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# **New Migration Partnership Between West African Countries and EU: Preventing the Migration Flows or Improving African Economies**

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## **NEW MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND EU: PREVENTING THE MIGRATION FLOWS OR IMPROVING AFRICAN ECONOMIES**

**Ahmet AY<sup>1</sup>**

**Mahamane Moutari ABDOU BAOUA<sup>2</sup>**

### **ABSTRACT**

The deaths of thousands of migrants in the last three years arouses concern for African and European authorities. In this context, Europe (EU) felt the need to solve the problem from its source while supporting the authorities of the countries of origin of these migrants. Thus, the EU is putting into place and implementing a new Migration Partnership Framework starting with a number of priority countries of origin and transit which are Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, and Ethiopia. The aim of this framework is to save lives at sea and in the desert, fight traffickers and smugglers' networks that benefit from people's despair and decrease the migration flows which reach 150,000 per year. According to this new partnership, EU will allocate about 2.38 billion euro to the origin and transit countries and in turn, African countries will stop the migration flows to Europe. Is this partnership benefic for these African countries? Is that the solution for migration flows in Europe? The aim of this study is to interpret and answer these questions by using migration reports, figures and graphs. After examining the interpretations, we emphasized that the only solution that will stop the migration flows, is good governance and foreign investments. The study suggest that African leaders have to cultivate good governance in the political management of their countries. Moreover, we suggest that EU invest in the private sector in order to decrease the unemployment in African countries.

**Keywords:** Migration flows, economic partnership, Europe, West Africa

**JEL Codes:** A12, J61, F53

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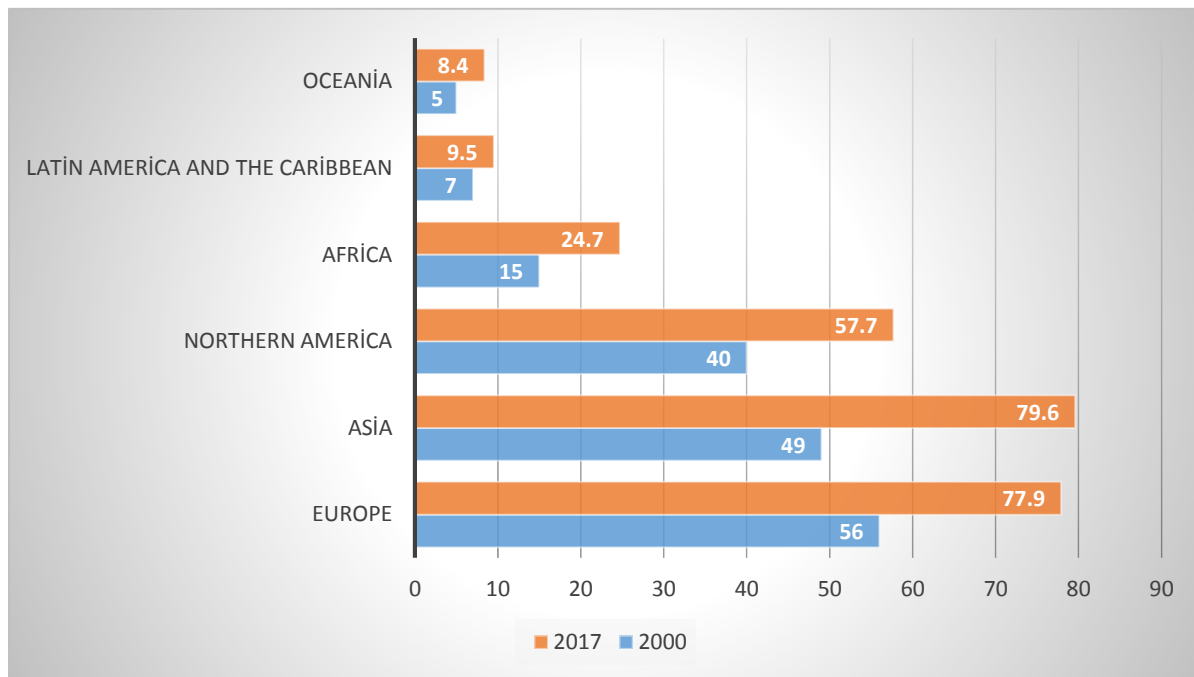
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## INTRODUCTION

