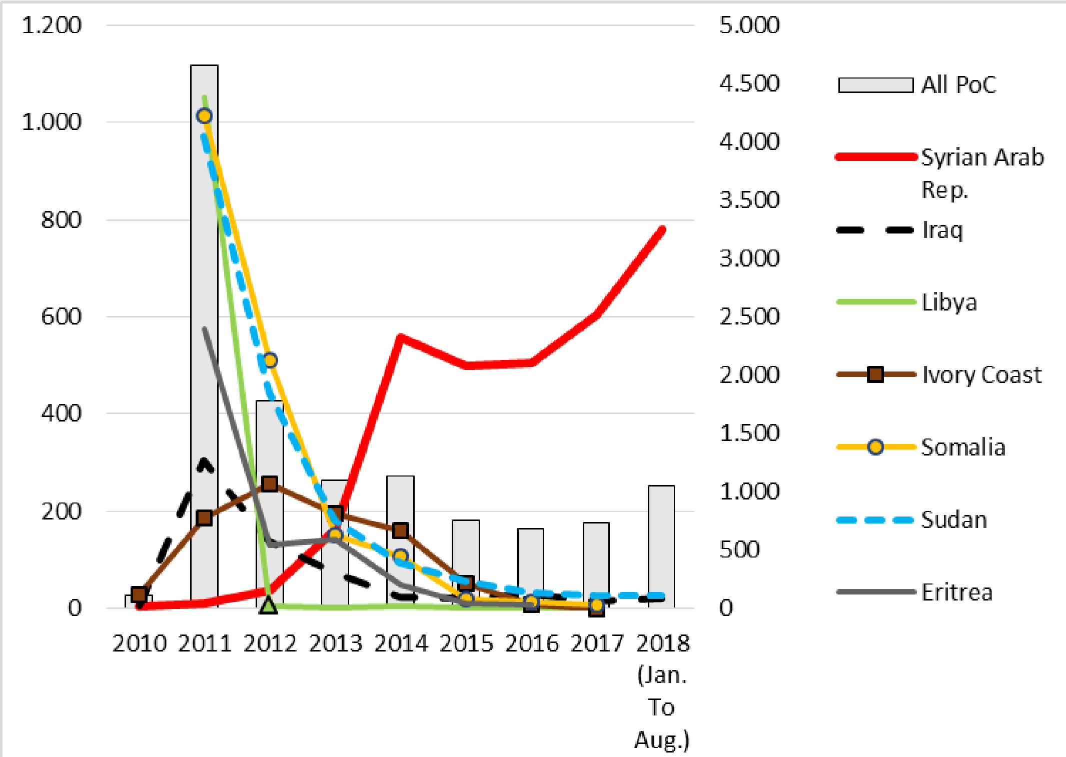
The Tunisian government has been hesitant in welcoming these flows and the border has been closed at times. In 2016, border crossings with Libya were closed after clashes took place in the border town of Ben Gardane. Tunisia also built a 200-kilometre barrier stretching about half the length of its border with Libya in an attempt to prevent Da'esh militants from infiltrating.[44]

Legal inflows, permits

No data on legal inflows to Tunisia are available: figures of permits are not published. Second-hand data used earlier are stocks of permit holders (first permits and renewed permits). Figures are not disaggregated.

Refugee arrivals

Figure 4. 8 Number of Persons of Concern (PoCs) since 2010 (total and selected nationalities): the growing share of Syrians



Source: UNHCR Population Statistics Reference Database

- From January to August 2018, 310 new asylum-seekers were registered (197 men and 113 women), bringing the number of persons of concern to 1,048.
- Movements of refugees' inflows indicate that all Persons of Concerns which acquired protection after the beginning of the war in Libya (Sub-Saharans from Eritrea, Sudan, Ivory Coast for instance) seem to be progressively fading, perhaps due to relocation or return to their country by a third party (possibly OIM).
- After an upsurge in registration of Libyans in 2011, UNHCR organised the return of 148,951 Libyan nationals that year, followed by 1,049 others in 2012.

[44] http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/strike-tunisia-town-over-halt-libya-border-trade-1410490164.

- Syrians stand as an exception as they are the only nationals to be increasingly incorporated under UN HCR's protection as "Persons of Concerns", namely, registered refugees and asylum seekers.
- The numbers of Palestinians are low, but steady (between 30 and 40, which suggests they might be staying in Tunisia, having no country to go back to. Yemeni PoCs, in spite of the distance between their country and Tunisia, grow in numbers. They numbered 30 in 2018.

Apprehension of irregular immigrants on border

Apprehensions of irregular immigrants entering Tunisia are not published by the Ministry of Interior in any source.

Return migration

Since 2008, the net migration rates of Tunisians Residing Abroad (TRE) had become positive (i.e., more TRE entering Tunisia than exiting), as compared to net migration rates of -59,000 and -52,000 respectively in 2005 and 2006.[45] This probably indicates that two opposite dynamics have been at play since the 2000s. First, the deteriorating socio-economic situation in Tunisia during the 2000s, which acted as a spur for emigration, especially from rural areas. Second, the 2008 financial crisis in Europe, the imposition of visas to all residents, including Arabs, decided in 2007 by the Libyan government, followed by announcements of deportation of irregulars,[46], as well as the blunt policies targeting the nationals from Arab Spring countries in the Gulf States since 2011,[47] limited legal emigration from Tunisia. More so, the change of regime may have encouraged some to return. However, in 2014 (last available data),[48] the net flows were negative again (-24,582). This may be resulting from the deterioration of the conditions in the country.

As of 2017, ONM's statistics (taken from INS) counted a total of 29,364 Tunisian return migrants, mostly coming for family reunion reasons (8,738). However, no metadata is available to confirm that the figures represent a net inflow.[49]

4.4 Migration Policy

Tunisia's new National Migration Strategy (Stratégie nationale migratoire, SNM) is articulated around five key issues and targets:

- Reinforce the governance of migration management;
- Guarantee the rights and interests of Tunisian migrants;
- Reinforce migration's input to socio-economic development, at the local, regional and national levels;
- Promote legal and orderly migration and prevent irregular migration;
- Protect the rights of all migrants including migrant labourers, asylum seekers and refugees in Tunisia.

---

45 For 2013 and 2014: Tunisian Ministry of Interior, data on entries and exits of travellers through Tunisian borders, http://opendata.interieur.gov.tn/fr/catalog/le-mouvement-d-entree-et-de-sortie-des-voyageurs-par-les-frontieres-tunisiennes-durant-les-annees-2012-2013-et-2014. For 2002 to 2012: Kriaa, M. et al. *Migration de travail en Tunisie: une lecture de la décennie 2002-2012*, Tunis : IOM, March 2013, p. 12.

46 "The visas were imposed to please Europe, as Libya had become a major gateway for irregular migrants from Africa" (Fargues, 2009: 4).

47 http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/firms-see-obstacles-in-hiring-from-arab-spring-nations

48 INS dataportal only provides the exits of TREs.

49 http://data.migration.nat.tn/fr/data/portal.

To date the National Migration Strategy, in its October 2015 version, has not been validated at the political level.

