

## A New Era in EU-Tunisia Partnership: Youth-Focused Strategies

*Education, jobs and better opportunities as part of a long-term migration policy*

### KEY POINTS

**1. Border control is only one part of the solution.**

Checking the borders can reduce some migration, but it does not fix the job problem.

**2. Education must connect with real jobs.**

Training programs need to teach the exact skills that employers are looking for.

**3. Young people need more choices.** Things like internships, career advice, and support for small businesses can really help.

**4. EU money must be checked carefully.** Clear reports should show if these programs actually reach young people and help them find work.

### Summary

Irregular migration from Tunisia is a big topic for the European Union (EU). In 2023, the EU and Tunisia made a deal to work together on migration, economy, and education. The EU promised 105 million euros to help with migration control. Part of this money was for professional and technical training.

But there is still a big problem: many young people in Tunisia cannot find a job. According to the World Bank, the youth unemployment rate was around 41% in the second quarter of 2024. Also, many young people are not working, not studying, and not learning a trade. Because of this, they feel like they have no future or choices in their country.

This report shows that just closing or checking the borders is not enough. The EU should also support professional training, job experience, and small businesses. These programs will not stop all migration, but they can give young people better options and make the partnership between the EU and Tunisia stronger (European Commission, 2023; World Bank, 2024).

The main question is not just how the EU can stop people from crossing the sea. It is also about how young people in Tunisia can build a good future when they want to stay in their country. When people cannot find a good job, they look for options in other countries. So, while the EU works on border management, it must also

invest in education and jobs. A good policy should look at more than one thing because success is not just about stopping border crossings. It is also about education programs, job choices, and the life quality of young people. This leaves us with an important research question: Can investing in education and jobs reduce the pressure to migrate from Tunisia?

### **Why Do Young Tunisian People Need More Opportunities?**

For many young people in Tunisia, finding a job after school or university can be very difficult. Having a university degree does not mean you will find a good job. Some employers want practical skills or work experience, but new graduates usually do not have enough chances to get this experience. According to the World Bank, the youth unemployment rate in Tunisia was around 41% in the second quarter of 2024. Also, in the same period, about 23% of young people were not working, not studying, and not learning a trade (World Bank, 2024).

These numbers show that the problem is not just about finding a job. It is also important to make it easier for young people to move from education to work. Young people face other problems too.

Sometimes workplaces are too far from their homes, salaries are low, or the jobs are not permanent. Young women and people who live outside the big coastal cities face even more difficulties. When young people cannot see a clear future, they might think about going abroad. Of course, there are many reasons for migration, and unemployment does not explain everyone's choice to leave. Still, better education and job opportunities can make staying in Tunisia a more realistic choice.

### **Education and Training Must Turn Into Job Opportunities**

One good solution is to bring schools, universities, and training centers together with local companies. Education should not just give students theoretical knowledge. It must also help them learn the real skills they need to do a job. For example, young people can take short courses in computer skills, tourism, languages, agriculture, green energy, or business. Each region should choose courses based on what local employers actually need. Internships are also very important. An internship helps a student see a real workspace, meet employers, and get experience before they graduate.

The EU can help universities and companies in Tunisia create more

internships. They can also support career centers that teach students how to write a CV, look for jobs, and practice for interviews. The World Bank already shared projects that connect university programs with employers to improve students' job skills (World Bank, 2024). These examples show that education and work experience can be part of a real solution. But giving training is not enough if there are no jobs. The EU and Tunisia must ask local companies what skills they need before they start new training programs. Finally, they should check how many students finish the training and how many of them actually find a job later. This way, they can make the programs better over time.

**A viable idea: Creating local educational partnerships.** Universities, vocational schools, and companies can work together. Students can learn a skill, do internships, and receive support with job applications.

### **Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Local Jobs**

Not every young person wants to work for a big company. Some want to start a small business, work with their family, or try a new idea. But starting a business can be very hard if you do not have enough money or experience. The EU can help young entrepreneurs by giving small grants, basic business training, and advice from experienced business owners. For example, young people can learn how to make a business plan, manage money, use social media, or sell things online. Local business centers can guide young people and help them understand the steps to start a business. This support should reach young people in big cities, but also in small towns and rural areas. The International Labour Organization looked at youth employment programs in Tunisia. These programs included skills training, support for starting a business, and job services (ILO, 2015). This shows that different types of support can work well together. But these projects must be realistic. Not every new business will be successful, and a short training course cannot fix all economic problems. This is why young people need support not just before they start their business, but also after they start it. The EU and Tunisia can

follow the progress of these businesses to see what kind of support works best.

### **A Better Balance in the EU-Tunisia Partnership**

The partnership between the EU and Tunisia covers different areas like migration, education, research, and working together on the economy. The European Commission stated that their 2023 support package included 105 million euros for migration work. Also, in 2023, they announced 10 million euros of support for technical and professional training (European Commission, 2023). This shows that the partnership is not only about border control. The next step should be making sure that education and job programs really help young people. The EU should not promise that job programs will stop all irregular migration. People migrate for many different reasons, like family, safety, and personal goals. However, if young people have easier access to education, stable jobs, and fair chances to start their own businesses, they will have more choices. This kind of approach can support long-term policies instead of just looking for quick, short-term results.

### **Policy Recommendations and Solutions**

**We should give more support to professional training.** The EU needs to support short courses based on what local employers actually look for. These training programs must include practical work and real internships. **Also, we need to help young people start small businesses.** Small grants, business advice, and basic training can help young people try their ideas and create jobs in their areas. **At the same time, we must connect schools and universities with employers.** When universities, training centers, and companies work together, it becomes much easier for students to move from school to work.

**Another important step is checking how the money is used.** The EU and Tunisia should share regular reports. These reports must clearly show how many people join the programs, finish their training, and actually find a job. In all these steps, we must protect human rights. Cooperation on migration must respect human rights, treat people with dignity, and take any complaints about bad treatment seriously. We should use these recommendations and check the results regularly. If a program does not help young people, the partners must change it. The real goal is to use public

money carefully and give young people real opportunities for their future.

### Conclusion

The EU-Tunisia migration partnership is an important part of the EU's work with its neighbors. But border control cannot fix all the problems with migration. High youth unemployment, a lack of work experience, and the gap between education and real jobs make life difficult for many young people. These problems need long-term solutions. The EU can help Tunisia by investing in professional training, internships, career advice, and small businesses. At the same time, Tunisia must work together with local companies, universities, and community organizations to make sure these programs match real needs.

Checking the results and protecting human rights are also very important. Success should not just mean fewer people crossing the sea. It should also mean that more young people find a good job and can make plans for their future. This approach will not stop all irregular migration, but it can make the partnership between the EU and Tunisia more balanced and useful for both sides.

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