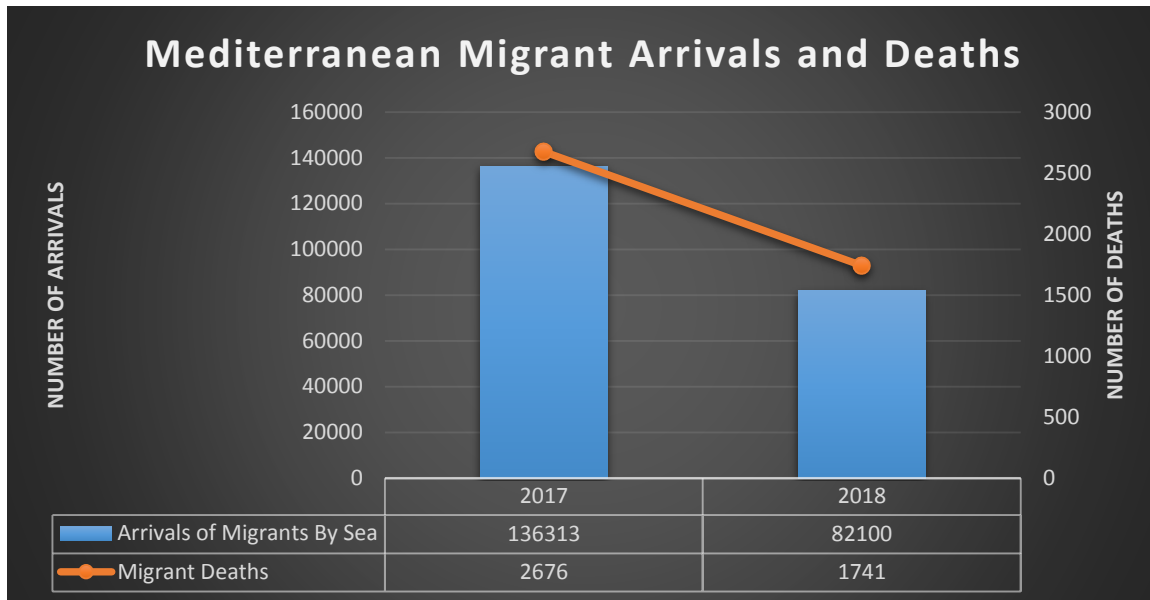
This world in which we live for millions of years, experiences several movements of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions. We are commonly calling this phenomena “Migration”. According to the UN International Migration report 2017, there is about 258 Million migrants worldwide and they represent the 3.4 % of world population (7.6 Billion in 2018). The number of total migrants is increasing faster than the world’s population. Europe is hosting nearly one thirds of all international migrants; as we can see in the figure below.

**Figure-1: Number of international migrants by major area of destination, 2000 and 2017**



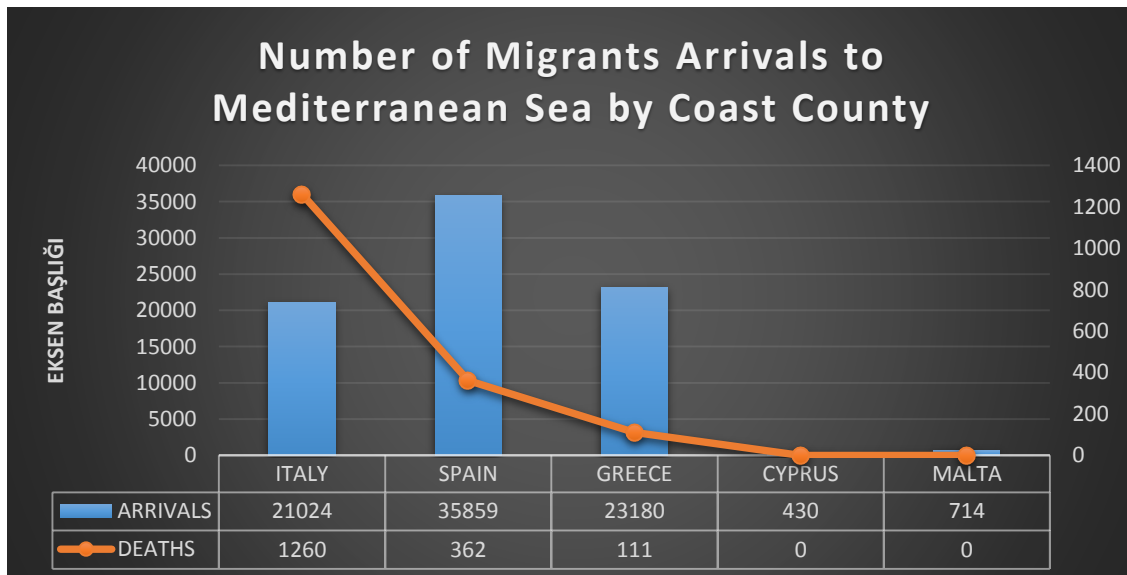
**Source:** (United Nations, 2017)

During 2015 and 2016, the flow of irregular migrants that entering the EU was unprecedented increasing and new arrivals from Africa, the Middle East and Asia, was reported as criminal networks of smugglers for assistance. The migrants from African, Middle East and Asian countries use criminal networks to facilitate their unauthorized entry into transit through (or stay in EU countries) due to the poverty, social and political instability in the countries of origin. Since 2015 thousands and thousands of migrants died while crossing seas in order to reach Europe. Migrants from Africa use Mediterranean Sea to reach what they call “European dream”. In 2016, the deaths of more than 3203 migrants were reported in Mediterranean Sea. While 3510 migrant deaths were recorded worldwide in 2017, this figure is 2674 in Mediterranean Sea and 24% of this figure represent the deaths of African migrants. The following graph shows the Mediterranean migrant arrivals and deaths statistics in 2018 and 2017.