4.4.1 Key state and quasi state institutions or agencies dealing with migration.[50]

Since 2011, many NGOs have been involved in migration advocacy and migrants' rights protection, especially due to the Libyan migration crisis and to the spate of boat capsizes on Tunisian coasts. Civil society also launched new organisations, including the Higher Council for Tunisians Abroad, to sustain links with Tunisian expatriates and to ensure the new government takes into consideration the demands and aspirations of its citizens abroad.[51] At the governmental level, the institutional setting of migration policy-making in Tunisia is complex and involves no less than five ministries and five governmental agencies.

4.4.2 Migration legislation and policies

Since its independence, Tunisia passed more than 60 laws related to the various aspects of migration: taxes and fiscal issues, foreigners' assets; technical cooperation in the field of migration; emigrants and immigrants' health protection; travel, stay and departure documents; social rights; employment; teaching and education; currency export; placement of Tunisians abroad; access to justice; social security.[52]

Law n. 68-7 dated March 8, 1968 and Decree n. 1968-198 of June 22, 1968 rule over foreigners' entry and conditions of sojourn in Tunisia. Tunisia conditions the possibility to work on its territory to a double condition: the foreigner should hold a labour contract endorsed by the Ministry of Employment, as well as a residency permit stating the permission to work. The 2004 Law regulating the entry and exits of foreigners and nationals (Organic Law n° 2004-6 dated February 3, 2004, modifying and completing Law n° 75-40 dated May 14, 1975) establishes national preference. Under this law foreigners are excluded from governmental employment and liberal professions, unless a special derogation exists (Kriaa, 2014: 17). This national preference is also mentioned in the Labour Law (art. 258).[53] However, certain categories of foreign labourers are exempted from the examination of the labour contract for redundancy with Tunisian workers (managers, NGO personnel, Moroccan nationals).[54] Since 2015, Algerians are also exempted from labour permits in Tunisia (and reciprocally).[55]

Several bilateral agreements regarding labour migration have been passed: Convention relating to property, rights, labour rights, the exercise of professions and trades, the right of establishment and freedom of movement with Libya (1973); with Italy on stay and work (1995) and on seasonal workers (2000); conventions on labour force with Libya (2003) and Syria (2004); with France on

---

50 Section based on Boubakri, 2013, Kriaa, 2014; Awad and Selim 2015, ETF, 2015; De Bel-Air, 2016; Roman and Pastore, 2018, Natter, 2018.

51 http://www.atf-federation.org/article-le-haut-conseil-des-tunisiens-a-l-etranger-hcte-108679034.html.

52 The National Observatory of Migration (ONM) published in 2017 a Compendium of all Tunisian legal texts pertaining to migration, under the following categories: (see: http://www.migration.nat.tn/images/pdf/recueil-juridique.pdf, in French and Arabic).

53 https://www.jurisitetunisie.com/tunisie/codes/ct/Ct1200.htm.

54 http://www.emploi.gov.tn/en/sitemap/.

55 http://www.svp.com/article/plus-besoin-de-permis-de-travail-pour-les-algeriens-et-les-tunisiens-100008006.

stay and labour (1988), young professionals' exchanges (2004) and joint management of migration (2008) (MPC Team, 2013).

Recent developments include the approval by the Tunisian Chamber of Representatives of a new Investment Law aimed at attracting foreign investment and stimulating the economy. The law features provisions that make it easier for qualifying investors and businesses to hire foreign workers. The Investment Law was voted on 17 September 2016 and took effect from 1 January 2017.[56]

The new Constitution of 2014 has six articles relevant to migration, especially emphasizing the rights to free movement within and across borders for citizens (art. 24), and the right to political asylum and prohibition of extradition of political refugees (art. 26).[57]

In Tunisia, so far, no law distinguishes the categories of migrants", or "refugees" and the country has no asylum law. Only international law can be referred to in that matter (Ben Achour et Ben Jémia, 2011). UNHCR has been involved in the drafting of a national asylum law since 2011.[58] In June 2016, the finalized draft law, developed in tandem with the Ministry of Justice, was still being examined ahead of its discussion in Parliament. Meanwhile, Tunisia's anti-trafficking law, Organic Law 2016-61, was enacted in July 2016, criminalized sex and labour trafficking and prescribed penalties of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 Tunisian dinar (TND) ($20,340) for offenses involving adult victims and 15 years imprisonment and a fine of 50,000-100,000 TND ($20,340-$40,680) for those involving child victims.[59]

Organic Law No. 11 of 2018 on the elimination of all the forms of racial discrimination. The law defines and criminalizes racial discrimination and aims to protect black citizens and sub-Saharan African immigrants.[60]

4.4.3 International law relevant to migration

Tunisia has ratified:

- the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 Protocol;
- the 1969 Convention governing specific aspects of refugees in Africa (ratified in 1989);
- the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol) and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (Smuggling Protocol). These are two of the three "Palermo Protocols", supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime signed in Palermo in 2000.
- Agreed to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016)61

56 http://www.investintunisia.tn/ Investment Law 2016: Law n° 71-2016 dated 30th September 2016.

57 See http://carim-south.eu/database/legal-module/the-constitution-of-tunisia-2014/. French text of the Constitution: http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=54c25ac94&skip=0&query=constitution%20&coi=TUN

58 http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2529#_ga=1.47020135.133653293.1460363829.

59 http://www.refworld.org/country,COI,,,TUN,,5b3e0a51a,0.html

60 https://www.lediplomate.tn/adoption-loi-organique-contre-discriminations-raciales-tunisie/. (no link found).

61 reaffirms the importance of the international refugee regime and contains a wide range of commitments by Member States to strengthen and enhance mechanisms to protect people on the move. It has paved the way for the adoption of two new global compacts in 2018: a global compact on refugees and a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/declaration.

- Ratified 59 ILO conventions related to labour migration (MPC Team, 2013).
  Tunisia has not ratified:
- 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

4.4.4 Partnership in EU policies related to migration

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP)
The EMP, also known as the "Barcelona Process", was launched in 1995 as a comprehensive multilateral forum for dialogue and cooperation at the regional level between the EU, its Member States and several Mediterranean third-party countries. The EMP includes three areas of dialogue and cooperation: 1) political and security issues; 2) economic and financial issues; 3) social and cultural issues. Although migration cuts across all three areas, it was placed under the third. Cooperation in migration under the EMP has not produced any relevant outcome. The main focus of the EMP is on strengthening economic cooperation in the Mediterranean (second pillar), along with the issue of security (first pillar), whereas the third pillar has been largely neglected (Pastore 2002).

EU-Tunisia Association Agreement
The European Commission signed its first Association Agreements with Tunisia in 1995 (that entered into force in 1998). This agreement establishes conditions for bilateral cooperation between the EU and Tunisia in a variety of fields. Similar to the EMP, the main focus of the agreement is economic cooperation and trade, whereas political dialogue and socio-cultural cooperation (which includes migration cooperation) are dealt with only marginally.

- 5+5 Dialogue
This multilateral sub-regional cooperation initiative established in 2002 focuses on migration in the Western Mediterranean. It involves five European countries (France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain) and five Mediterranean third countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia), with the participation of the IOM, ILO and ICMPD as observers. The 5+5 Dialogue is mainly concerned with security issues: the fight against irregular migration and human trafficking, joint border management and information exchange.

European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)
The ENP is a bilateral cooperation initiative launched by the European Commission in 2004. It is implemented through bilateral Action Plans, laying out guidelines for cooperation with each third country in different policy areas.

