

Irregular migration in the Arab region

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Introduction

The bottom of the slide features a decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy lines in various shades of blue, creating a sense of movement and depth against the white background.

Regional migration trends

- * MENA countries as a whole may be home to just as many first-generation international emigrants than immigrants – 20 million of each.
- * Europe and the Arab oil countries, i.e. the Gulf States and Libya, constitute the two largest destinations for Arab migrants.
- * A combination of internal factors and external factors makes a continuation of migratory pressures a likely scenario in the coming years.
- * Irregular immigration is not only occurring in traditional countries of immigration, but also in most traditional countries of emigration, which are turning into new countries of immigration ('transit migrants').

Migrant vulnerabilities

- * The degree of vulnerability of migrants differs between two extremes.
- * Migrants are more vulnerable than if they were citizens, for a number of complex reasons.
- * Irregular migrants and migrants working in the informal sector are particularly vulnerable, including to abuse and exploitation.
- * Following the Arab uprisings in 2011 and 2012, more and more migrants are finding themselves in situations of vulnerability.

How to respond?

- * **Strengthening rule of law in migration and border management**, including through initiatives aimed at combating transnational organized crime;
- * **Promoting a comprehensive approach to migrant assistance**, by addressing the challenges of mixed flows, meeting the acute humanitarian needs of migrants, and consolidating regional mechanisms for the voluntary and orderly return and reintegration of migrants;
- * **Promoting positive alternatives in at risk communities**, through short-term community stabilization initiatives and the promotion of longer-term stability and socio-economic development, including through the development and implementation of regular labour migration schemes and measures aimed at maximizing the development potential of migration; and
- * **Fostering dialogue and information sharing** between sending, transit and receiving countries on migration management.

Conclusion

- * There is a direct link between migrant protection and greater development benefits of migration and, conversely, between a lack of protection and reduced development contribution by migrants.
- * State consultation and cooperation is important to address irregular migration, promote positive alternatives in at risk communities and facilitate regular migration.
- * There is a wealth of experience and good practice available from countries of high emigration and from countries of high immigration in the region. Sharing these is a starting point for cooperation.