**Figure-2: Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals and Deaths in 2017 and 2018**

**Source:** (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2018)

The Mediterranean Sea received 136,313 Migrants in 2017 and 82,100 in 2018. The arrivals of migrants in 2017 represent 62% of total arrivals in 2017 and 2018. While 2676 deaths were recorded in 2017 and 1741 migrants were reported dead in 2018. The deaths of migrants in 2017 represent 60.7% of total deaths in 2017 and 2018 combined.

**Figure-3: Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals and Deaths by European Coast Countries**

**Source:** (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2018)

According to the graph above, about 35,859 migrants reached Spain in 2018, which means that Spain is the main gate for migrants. While Italy is the biggest rescuer of arrived migrants and the main witness of the deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. The deaths of African migrants in Mediterranean push Leaders (both African and European) to act against illegal migration which is a nuisance than benefic for both sides. Thus, migration partnership between EU and Africa reborn in the middle of 2017 (United Nations, 2017).

The Migration partnership between EU and African countries dates back to 2007 and started to become subject of discussion in 2014 – 2017 periods. A major political declaration on migration and mobility approved by the Heads of State and Government at the EU-Africa summit in April 2014, which reaffirmed the shared commitment of the parties to, among others, fight against irregular migration, covering all relevant aspects, including prevention, strengthening the management of migration and borders, return and readmission, as well as tackling the root causes of irregular migration. The above-mentioned declaration comes with a 2014-2017 Action Plan, with the necessary financial resources. This action plan came with the EU's new migration partnership framework in which EU signed migration agreements with four West African countries (Mali, Nigeria, Niger and Senegal) and one East African country as illustrated in the Figure-4.

**Figure-4: Countries concerned by the EU's new migration partnership framework**



The reasons that EU chose these third priority countries is because they represent the origin and transit of migrants in African. While Niger, Senegal and Ethiopia represent the transit countries, Mali and Nigeria are origin countries. Ethiopia is a transit country for migrants from Eritrea and Somali. Niger plays a very important role in the illegal transit of migrants from West Africa to Libya. The EU's aims through

this Partnership Framework, is to saving lives and breaking the business model of smugglers, preventing illegal migration and enhancing cooperation on returns and readmission of irregular migrants, as well as stepping up investments in partner countries. In this context, the main purpose of this study is to investigate whether these partnerships are benefits or not for these five (5) African Countries and if that is the solution for illegal migration flows to Europe. The study will also answer the following question: “Should the EU prevent the entry of African migrants into Europe or help Africa to develop?”. Thus, this study will analyze the possible solutions for the illegal migration of Africans to Europe by using the migration reports, figures and graphs.

The first part of this study will investigate the concepts and theories of migration. The second section reviews the historical background of west African Migration to Europe. The third section provides the information about the New Partnership Framework of EU about illegal migration of African to Europe; while the fourth section discusses the solutions provided by the new migration partnership against migrants’ flow to Europe; and in section fourth we concluded and gave some suggestions about illegal migration.

## **1. CONCEPTS AND THEORICAL FRAMEWORK**

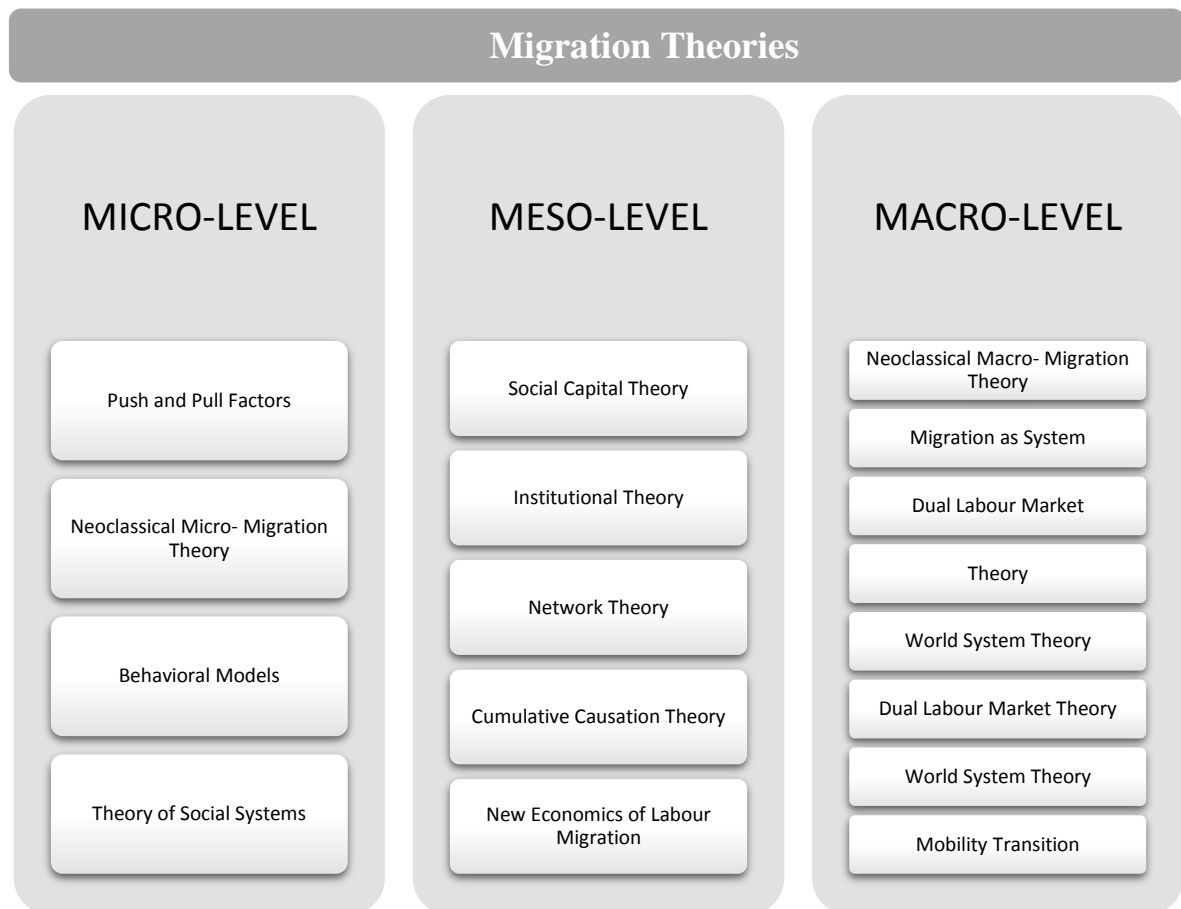
Let us start by defining the migration and migrant. Even if there is no universally definition of migration, we all accept that it is a phenomenon of moving across a border or within a giving place. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2004), defined Migration as “*A process of moving, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people, and economic migrants.*” in the IOM Glossary on Migration. In the same Glossary IOM defined the migrants as persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family (International Organization for Migration, 2011).