Following the 2011 revolution in Tunisia, however, the aim of regulating unwanted migration progressively dominated among Member States' concerns, pushing them to give priority to border control and readmission agreements (Fargues and Fandrich 2012: 5-6). Faced with Tunisia's growing resistance to readmitting Tunisians, as well as Third Country Nationals (TCNs), in November 2012, the European Union and Tunisia signed an Action Plan for 2013-17, in the framework of the ENP. This Action Plan granted Tunisia 'Privileged Partnership' status and aimed at strengthening financial support, trade openings and improved mobility.[62] The two parties were

[62] https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/10_tunisia_4pg.pdf.

also prepared to start discussing the implementation of a Mobility Partnership for cooperation on the movement of people, the management of legal migration, migration and development, the protection of the rights of migrants, the fight against irregular migration and readmission.[63] In this context, the country's new regime tried to lay down priorities for negotiating these new patterns of migration cooperation with the EU. These included labour migration, fundamental rights protection for migrants, visa facilitation and development.[64]

Mobility Partnership

The Mobility Partnership was signed between Tunisia and ten Member States[65] on 3 March 2014.[66] Like other Mobility Partnerships, the EU-Tunisia Partnership addresses migration-related issues under four main pillars: exploiting the potential of immigration for development; mobility, legal migration and integration; irregular migration and border management; trafficking in human beings and asylum. These objectives are similar to those displayed by the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM),[67] i.e. increasingly security-oriented..[68]

LEMMA Project (2016-2019)

The project is the flagship project launched in support of the implementation of the Mobility Partnership between the EU and Tunisia. It aims to **strengthen Tunisian government's capacities for developing and enacting its national migration policy**. The EU devoted a budget of 5 million Euros to Lemma through the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). Six MS contribute to the project: Belgium, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Sweden, which supply expertise (through development agencies, public bodies, ministries, technical operators).

Under the supervision and coordination of Expertise France (a French agency for international technical cooperation), the LEMMA Project has 3 components: 1- "Labour Migration and Professional Mobility"; "Mobilising Tunisian Expatriates' Skills and Incorporation of Migration into Local and Regional Development"; 3- "Support to Return Migrants' Reinsertion". Pôle Emploi (France's unemployment office) supplies long-term expertise for Component 1, with an approach promoting circular migration schemes. The French Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Development supplies long-term expertise to Component 2 (Diaspora mobilisation), while the French Bureau for Immigration and Integration (Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration, OFII) coordinates activities under Component 3 (Returns and reinsertion).
MS supply public expertise based on needs identified by Tunisian partners: the National Observatory of Migration, the General Directorate for Cooperation on Migration, the Office of Tunisians Abroad, the ANETI, ACTC and the Ministries of Development, Investment and International Cooperation; Social Affairs, and vocational Training and Employment. Tunisian civil society organisations (CSOs) are also involved: the Réseau Euro-Méditerranéen des Droits de

63 To that effect, the project "EU-Tunisia Migration Cooperation Agenda" (ETMA) was conducted by ICMPD in partnership with the Tunisian government (https://www.icmpd.org/index.php?id=2373) and led to the setting up of the Tunisia-Europe Platform on Migration (https://www.eurotun-migr.net/en/).

64 Memo presented by Ambassador Ridha Farhat in Brussels (March 2012). *Les Grands axes en matière d'immigration et d'intégration*, quoted in Fargues and Fandrich, 2012: 8.

65 Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

66 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/international-affairs/general/docs/declaration_conjointe_tunisia_eu_mobility_fr.pdf.

67 the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM)is the overarching framework for the EU external migration and asylum policy launched by the EU in 2005, and renewed in 2011 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/global-approach-to-migration/index_en.htm.

68 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/southern-mediterranean/index_en.htm.

l'Homme (REMDH) and the workers' trade union Union Générale des travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT).[69]

"ProGreS Migration Tunisie" Project (Projet GouveRnance et Stratégie)

"ProGreS Migration Tunisie" is part of the Action Plan developed at the Valetta Summit in 2015 by the African and European leaders in view of reinforcing the cooperation in terms of migration. It is implemented by the Secretary of State of Immigration and Tunisians Abroad (SEMTE). Launched in 2016, for a duration of 42 months and funded by the European Union with a donation of 12.5 million euros via the EU Emergency Trust Fund. The objective of "ProGreS Migration Tunisie" is to strengthen migration governance and develop socio-economic opportunities for potential migrants, according to four areas for action: I) Implementing Tunisia's National Migration Strategy; II) Developing job and investment opportunities through diaspora mobilisation; III) Creating a service to welcome Tunisian migrants and offer them socio-economic reintegration; IV) Managing migration locally.

Readmission Agreement and Visa Facilitation Agreement

On 12 October 2016, in the framework of the MP, the European Commission and Tunisia began parallel negotiations on an agreement to facilitate the process of issuing short-stay visas and an agreement to establish procedures for the readmission of irregular migrants. The EU privileges short-term stays of highly-skilled Tunisian labourers to support its economic needs in specific sectors.[70] The September 2016 Joint Communication on Strengthening EU Support to Tunisia, and the "Revised European Neighbourhood Policy" reaffirm the focus on skilled migrants and students as beneficiaries of visa facilitations. Since 2017, there is also a renewed focus on irregular emigration from Tunisia. The issue of the circulation of goods (negotiations for the ALECA, the Free Trade Agreement with the EU) is also becoming prominent as a precondition to the (possible) improvement in the circulation of persons between Tunisia and the EU.[71]

Rabat and Khartoum Processes

As situated on the migration route between Africa and Europe, Tunisia is a member in the Rabat Process (Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development).[72] It received funding through the Valetta Action Plan. It is a less central member of the Khartoum Process.

In summary, through these numerous agreements, the EU requires Tunisia's compliance with readmission and externalisation of migration control as a precondition for EU financial and other incentives, including visa facilitations. The EU has not materialized these incentives.. Consequently, recurrent protests target the asymmetry of migration rights between the North and the South. More generally, the agreements passed with the EU have been fiercely criticized by the media and civil society organizations. According to a petition signed by a number of Tunisian and Human Rights organizations, '[…], the provisions included in this 'Mobility Partnership' do not provide Tunisian citizens with real opportunities to enter and live in the European Union. It limits itself to facilitating the issuance of visas to the most privileged and/or qualified persons, while the employment possibilities evoked are remote and are void of any concrete prospects. These commitments are

---

69 https://lemma.tn/a-propos/.

70 See for instance in the European Agenda on Migration, p. 18 https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_fr.pdf

71 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3703_en.htm?locale=EN.

72 https://www.rabat-process.org/en/about/rabat-process.

insufficient when compared to the obligations imposed on Tunisia within the framework of the partnership, including tighter border controls, cooperation with Frontex, and the signature of a readmission agreement'.[73]

4.4.5 International organisations operating in the country

International organisations like the UNHCR, the IOM and the ILO were already operating in Tunisia in the years 2000s, but until 2011 their activities were limited and did not include advocacy. After the revolution, these IOs have developed, funded and implemented numerous projects in partnership with governmental actors, CSOs and INGOs in Tunisia (Roman and Pastore, 2018: 15).

