

The truth behind border control: Should the European Union include youth unemployment in the Tunisian migration agreement

Summary

In July 2023, there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the European Union and Tunisia; a financial commitment of 105 million euros for migration management and 150 million euros as general budget support. Dec. However, this project / study focuses on a very basic shortcoming of the agreement in question: Is the financing plan ignored why youth unemployment, the biggest trigger of the Decoupling from Tunisia, has not been completed?

When EU official documents, European Public Audit reports and World Bank data are examined, it is seen that the overwhelming majority of the budget is transferred to your management, human trafficking and repatriation periods. Against this, human rights control mechanisms used to be weak; although sea crossings decreased by returning due to the leading ones, youth unemployment in his country continued to exist as a chronic issue around 38 on his son yildiz face.

This study argues that security-based approaches alone cannot permanently halt irregular migration. Within the scope of the project, it is necessary to link some of the funds of the European Commission to concrete programs that will directly create benefits, and to strengthen the supervisory and rights monitoring role of the European Parliament's LIBE Committee during this period.

Key Points

- The EU's Security-Focused Border Policy: Securitization of irregular migration and transfer of border control to third countries.**
- Tunis 2023 Memorandum: Insecure and rights-free, border management entirely focused on deportation.**
- Economic Driving Factors and Funding Insufficiency: 38% youth unemployment triggering migration; migration funds not prioritizing employment.**

The main theme is

The current strategy is based solely on the number of boats prevented from sailing, rather than the socio-economic opportunities created as a measure of success. The decrease in the number of irregular migrants leaving Tunisia today does not mean that the structural problems triggering migration have been resolved. A policy that focuses solely on border control while ignoring root causes will condemn the EU to a perpetual and inefficient cycle of financing. Therefore, while preserving the existing security cooperation, it is difficult for the EU to integrate a genuine development model that will create employment opportunities for Tunisian youth into the strategy. Irregular migration movements along the Central Mediterranean route have become one of the most critical agenda items in European politics. The EU is attempting to manage this process by establishing strategic partnerships with source and transit countries and providing financial support in exchange for border control.

1. Security-Oriented Transformation in Migration Policies

During the son years, the European Union's migration strategy evolved to the proximity of stopping straight flows through transit countries even before they reached European territory. In this regard, collaborations established with origin and transit countries are financed through financial support mechanisms. Although this externalization model, which covers the same external controls, provides short-term and visible political results, such as a "decrease in the number of assets," migration is not dealt with for a period of time with social and economic roots, but only a security problem that needs to be controlled.

Moreover, this strategy places the bulk of the operational burden on the joint governments. As a matter of fact, the European Ombudsman, in partnership with Tunisia, expressed exactly this record and drew attention to the fact that a comprehensive human rights effectiveness assessment was conducted before the migration management setting of the agreement was taken over (European Ombudsman, 2024).

2. The EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding and Structural Deficiencies

July 16, 2023 signed the Memorandum of Understanding; macroeconomic stability, trade-investment, green energy transformation, contacts between peoples and migration-entrepreneurship Deconstructed on the basic pillar (European Parliament, 2023). Considering the distribution of funding, the European Commission has allocated a resource of 105 million euros for queue management, anti-smuggling and repatriation periods, followed

by a total direct transfer of 150 million euros for macroeconomic stability support (European Commission, n.d.). In the subsequent process, an additional package worth 127 million euros was announced for the implementation of the agreement (European Commission, 2023).

When the financial structure of the application is examined, three key weaknesses stand out:

The nature of its funds: The separate migration budget is structured with a focus on the control of migration, stopping of boats and repatriation, which is completed rather than solving the structural causes of migration.

Audit Contribution: The European Ombudsman found that the Commission had not effectively published the risk assessments on which the statement was based, and stressed that the lack of an official human rights impact analysis was a major deficiency (European Ombudsman, 2024)

Accountability Issue: Institutional control mechanisms are weak in the agreement. It is proposed to define clear criteria that will allow the ombudsman to suspend the funds of fundamental rights violations upon detection and to establish an open poetry mechanism for the victim (European Parliament, 2025).

3. Chronic Youth Unemployment: A Structural Blind Spot of Migration Policy

July January–July 2026, the European Commission presented as the success of the explanation of the decline in Mediterranean crossings; Verdi shows that the number of people crossing from the Tunisian coast to Italy (1,270 people) decreased by almost half compared to the same period of 2025 (2,393 people) (Neva, 2026). However, printing migration numbers with administrative measures does not provide a comprehensive

understanding of the underlying dynamics driving migration.

According to International Labour Sample (ILO) modeling, youth unemployment, which is the biggest driving force behind the migration from Tunisia, has been chronic at around 38 percent, and this rate has remained stuck in the 35 to 41 percent band for the last ten years (World Bank, 2026). Humanitarian aid organizations report rising inflation, food security and the displacement crisis among the young population as the main structural factors forcing Tunisians to leave the country (ACAPS, 2025). The amount of time that migration funds are spent solely on blocking boats instead of improving the root causes of migration, total unrest and migration pressure will remain in existence, which will coincide with a period of time when it remains difficult to refinance control of the EU during its term.

Policy Recommendations and Solutions

In accordance with the above-mentioned structural questions, a closed strategy change should be made under the leadership of the Chairman of the European Parliament's LIBE Committee. In this regard, a fixed proportion of the migration management as a whole should be estimated directly from projects and vocational training programs that will increase youth employment in Tunisia. EU support should focus not only on preventing migration but also on eliminating the socio-economic reasons that force people to migrate. Release of financing; clear criteria should be defined that will ensure the suspension of funds in case of violation, depending on concrete indicators related to youth employment, educational outcomes and human rights security.

During this process, the supervisory mechanisms of the European Parliament also need to be strengthened. It should be made difficult for the European Commission to submit an official report to the LIBE Committee at least once a year on the implementation period of the Tunisian

Memorandum and the like. Field findings from independent civil society organizations should also be included in this reporting. Additionally, transferring a portion of EU funds to local civil society organizations independent of those working in the field will increase on-the-ground accountability. Finally, Parliament should link future foreign partnership funds to a binding "Human Rights Impact Assessment" section; in cases of continuing rights violations, the LIBE Committee should use all its freezing and veto powers as an active means of supervision.

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