People migrate from their current location to another country, another city, another district, another town, another village or neighborhood. If we look at what migration has brought to human society, we can say that migration is very important in social life. The importance of migration is depending to the types of migration. There is a wide number of studies about migration that provided the concepts and types of migration. Migration types can be grouped under two main headings: “internal migrations” and “external (or International) migrations”. Here we will provide the types of International Migration, since our study is focusing on the International Migration. We can count three main types of International migration: labour and temporary migrations, forced migration (refugee movements) and international retirement migration (IRM). Labour migration concerns the migration of high-skilled, unskilled low wage, and temporary labour. Forced migration includes refugees and asylum seekers who cross borders due to conflicts and political

instabilities, and the displaced who have lost their settlements due to natural disasters and construction projects. International retirement migration is when the retired purchase property abroad for their residence (Erol & Ersever, 2014; Bell et al., 2010).

There are numerous studies that used various factors (such as the origin of such theories, migration patterns, relevant disciplines, and application of such theories in the present context) in order to classify the migration theories. Here we will classify the migration by level of migration as follow: micro-level, macrolevel and meso-level of migration.

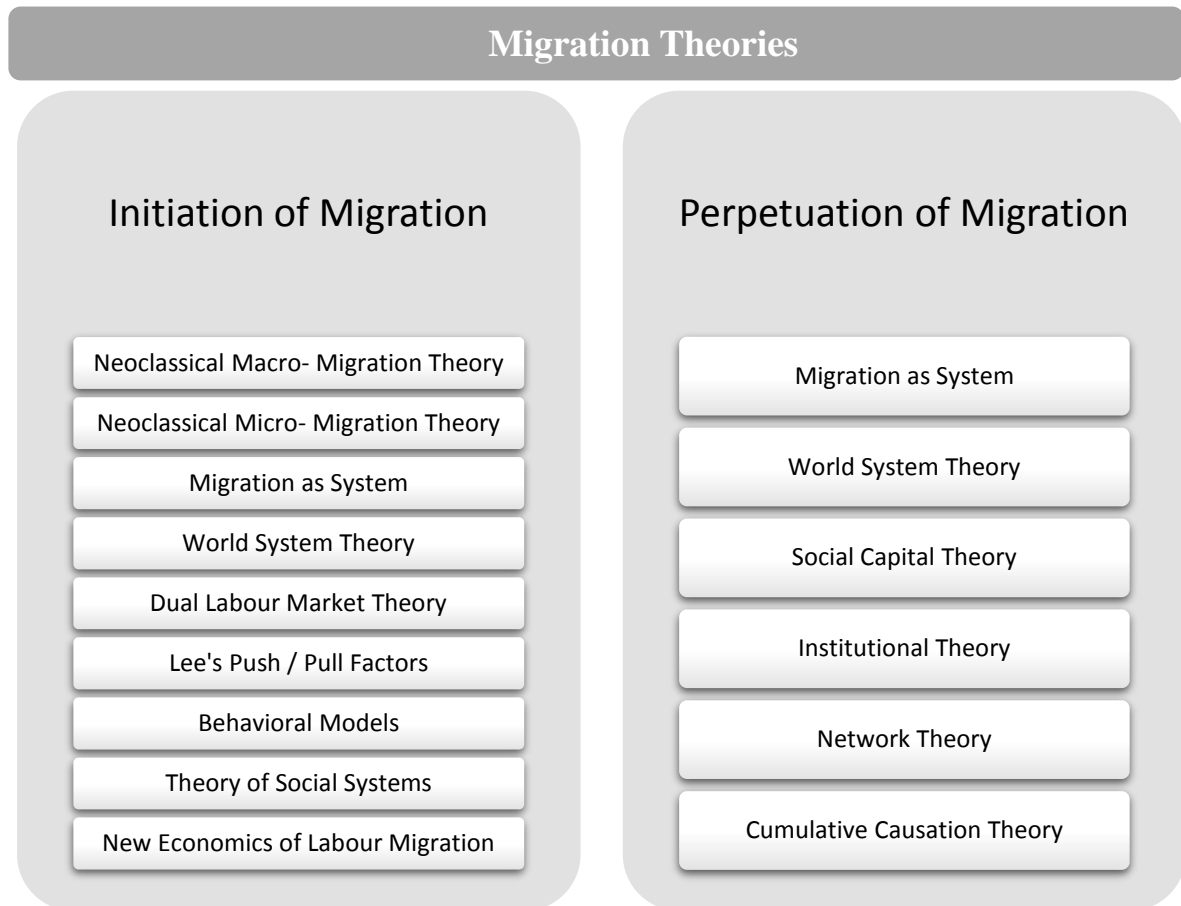
**Table-1: Migration Theories: Level Based Analysis**