The UNHCR opened an office in Tunis shortly after the fall of the regime. After signing a cooperation agreement with Tunisian authorities in July 2011,[74] it took a leading role in the management of refugees coming from Libya and other countries (registration, refugee status determination and resettlement procedures), and provided assistance to migrants turned away from Europe back to Tunisia. UNHCR also ran the Choucha camp on the border with Libya, which closed mid-2013. Since then, UNHCR's priorities are to develop a national asylum system in Tunisia.. Without a formal national asylum system, UNHCR conducts registration of asylum seekers and refugee status determination in Tunisia, to ensure that persons of concern to UNHCR are identified and documented. This prevents arbitrary arrest, detention or refoulement. Together with Tunisian authorities, UNHCR assists registered urban refugees and asylum seekers to become self-reliant. Tunisia grants access to public education and health for refugees, with UNHCR covering additional cost for the most vulnerable.[75] It also provides refugees rescued at sea with information on the risks associated with irregular movements by sea, as well as psychosocial support. Additionally, UNHCR trains border officials to raise awareness about asylum and protection in the context of mixed migration.

ILO is involved in technical assistance, training and capacity building programmes in the areas of labour migration, protection of workers' rights and reaching international labour standards. For example, the Decent Work Country Programme for Tunisia (2017-2022), which should also concern migrants legally employed in Tunisia.[76] The Integrated Programme on Fair Recruitment (FAIR) also runs initiatives aimed to protect the rights of migrant workers in Tunisia.[77]

IOM opened its Tunisia office in 2001. Its work to regulate migration includes initiatives to encourage local income-generating activities and entrepreneurship to "stabilise fragile communities" and limit emigration, as well as professional, linguistic and cultural training ahead of migration for labour migrants and refugees. IOM's activities are also focussed on crisis

---

73 http://www.migreurop.org/article2319.html).

74 http://www.diplomatie.gov.tn/index.php?id=42&L=2&tx_ttnews%5barc%5d=1&tx_ttnews%5bbackPid%5d=42&tx_ttnews%5bcat%5d=13&tx_ttnews%5bpL%5d=2678399&tx_ttnews%5bpS%5d=1309471200&tx_ttnews%5bpointer%5d=1&tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=310&cHash=f3afa9fdb76c6bdafa4c8018f6158262

75 http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2529#_ga=1.20460920.133653293.1460363829

76 https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_565882/lang--en/index.htm.

77 https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/news-statements/WCMS_614909/lang--en/index.htm.

management and resettling refugees who entered Tunisia from Libya, as well as on promoting migration for development and assisted voluntary return and reintegration.[78]

Active in Tunisia since 2002, ICMPD is involved in technical cooperation between European and local actors, for projects matching EU interests as regards migration from Tunisia. It currently supports the government of Tunisia in developing a comprehensive migration strategy. It was involved in 8 projects, dealing with all aspects of migration: border management, prevention of irregular movements, regulation of flows, migration for development, refugee protection and integration and inputs in urban areas.[79] ICMPD also supports the National Statistical Institute in its contribution to MED-HIMS, a regional programme of coordinated international migration surveys conducted within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) – South Region, as well as coordinates activities within EUROMED Migration IV (2016-2019). ICMPD also coordinates the Rabat and Khartoum Process activities, to which Tunisia is a party.

Foreign national donors (especially French, Swiss and German development cooperation) are very active in the country. After 2011, European foundations (e.g. the German foundations Friedrich Ebert and Konrad Adenauer) already established in Tunisia before the revolution started developing activities in the fields related to labour migration, irregular migration, and migrant rights protection (Boubakri 2013: 22-23). More generally, as argued by Natter (2018, 20), the multitude of IOs and INGOs that arrived in Tunisia after 2011, "brought not only their funds, but also their interests and discursive frameworks with them" and have been exerting great pressure to change Tunisian institutional actors' perception of migration.

4.4.6 Visa policy regulating immigration: visa free countries; policy towards refugees

Tunisia practices a relatively open-door policy, as regards entering the country. The country grants visa-free entry and stay up to three months to the citizens of 97 countries worldwide, from Europe, North America and the Gulf States, as well as some citizens of neighbouring African states (Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Ivory Coast, for instance).[80] This relative openness is due to the country's promotion of tourism, especially from Western and Gulf countries. Besides traditions of circulations across the Sahara, economic expansion towards Sub-Saharan Africa is also on the agenda since 2011, supported by the development of transportation systems and the establishment of business ties and diplomatic missions in African countries,[81] which requires bilateral agreements on visa facilitation. Education has also been a target for private investments and public policies, seeking to improve Tunisia's cultural influence. Private higher education developed in the 2000s and mostly since 2011;[82] African students are seen as a potential pool of economic resources and scientific talents to tap. Free registration in public universities is even envisaged.[83]

78 https://tunisia.iom.int/%C3%A0-propos-de-loim.

79 https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/press-releases/building-on-13-years-of-experience-tunisia-and-icmpd-deepen-cooperation/

80 Visa regime list with third countries, as of February 2018: https://www.diplomatie.gov.tn/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/visa2018.pdf.

81 http://afrique.lepoint.fr/economie/tunisie-le-prive-a-la-conquete-de-l-afrique-01-12-2017-2176673_2258.php.

82 https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/overview/covering-new-ground-private-sector-creating-more-opportunities-investors

83 http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20180727124202255.

Restrictions on the hiring of or bringing in foreign workers, under the current Labour Code (see infra), may be progressively alleviated by the new rules applying to qualifying foreign investors and businesses. However, preventing foreigners from accessing the labour market is linked to Tunisia's perception of its interests.

Refugees are particularly affected by administrative obstacles to enter the labour market, which requires obtaining legal residency, which requires finding an employer. Registered refugees have access to basic services such as health and primary education in Tunisia, and are prevented from abusive expulsion by the new Constitution. Yet, Tunisia criminalizes irregular entry, stay, and exit. The country imposes a fine of 20 Tunisian dinars (around $8) to be paid for every week of illegal stay.[84] Non-recognised refugees, providing they could enter visa-free, are limited to a three-months stay. A temporary residency (one-year), "ordinary" (two years), or "long duration" (10 years) is conditional on obtaining a residency visa, a labour permit or a family reunion scheme (Boubakri, 2015: 30; Labidi et al, 2017: 25-29).[85] The many Libyans having fled in 2011 and since 2014, for instance, could enter Tunisia (free circulation since 1988). but cannot stay beyond three months, like other foreign visitors.[86] Therefore, they do not have any formal legal status in Tunisia: they are considered neither migrants nor asylum seekers, and they do not qualify for the UNHCR refugee status.

Living in legal limbo may result in difficulties accessing basic services, such as education and health care, especially for those who are less well-off (Roman and Pastore, 2018: 24-25; Boubakri, 2015). Reasons for not addressing these cases were thought to range from officials' ignorance of the diversity of situations among Libyans, to fear of creating a precedent by granting them a status, possibly encouraging large inflows, political claims, and popular discontent among Tunisian citizens (Roman and Pastore, 2018: 29). Meanwhile, Libyan de facto refugees are forced to cross the border every three months to renew their entry visas and three-months stay (Boubakri, 2015: 30).

Sub-Saharan Africans, therefore, fall even more easily into irregularity, for they cannot cross the border to Libya and come back. The penalty for irregular sojourn may prevent migrants who cannot pay from leaving Tunisia.

