

MIGRATION IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: Commonalities and differences among Egypt, Lebanon, Greece and Cyprus

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p. 5-11	<p>Migration Trends in the Eastern Mediterranean</p> <p>The Eastern Mediterranean remains a major route for refugees and economic migrants from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Greece recorded 52,052 arrivals in 2024, while Cyprus recorded 61 attempted crossings from Lebanon by mid-year. The decline in arrivals to Cyprus is largely due to the new EU-Lebanon agreement, which has restricted this migration route for refugees. Egyptian migration has surged, with 20,000 Egyptians arriving in Italy from Libya in 2022, almost triple the number from the previous year. Egypt also hosts 1.2 million Sudanese refugees, while Lebanon has experienced mass displacement, with 440,000 people, mostly Syrians and Lebanese, fleeing to Syria between September and October 2024.</p>
p. 6-7, 12-13	<p>EU's External Migration Policies and Agreements</p> <p>The EU has strengthened migration agreements with Egypt and Lebanon, offering financial support in exchange for border management. In 2024, the EU offered Egypt a €7.4 billion package, including €200 million for migration management, while Lebanon received €1.03 billion to support border security and essential services. These deals reflect the 2016 EU-Turkey declaration, which aims to curb irregular migration at source.</p>
p.12-14	<p>Deterrence and Border Control Measures</p> <p>Greece and Cyprus have tightened border controls through pushbacks, deportations and stricter asylum policies. Cyprus suspended asylum for Syrians in April 2024, leaving over 14,000 in limbo, and led the EU in migrant returns with 9,193 deportations in 2023. Greece increased border fencing and accelerated asylum refusals. Lebanon and Egypt cracked down on migrants, with only 20% of Syrians in Lebanon holding valid residency in 2023, making them vulnerable to deportation.</p>
p.9-11, 14-15	<p>Ongoing Socioeconomic and Political Factors Driving Migration</p> <p>Conflicts in Syria, Sudan and Gaza, as well as deteriorating economies in Egypt and Lebanon, continue to drive migration. In Egypt, 32 million people live in poverty, and in Lebanon, 36% of the population want to migrate, with 17% willing to do so irregularly. The lack of legal avenues forces many to take dangerous journeys, while climate change and resource scarcity add to the pressure to migrate.</p>

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