**Sources:** (Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana, 2016)

Micro-level theories concern migration decisions from an individual's perspective or a person's desires and expectations. Macro-level theories are about migration decisions from an aggregate opinion; which means the economic structure of the country. Meso-level is where migration decisions are between the two former theories, i.e. family bonds, social networks, peer groups and isolated minority communities. It is also possible to regroup the migration theories as "initiation of Migration" and "Perpetuation of Migration". The following Figure illustrates the classification of these theories (Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana, 2016, s. 18-20).



**Table-2: Migration Theories: Level Based Analysis**

**Source:** Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana (2016)

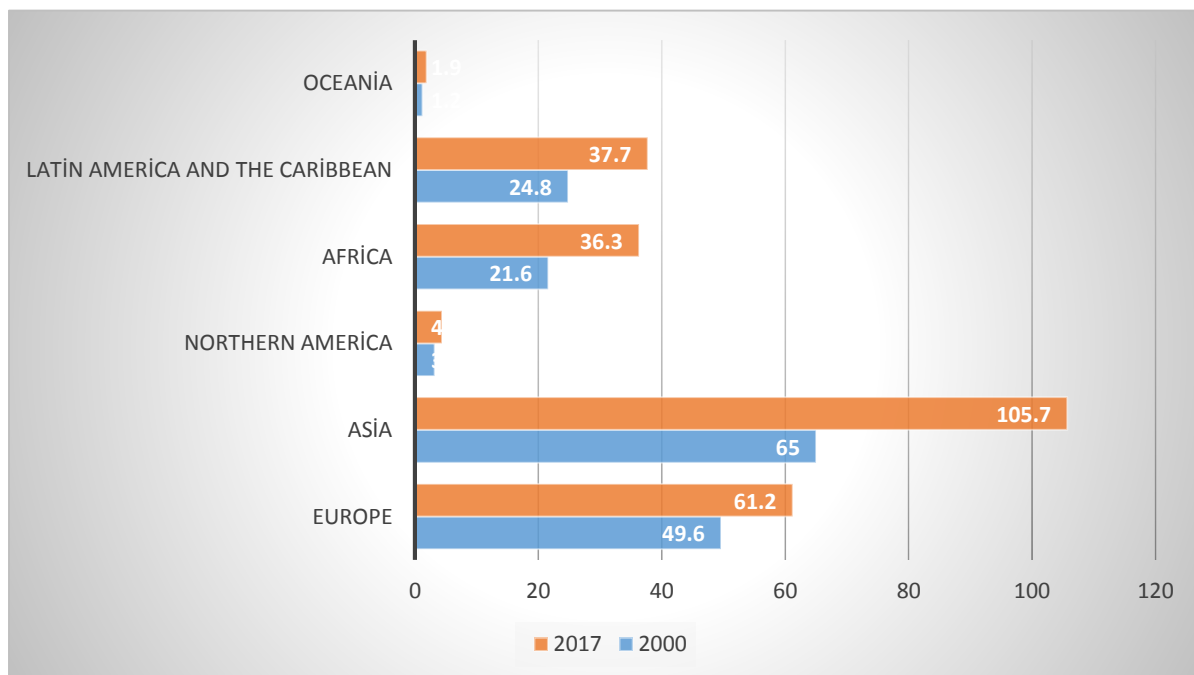
All these theories tried to explain the migration phenomena. However, we will explain some of economic theories of Migration. Neo-classical theory has revealed the first systematic theories about migration. Neo-classical theory emphasize that the emergence of migration is due to the differences in supply and demand of labour. The macro theory of this approach implies that, wages differences and employment differences between countries, which reveal the reasons of migration. In addition, this approach emphasizes that wage differences concern the size of the international migration volume. New Economics of Labour Migration which focuses on migration from the micro individual level to meso level such as families, households or other culturally defined units, has been developed recently with the aim of challenging the assumptions and conclusions of Neo-classical Theory. The dual labour market model argues that migration is not a consequence of decisions made by individuals, and that actually the international migration is the result of intrinsic labour demands of industrialized societies. (Güllüpnar, 2012; Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana, 2016)