Tunisia is resistant to becoming a safe third country, and EU proposals to establish migrant camps have faced pushback, for several reasons: Tunisia considers itself as neither a major source of migrants nor a major transit country, since the number of people leaving by sea from the country has been steadily declining until 2017. Migration thus had slipped off the Tunisian political agenda. Tunisia's security-related fears also explains its policy of refusing to become a safe haven for immigrants. The country is already dealing with terrorism, smuggling, and returning foreign

---

84 http://www.centresmigrants.tn/fr/vivre-en-tant-que-migrant-en-tunisie/les-penalites-de-depassement-de-sejour, and http://www.legislation.tn/sites/default/files/news/tf201710613.pdf (p. 3402).

85 https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/services-aux-citoyens/preparer-son-expatriation/dossiers-pays-de-l-expatriation/tunisie/entree-et-sejour/article/passeport-visa-permis-de-travail.

86 In spite of the signature in 1973 of a Convention granting the right to work, to st up businesses and circulate freely in Tunisia (Convention relative au droit du travail, à l'exercice des professions et métiers, au droit d'établissement et au droit de circulation», signed and enacted in 1973 and publihed on March 18, 1974 (Law N° 74-13 (J.O.R. T. N° 21 of March 19, 1974). Unstable relations between the two countries were said to have prevented the application of the law to Libyans since 2011 (Moulay, 2016: 49).

fighters, and is not interested in adding another burden to its overstretched security apparatus (Abderrahim, 2017).

4.4.7 Visa and other policies regulating emigration and contacts with diaspora

Tunisia's immigration policy and refusal to host migrant camps and disembarkation posts on its territory is indeed linked to the issue of Tunisians' emigration, which surged since 2017 as said above.

The current emigration policy is focused on preventing irregular migration, in line with commitments to the many legal agreements binding Tunisia with Europe. But Tunisia combines this control of migration with facilitating the mobility of its citizens, in particular with the aim of improving the return of investment in Tunisia, and alleviate unemployment, which rose markedly since 2011. The official discourse on emigration has always been to promote legal migration through the signing of agreements with European countries and with countries outside Europe (Canada, Australia, etc.) and to strengthen links with Tunisian emigrants in order to encourage their participation in local development, hence the plethora of high-level State actors involved in managing the various aspects and issues related to migration.

Visas to emigrate from Tunisia to Western countries are difficult to obtain, in line with the growing securitisation of migration from Southern countries. Obtaining a simple visit visa (less than 3 months) implies a lot of documents (valid passport, copy of old passports), proof of income and current professional status at time of application, justifications, attestations and invitations from the inviting side, etc.).[87] In case of longer stay (family reunion, work, studies), documentation is even more difficult to gather, unless the employer is involved from the receiving side. The first steps of the applications are done online through visa application centers (TLSContact fo European countries; VFS Global for Canada). These are the exclusive visas providers for the two regions, with set fees. Files have to be handed over to General Consulates in Tunis.

Regarding employment, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment maintains a list (online) of the authorised private placement agencies for employment abroad. These are available everywhere on the territory.[88] Ministry of Employment's agencies are also present outside Tunis.[89] However, the necessity to finalise administratively one's professional project abroad is probably an obstacle to legal and orderly emigration, for those deprived of education, deprived of information and contacts.

With respect to the diaspora, the Tunisian government insists on five main goals: providing social security (ex: bilateral agreements with France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands); tightening cultural ties with migrants and their descendants (by establishing cultural programs, teaching Arabic language and providing preachers for religious celebrations); promoting investment and transferring remittances; gathering knowledge and savoir-faire abroad and developing information

---

87 http://tunisievisa.info/visa/espace-schengen-europe/liste-des-documents-pour-visiter-lespace-schengen/#.

88 http://www.emploi.gov.tn/en/employement/international-employment/les-etablissements-prives-de placement-a-letranger/

89 http://www.emploi.gov.tn/fr/emploi/emploi-international/les-offres-demploi-a-letranger/.

systems for expatriate citizens (Pouessel, 2014: 7-8). Since 2011, the creation of new bodies (SEMTE, for instance) signals a trend to better incorporate expatriate Tunisians in the democratic construction and development processes.

Legal and administrative incentives exist to encourage Tunisians abroad to invest in Tunisia, even at regional levels. Tunisians abroad enjoy tax benefits all over Tunisia. In addition, in regions that are classified as areas of investment, any investment operation (owned by foreigners or by Tunisians) receives: 10 years of tax exemption; and in agricultural regions, incentives through the Agency for the promotion of agriculture investment (APA). Furthermore, migrants abroad who are businesspeople have the right to import goods related to their core business activities (industrial, commercial or agricultural) without paying customs duties. To support migrant engagement in the economy of the home country, double taxation is cancelled. Migrants benefit from the portability of the host country's retirement regime to Tunisia and all social rights that they had abroad: medical, social security (Pouessel, 2014: 13). However, the current political instability and lagging economic situation probably constitutes an obstacle to attracting investments from expatriates. Meanwhile, the World Bank estimated that U.S. $1.903 billion in remittances were sent to Tunisia via formal channels in 2017, representing 4.8 % of the country's GDP (World Bank, 2018: 31).

The perception of irregular emigration to Europe changed since the fall of Z. Ben Ali's regime. At the time, these migrants were subject to a "patronizing rhetoric [which] consisted in deflecting policy attention (in both Tunisia and abroad) from the severe and impoverished living conditions faced by a growing segment of the population and the youth in depressed areas" (Cassarino 2014: 107–108). At the same time, they were used "as a bargaining chip to acquire international legitimacy and resources". After the revolution, "Tunisian emigrants have increasingly become seen as individuals looking for opportunities that their homeland was not able to provide them, while simultaneously keeping strong ties to the country and staying involved in its development".

Consequently, in view of the difficult economic situation and political uncertainty prevailing in the country, irregular migration may be seen more as "an economic and political safety valve, capable of easing domestic unemployment and political unrest, and as an economic boon in the form of remittances and labour-market assets brought home by those who return", than a significant problem (Lixi, 2018). Yet "there is also a sense among Tunisian policymakers that irregular migration should be contained as the risks of large-scale departures becoming politicized are great, especially considering the existence of a very active Tunisian civil society ready to hold the government accountable for its economic failures and border-control actions" (Lixi, 2018). In other words, large-scale departures would underline and emphasize the economic and socio-political failures of the successive governments since the revolution, and their inability to respond to popular expectations regarding political reform and stability, economic development and job creation (especially in poor, rural areas), cleaning up corruption, etc.

4.4.8 Policy gaps

Developing and implementing a functioning migration policy in Tunisia faces four key obstacles:

First, the numerous institutions involved in migration policy-making and implementation often have overlapping mandates and tasks. This originates from, and enhances political and economic-financial competition between the bodies, which in turn interferes in decision-making. For example, the recent shift of the SEMTE from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has caused open discontent and tensions between the two ministries over their respective competences in the field of migration (Natter 2018: 20-21). Therefore, as advocated for by Kriaa (2014: 22), a clear and centralized leadership is needed, to ensure a better decision-making capacity, efficient task-description and coordination between actors along the migration management process.

Second, a better coordination between migration data-producing bodies is needed. Existing databases tackling various steps of the migration process use diverse concepts, definitions and classification systems, which could be harmonized (Kriaa, 2014: 22), or at least, be clarified to users in a "metadata" section. For example, statistical operations (censuses, surveys) do not collect information on the administrative status of foreign residents, which makes it difficult to connect these sources with UNHCR's records, for instance.

Third, irregularity, or attempts at emigrating irregularly, is fuelled by the difficulty to emigrate legally. Bilateral employment agreements, such as the 2000 Tunisia-Italy and 2008 Tunisia-France agreements promise the granting of set yearly numbers of visas to Tunisian workers. However, these do not work: the number of Tunisians effectively hired is much lower than the set quotas (3,000 instead of 9,000 in the case of the Franco-Tunisian agreement, for example) (Pouessel, 2014: 12; Kriaa, 2014).

Fourth, comprehensive action is hampered in immigration management and protection of refugees and irregular migrants. The reasons for this include the stalemate in the adoption and ratification of the asylum law, by the Parliament, as well as that of the draft Stratégie Nationale Migratoire drafted by the SEMTE. However, as noted earlier, this blockage is not only organisational but alsohas political roots, namely the divergence in migration-related political agendas between Tunisian and EU stakeholders. Through individual agreements and the platform of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU strictly conditions all its funding and technical assistance to a limitation of migratory outflows and acceptance by Tunisia to readmit its own citizens, as well as TCNs who transited in Tunisia on their way to Europe. Tunisia, by contrast, finds itself in a dilemma. The country needs to guarantee to its nationals some avenues for legal migration, to alleviate its strong migration pressure. It thus expects some concrete and sizeable progress on the issue of mobility, yet to be realised by the EU. Furthermore, the price to pay to comply with EU demands (EU external border enforcement and tightened control over Tunisian emigration, readmission of irregular migrants) is high, and may affect the political credibility of the government. The security apparatus is walking "a fine line between being viewed as too heavy handed and not proactive enough" (Lixi, 2018), between risking to be accused of provoking more deaths at sea in operations against illegal emigrants, and acknowledging the economic, social and political failure of the post-revolutionary experience, when closing eyes on increased outflows. Moreover, complying with demands to readmit TCNs having transited through Tunisia on their way to the EU, as well as setting up camps for Sub-Saharan and other immigrants (i.e., de facto making Tunisia an external border of Europe), is seen as a security risk, and ethically too sensitive to be accepted by Tunisian civil society and human rights organisations. To overcome the current stalemate, some steps are required on behalf of the EU, to consider Tunisia's concerns.

References

Abderrahim, T. "North Africa, Europe's Last Resort on Migration", Sada-Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 23, 2017 http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/68097.

Altai Consulting. "Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots", study prepared for the IOM MENA, 2015 https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/StudyMigrants/IOs/IOMTrendsAccrossMediterranean.pdf.

Assaad Ragui & Krafft Caroline, 2016, « Labour Market Dynamics and Youth Unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa: Evidence From Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia ».

Awad, Ibrahim, and Hedayat Selim (2015), "Labour Migration Governance in Transition. Continuity and Change in Egypt and Tunisia (2011-2015)", *FIERI Working Paper,* Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS), The American University in Cairo (AUC), Turin, Forum of International and European Research on Immigration (FIERI).

Belghit Anne Goujon, Bourgain Marina & Gilson, Adeline, 2016, « Retour sur la notion de capital humain individuel des jeunes à travers l'investissement en formation initiale et l'insertion professionnelle en France, Abstract », Vie & sciences de l'entreprise, No.202.

Berkowitz Ruth, Glickman Hagit, Benbenishty Rami, Ben-Artzi Elisheva, Raz Tal, Lipshtadt Nurit & Astor Ron Avit, 2015, « Les relations entre milieu social, climat scolaire et réussite scolaire en Isarël. Les hypothèses de compensation, de médiation et de modération », Climat scolaire et bien-être à l'école, Education et formations, No.88-89.

Boubakri, Hassan ? « Migration et Asile depuis 2011: vers de nouvelles figures migratoires?», *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, vol.31 N°3 & 4.

Boubakri, Hassan (2013), "Revolution and International Migration in Tunisia", *MPC Research Report 2013/04*, Migration Policy Centre (MPC), Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS), San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), European University Institute (EUI).

Cassarino, J. P. (2014), "Channelled Policy Transfers: EU-Tunisia Interactions on Migration Matters", *European Journal of Migration and Law*, No. 16, p. 97-123.

Centre (MPC), Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS), San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), European University Institute (EUI).

Cours des comptes, 2017, « Référé du Premier président de la Cour des comptes sur les conditions de préparation et de gestion de la rentrée scolaire 2016/2017 ».

Cristofoli Sophie, 2015, « L'absentéisme des élèves soumis à l'obligation scolaire. Un lien étroit avec le climat scolaire et le bien-être des élèves », Climat scolaire et bien-être à l'école, Education et formations, No.88-89.

De Bel-Air, Françoise (2016), "Migration Profile: Tunisia", *Policy Brief 2016/08*, Migration Policy

Deming, David J., Hastings, Justine S., Kane, Thomas J. et Staiger, Douglas O., 2014, « School Choice, School Quality and Postsecondary Attainment », The American economic review, Vol.104, No.3.

Elder, S. "What does NEETs mean and why is the concept so easily misinterpreted?", *Technical Brief No.1, Work4Youth (W4Y) project*, ILO, January 2015.

European Training Foundation (ETF) (2015), *Migrant Support Measures from an Employment and Skills Perspective (MISMES). Tunisia*, http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/2938DD5003574A3EC1257E9A002BF071/$file/MISMES%20Tunisia.pdf

Flayols, Alexandra, 2015, « Accumulation du capital humain et employabilité : une mise en perspective empirique », Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Toulon.

Flayols Alexandra, 2016, « L'éducation au Maroc et en Tunisie : enjeux et perspectives après un quart de siècle d'évolutions rapides », In Axe Civilisations et sociétés euro-méditerranéennes et comparées (Toulon) et Université de Toulon et du Var (Éd.), Les échanges dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen: formes et dynamiques (p. p.183-208), Paris: l'Harmattan.

Flayols Alexandra, 2018 (forthcoming), « Le rôle clé de l'éducation dans l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes de la région de Marrakech », FEMISE, Policy Brief.

HCP, 2013, « Activité, emploi et chômage, résultats détaillés », Haut-Commissariat au Plan.

HCP, 2014, « Activité, emploi et chômage », Haut-Commissariat au Plan.

ILO, 2014, « Transition vers le marché du travail des jeunes femmes et hommes en Tunisie », No. 15, Work4Youth Série de Publication.

ILO, AECID et ONEQ, 2013, « Analyse du système éducatif Tunisien ».

Institut National de la Statistique - Tunisie, 2016, « La Tunisie en chiffre ».

International Labour Office, 2015, « La jeunesse tunisienne et l'économie informelle », Genève: BIT.

Lasnier Frédéric, 2018, « Where are the best developers in the world based? : https://www.pentalog.com/blog/IT-ranking-world-top-developers

Mankiw, N. Gregory, Romer, David et Weil, David N, 1992, « A contribution to the empirics of economics growth », The Quarterly Journal of Economics.

Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi et Observatoire National de l'Emploi et des Qualifications (MESRST), 2011, « Le décrochage de la formation professionnelle en Tunisie ».