## 2. BACKGROUND OF WEST AFRICAN MIGRATION TO EUROPE

First of all, we need to remember that migration is not only a harmful thing for both sides. While it may be benefic for destination country, it could also be benefic for the origin country. However most of views emphasis that African migration is harmful for Africans, since they could not ensure the technological transfer to their countries. Additionally, because African migration tends to be illegal; especially to Europe. Within the 1993-2002 periods, Some African regions (especially West Africa), suffered from political unrest and ethnic conflicts. This situation has dramatically increased the number of African refugees. Most of African migrants are children and women and their main destination is Europe. Today, the African migration to Europe is victim of criminal networks of smugglers. That is why the illegal migration of African to Europe recently increased. Europe is the biggest host for African migrants and most of them move by illegal way (Kohnert, 2017).

The following graphs shows the number of migrants by area of origin.

**Figure-5: Number of international migrants by major area of origin, 2000 and 2017**



Source: (United Nations, 2017)

Even though the percentage of African migrants is very low compared to total migration, illegal African migration is higher than that of other regions. Therefore, we can argue that African migration is related to the illegal entry to European countries. The following table show the Data on arrests and expulsions of West African migrants from the 27 EU countries. According to the Table-1, Senegal recorded the most arrests and expulsions from EU in 2006 and 2007 due to the facts that most of Senegalese living

in France are irregular migrants. Nigerian migrants are known for illegal activities in their host countries especially in Europe. Niger recorded the least arrests in Europe because Nigerien migrants are not numerous in EU.

**Table-3: Data on arrests and expulsions of West African migrants from the 27 EU countries in 2006 and 2007**

	2006		2007	
<i>Ivory Coast</i>	2621	6.9 %	2075	8.2 %
<i>Ghana</i>	2044	5.4 %	2541	10.1 %
<i>Mali</i>	4507	11.8 %	2264	9 %
<i>Mauritania</i>	1174	3.1 %	1297	5.2 %
<i>Niger</i>	416	1.1 %	472	1.9 %
<i>Nigeria</i>	6035	15.8 %	6430	25.6 %
<i>Senegal</i>	19775	51.8 %	8483	33.7 %
<i>Cap-Vert</i>	1594	4.2 %	1598	6.4 %
<i>Total</i>	38 166	100 %	25 160	100 %

Source: (Konan, Anich, Lidth, & Mona, 2012)

Why African young men, women and children want to move to Europe by any way? Thousands of Africans died in Mediterranean Sea in 2015 and 2016 with the intention to reach Europe. Most of them are women and children. The cause of this migration from unstable African countries is not only political unrest and conflicts, but also the unemployment that reach a high level. Young Africans prefer to move to Europe by any means than to stay in their own country without job. These young people accept to take the risk of dying in Mediterranean Sea because they refuse to live in the violence without job (Abel et al., 2018).

The Libyan crisis caused the immediate return of more than 200,000 migrants, destabilizing the sub-Saharan region. This added an extra burden on countries of origin, notably in Chad and Niger. About 8.4 million migrants (2.8% of the total population) moving around West Africa represent the largest total migrant stock in Africa, and this migrants stock moves internally, intra-regionally, continentally and internationally. In the last decade the labour mobility has significantly increased. According to the estimations, South-South migration accounts for more than half of all migratory movements within the region (Konan, Anich, Lidth, & Mona, 2012).

Countries in the Sahel have received a large influx of returnees, as well as arms, from Libya. The most visible effects of these destabilizing elements observed are in Mali, but its neighboring countries have also been affected. The situation in northern Mali has led to the displacement of people internally and regionally, with consequences for regional migration, border management and community stabilization.

Niger is also witnessing the arrival of migrants from around the region attempting to reach Libya who are being expelled at the border, as well as returnees fleeing insecurity in northern Nigeria.

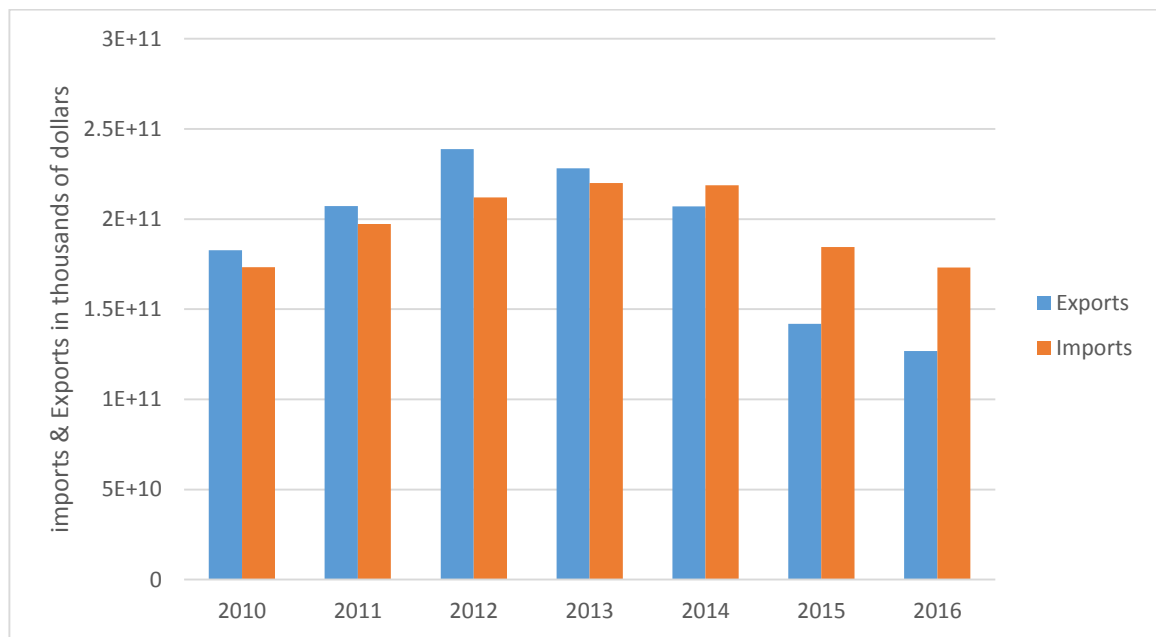
### **3. THE NEW MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK OF EU FOR AFRICA**