Moisseron Jean-Yves, Chabbert Pauline, De la Cruz Pauline, Gillot Gaëlle, De Facci Damiano, Kated Kamel, Groppo Charlotte & Guerin France, 2017, « L'accès et le maintien des femmes à l'emploi de qualité au Maroc, en Tunisie et en Turquie | AFD - Agence Française de Développement », Notes techniques.

Mullis Ina V. S, Martin O. Michael & Loveless Tom, 2006, « 20 Years of TIMSS International Trends in Mathematics and Science Achievement, Curriculum, and Instruction », Chestnut Hill, Ma: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

OECD, 2015, « What contributes to students' well-being at school? ».

OECD, 2017, « Collabourative problem solving ».

OECD, 2018a, « OECD Economic Surveys: Tunisia 2018 ».

OECD, 2018b, « Étude économique de L'OCDE, Tunisie 2008. Promouvoir la croissance et l'emploi ».

ONEQ, 2013a, « Rapport Annuel sur□ : Le marché du travail en Tunisie », Observatoire National de l'Emploi et des Qualifications.

ONEQ, 2013b, « Réforme du dispositif national de la formation professionnelle. Document d'orientation et plan d'opérations 2014-2018 ».

ONEQ, 2013a, « Réforme du dispositif national de la formation professionnelle. Document d'orientation et plan d'opérations 2014-2018 ».

ONEQ, 2013b, « Rapport Annuel sur□ : Le marché du travail en Tunisie », Observatoire National de l'Emploi et des Qualifications.

ONEQ, 2017, « La formation professionnelle en chiffres, 2015 ».

World Bank, 2014, « The Unfinished Revolution□ : Bringing Opportunity, Good Jobs and Greater Wealth to All Tunisians », Development Policy Review, Vol.Report No. 86179-TN.

World Bank, 2018a, « Doing Business 2018 Arab world. Reforming to create jobs ».

World Bank, 2018b, « Doing Business 2018. Reforming to create jobs. Regional profile: European Union ».

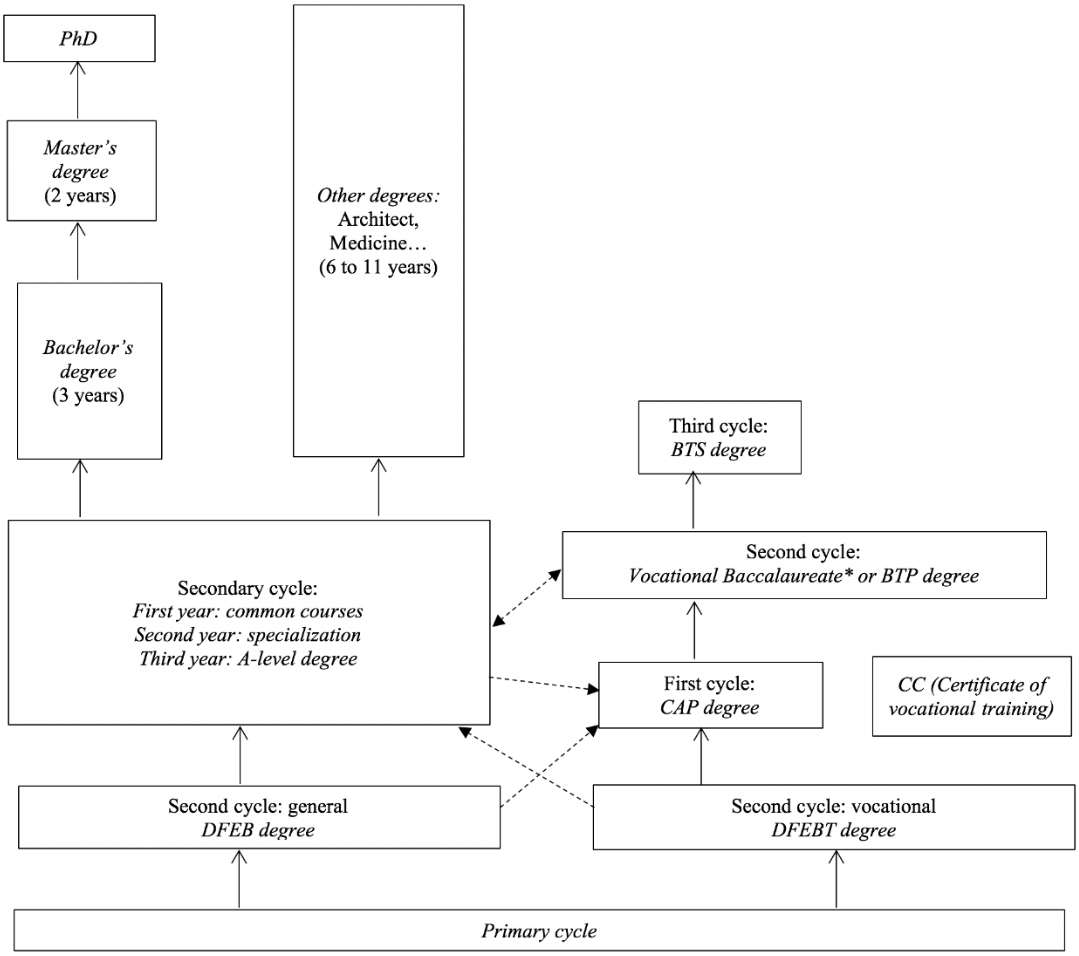
Appendix A Complete statistics about education

Table A.1 Organisation of Tunisian education system, compared with France and Morocco

Age range	Tunisia		France		Morocco	
17 to 18	Secondary		Terminale	Lycée	3ème année	Lycée
16 to 17			1ère		2ème année	
15 to 16			2nd		1ère année	
14 to 15	Second cycle: General or vocational preparatory school	Basic education	3ème	Collège	3ème année	École collegiale
13 to 14			4ème		2ème année	
12 to 13			5ème		1ère année	
11 to 12	First cycle: Primary		6ème		6ème année	École primaire
10 to 11			CM2	École élémentaire	5ème année	
9 to 10			CM1		4ème année	
8 to 9			CE2		3ème année	
7 to 8			CE1		2ème année	
6 to 7			CP		1ère année	
5 to 6	Pre-primary		Grande section	Maternelle	1ère année	École préscolaire
4 to 5			Moyenne section		2ème année	
3 to 4			Petite section			

Note: The color code highlights equivalences between educational systems across these countries.
Source: author.

Figure A. 1 Graphical presentation of the Tunisian education system (general and vocational)



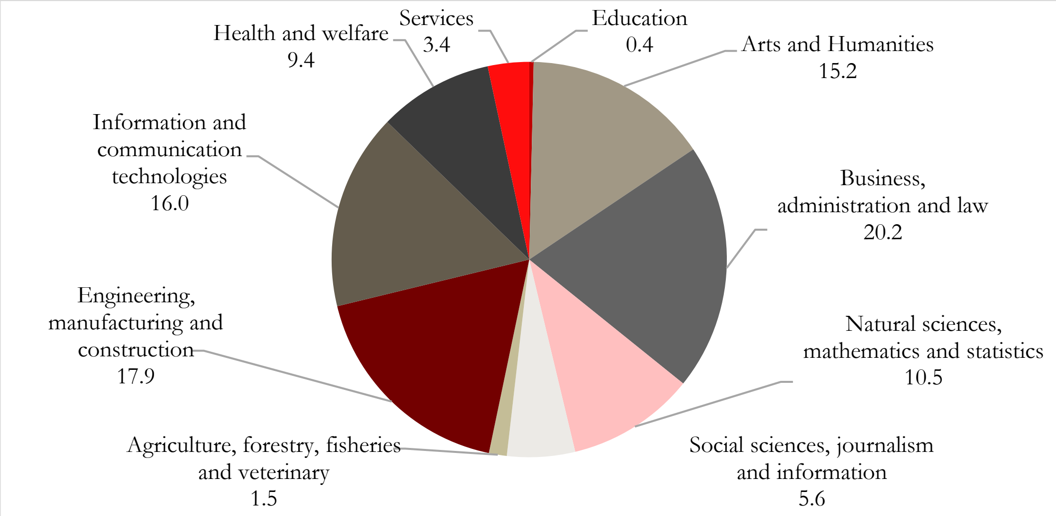
Note: Reorientation class in dotted; not implemented.
Source: Alexandra Flayols.