#### **3.1. Partnership between European Union (EU) and West African Countries**

Before discussing about migration partnership between EU and West African countries it is necessary to give a historical background about EU-Africa relationships. Since the passing of the Organization of African Unity into the African Union (AU), European Union (EU) has aimed to strengthen its formal relationship with Africa. AU established the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in March 2004 under article 17 of the AU's Constitutive Act which has as objectives to promote democracy, good governance and human rights in AU member states. The Joint EU-Africa Strategy which the ultimate aim is to forge a stronger partnership that builds on the identities and renewed institutions of the two continents was adopted at the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007. In this context, the European Parliament and the PAP were asked to develop a political vision and practical approaches based on mutual respect, common interests and the principle of ownership. The two parliaments are supposed to monitor the implementation of the joint strategic partnership and its' First Action Plan (2008–2010) through the PAP's ad hoc committee for relations with the European Parliament and the European Parliament's ad hoc delegation for relations with the PAP (Emmanuel, 2010; Kohnert, 2017).

During the cooperation between EU and African Union, EU assisted African countries in numerous sectors such as governance, peace, security, energy, education, trade, economic growth and job creation, sustainable agriculture, infrastructure, health, and migration. With 45 delegations in Africa especially within African Union, EU is regularly deploying Election Observation Missions in African countries, at the invitation of the host governments, often coordinated with observers from the African Union and regional economic communities. Additionally, EU-AU Human Rights Dialogue is held annually as support in Human Rights. According to EU Commission, for 2014-2020 periods, more than 31 billion EURO has been released for official development aid; and the External Investment Plan (EIP) mobilizes up to €44 billion of investments for Africa. (EEAS Press Team, 2017).

In term of trade EU and African countries have some agreements such as EPA in the framework of EU-Africa Business Forum (EABF) which is part of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) (Marshall Plan Project Group-BMZ, 2017).

**Figure-2: Trade (Exports and Imports) of Africa with Europe**

Source: (UNCTADSTAT, 2017)

The Figure-2 shows the export and imports of Africa and Europe. According to Figure-2, there is increase in export of Africa to Europe since 2010 and we can see a significant decrease of trade in 2015. This is due to the oil and mineral resources prices decrease in the whole market started in 2015. Actually, the exports of Africa to EU account about 130 Billion US\$ and these figures was about 240 Billion US\$ in 2012. The average imports (197 Billion US\$) is almost equal to the average exports (190 Billion US\$) within the periods of 2010-2016 (UNECA, 2016). Africa-Europe partnership is also related to the reinforcement of political relations; strengthen and promoting issues of common concern; promoting effective multilateralism; and promoting people-centered partnerships. All these subjects above shows that Europe, which was a predator for Africa in the past, became a partner today (SENTURK, KOSE, & KAHRAMAN, 2017).

### **3.2. New Migration partnership Framework of EU**

Now let's us analyze the new migration partnership framework that EU introduced in order to decrease the illegal migrants' flows.

As we stated before, thousands of people died in Mediterranean Sea while trying to reach Europe in last 3 (three) years. Unemployment and crimes increasing in Europe, pushes EU members states to work together to better manage migration flows and strive for well-managed migration. In this context, they introduced a new Migration Partnership Framework in June 2016 that fully integrates migration in the European Union's foreign policy. The objective is saving lives and breaking the business model of

smugglers, preventing illegal migration and enhance cooperation on returns and readmission of irregular migrants, as well as stepping up investments in partner countries. EU is launching this new framework by starting with a number of priority countries of origin and transit – Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, and Ethiopia (Bauloz, 2017).

The European Union, which is developing coherent and continuous dialogues at all levels with partner countries to work towards common solutions, started to strengthen the EU agency involvement in partner countries (European Border and Coast Guard, EUROPOL). Additionally, Europe supports the idea of assisting host and transit countries through existing Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, including on border management and fighting traffickers and smugglers. That's why EU released more financial tools such as the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa or the Syria Trust Fund to support refugee population and reduce dangerous journeys. The proposition of an ambitious External Investment Plan in September by the European Commission in order to support investments in the EU's partner countries, especially in Africa and the European Neighborhood will really strengthen their partnerships.