Table A.2 The students are more often are more often repeating but leave school less in tertiary education in Tunisia (2016-2017, in %)

	Percentage of repeaters	Dropout rate
Humanities	40.86	3.69
Business and management	28.72	4.24
Education	3.87	0.3
Law	41.24	0.68
Environmental protection	25.53	4.1
Social services	11.61	3
Transport	26.87	0.61
Services	27.32	0.73
Mathematics and statistics	52.96	3.59
Journalism	32.81	3.12
Health	10.97	0.57
Industry	10.16	2.17
Social and behavioural sciences	39.35	3.16
Computer Science and Multimedia	26.94	2.28
Biology	16.59	1.81
Veterinary	18.13	1.17
Physical	33.19	2.16
Agriculture. Forestry and Fisheries	7.75	1.22
Arts	18.09	5.23
Architect and building	17.13	0.49
Engineering	17.93	2.09
Average rate	26.62	2.56

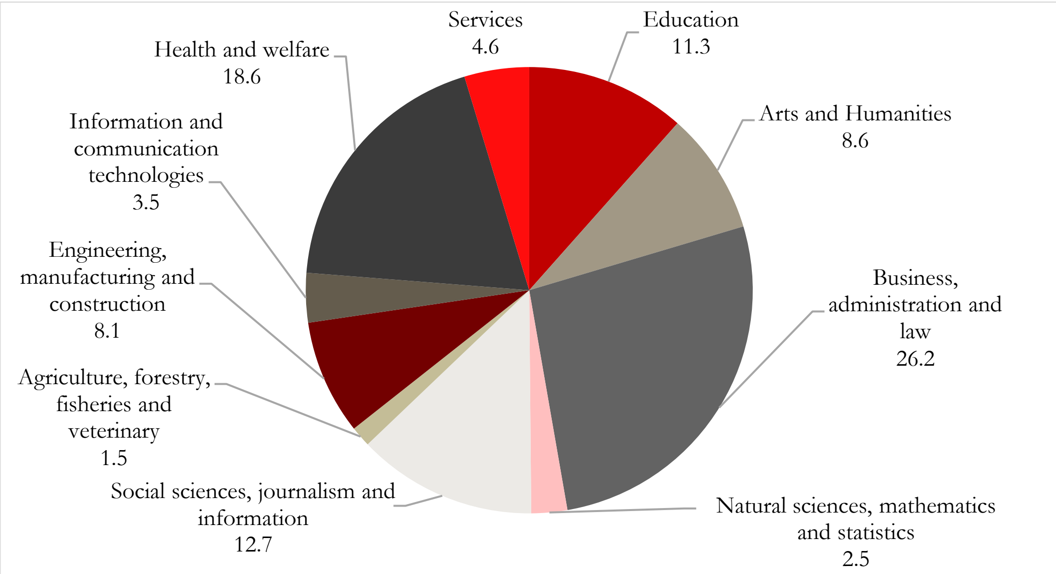
Source: MESRST.

Figure A.1 In tertiary level of education, the Tunisian students are mainly graduate in Engineering, manufacturing and construction and in ICT (2016, in %)



Source: UIS.

Figure A.2 In tertiary level of education. the Netherlands students are mainly graduate in Business, administration and law (2014, in %)



Source: UIS.

Table A.3 The success rate in A-level degree for Tunisian students is better in sport, 2015

	Success rate
A-level	36.1
Humanities	20.5
Economics and management	29.6
Experimental science	42.8
Mathematics	60.7
Technical	46.5
Computer science	42.1
Sport	82.4

Source: INS. 2016.

Appendix B Complementary statistics about labour market

Table B.1 The employment rate is better for men and it's lower in the Maghreb countries(2018, in %)

	15 years and more			15-24 years old		
	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**
Algeria	39.7	65.0	14.3	18.8	32.2	5.0
Egypt	44.3	70.8	17.8	21.9	35.8	7.4
Iran	40.2	66.6	13.6	22.6	36.5	7.5
Jordan	34.8	57.3	11.2	15.9	27.0	4.4
Lebanon	43.9	66.4	21.3	23.2	32.7	14.2
Libya	42.0	64.7	19.4	17.6	28.3	6.6
Morocco	44.6	67.2	23.0	28.8	42.1	14.8
Nigeria	52.8	60.5	44.9	34.1	37.3	30.6
Tunisia	40.7	62.1	20.3	22.6	30.2	14.6
France	49.2	53.4	45.3	28.5	31.1	25.9
Germany	57.2	62.7	52.0	45.8	47.3	44.3
Greece	40.6	50.1	31.8	17.3	20.1	14.3
Italy	42.8	51.9	34.2	17.6	20.9	14.1
Netherlands	60.0	66.0	54.1	62.6	62.6	62.5
Spain	46.0	52.5	39.9	20.6	22.3	18.9

Source: KILM.

Table B.2 The hare of youth unemployed in the total unemployed is high in Tunisia, (2018, in %)

	Total	Male	Female
Algeria	44.7	47.4	39.2
Egypt	50.0	54.1	46.0
Iran	27.6	27.7	27.6
Jordan	40.5	40.2	41.2
Lebanon	45.2	46.5	43.0
Libya	36.8	34.6	40.3
Morocco	29.2	31.3	23.9
Nigeria	34.3	28.4	40.8
Tunisia	32.1	33.5	29.6
France	23.1	24.2	21.9
Germany	17.5	18.2	16.6
Greece	11.9	13.1	11.1
Italy	19.4	20.3	18.5
Netherlands	25.5	23.7	27.5
Spain	14.5	15.9	13.2

Source: KILM.

Table B.3 The Tunisian economy characterized by the importance of the employment in the industrial and the services sector (2017, in %)

	Agriculture	Industry	Services
Algeria	12.8	47.0	40.2
Egypt	24.8	25.5	49.6
Iran	17.1	32.4	50.5
Jordan	3.7	26.8	69.5
Lebanon	3.2	20.3	76.5
Libya	12.4	26.7	60.9
Morocco	37.5	19.6	43.0
Tunisia	13.7	42.6	43.7
Nigeria	36.5	11.6	51.8
Middle East & North Africa	17.9	28.5	53.7
France	2.9	20.4	76.8
Germany	1.3	27.3	71.5
Greece	12.1	15.3	72.6
Italy	3.9	26.3	69.8
Netherlands	2.2	16.5	81.3
Spain	4.1	19.5	76.4
Euro area	3.2	23.5	73.3

Source: WDI.