The short-term measures taken the European Commission include the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which was enhanced from €500 Million to €2.38 billion. However, the long-term measures of the new partnership framework are about the mobilization of European Development Fund of €44 billion and the total aid flows allocated to the key priority countries that recently averaged the €4.4 billion per year. According to the first progress report of the New Partnership Framework, projects were mobilized in all five-priority countries under the EU Trust Fund for Africa and Niger, Nigeria and Mali have increased actions to combat migrant smuggling. Additionally, Senegal and Mali are cooperating and helping to finalize some procedures (European Commission, 2017).

#### **4. WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS TO BE APPLIED AGAINST THE ILLEGAL FLOW OF MIGRANTS TO EUROPE?**

Now that we have enough information about the Migration Partnership Framework (MPF), let us analyze its effectiveness. While they have had, so far, more or less tangible results depending on the countries, the European Commission depicted its collaboration with Niger as 'a showcase of how the EU and its Member States can combine the various instruments and tools available in a comprehensive manner'. The case of Niger indeed provides a good illustration of the breadth of actions which can be taken by partner countries and the supporting tools that can be provided by the EU and its Member States under the Migration Partnership Framework MPF. Niger has accordingly been quite active in cooperating with the EU, be it for the implementation of the short-term Action Plan against illegal migration or the finalization of the Action Plan to fight against smuggling, decrease irregular migration and provide alternative economic

opportunities. Concrete actions have also been taken, such as stricter measures of border control against irregular migrants going to Libya, awareness campaigns to discourage migration, arrests of smugglers and seizures of their equipment, as well as repatriation of migrants to their countries of origin with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (European Union, 2017, s. 3-4). On the part of the EU, support to Niger has materialized in on-the ground assistance and trainings, most notably with the EUCAP Sahel Niger mission in Agadez under the EU Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), the provision of equipment and the forthcoming deployment of EU liaison officers, as well as assistance for the implementation of the short-term Plan of Action against smuggling and trafficking. While the flow of irregular migrants transiting through Niger has arguably decreased from 70,000 in May 2016 to approximately 1,500 in November 2016 and some 102 smugglers have been arrested and 95 of their vehicles seized, the European Commission concedes that ‘this reduced transit flow within Africa has not yet resulted in reduced arrival to Europe’. While it is arguably too early to judge on the MPF achievements, the EU-Niger compact nevertheless already well illustrates the trade-off policy at the heart of the MPF (Bauloz, 2017).

Even if Niger successes in decreasing illegal migration and even if EU granted these African countries with financial support, it seem that it is not enough as development support regarding this partnership. EU Should support African countries with technological transfer and direct investments. Among the five origin countries, Niger is the most exposed and the support done by EU did not positively affect Niger. We used to say that development aid promotes good governance; so that eradicates less obvious push factors of migration such as political instability, corruption-induced discrimination, repression and under-representation. The inference is that if development aid is to be targeted at decreasing irregular migration then it is most effective if transmitted through the medium of governance aid. Furthermore, governance aid is itself at least partially tasked with empowering the rule of law and good governance. It is therefore an area of development that is less likely to be misused than many other types of aid (Funk, Namara, Pardo, & Rose, 2017).

As we know EU applied the same partnership framework with Turkey for Syria. And Turkey threaten EU to leave migrants flowing in Europe if its requirements are not respected. These five African countries (especially Niger) respected their engagement in order to decrease the illegal migration flow. However, the situation of countries of illegal migrants did not change until now. That’s why they migration flow continue in other form by other target countries like Algeria and Chad. EU must strengthen its partnership with African countries in order solve the instability problems of these countries. The main problem is not the flow of migrant but the bad situation created in their countries that lead to conflicts and unemployment. That’s why EU, UN and AU must work together in order to solve instability problems in Africa. The question of unemployment must be solved by increasing the foreign direct investment flows to

African countries. According to the action plan adopted in the Valletta Summit in 2015, the European Investment Bank, in cooperation with other financial institutions and African partners, can support the re-establishment of the conditions for self-sustaining economic growth and the development of human capital in the origin countries by providing financial services. Moreover, the professional skills and employability of young people can be enhanced in regions of origin and transit of migrants in Eastern, Northern and Western Africa. Additionally facilitating the responsible private investment in agriculture, agri-business and agri-industries and boosting the intra-African trade of agricultural products will contribute to accelerate the agricultural growth and transformation (Council of the EU, 2015).

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Thousands of people died in Mediterranean Sea while trying to reach Europe in last 3 (three) years. Unemployment and crimes increasing in Europe, pushes EU members states to work together to better manage migration flows and strive for well-managed migration. Thus, the EU is putting into place and implementing a new Migration Partnership Framework starting with a number of priority countries of origin and transit which are Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, and Ethiopia. The aim of this framework is to save lives at sea and in the desert, fight traffickers and smugglers' networks that benefit from people's despair and decrease the migration flows which reach 150,000 per year. According to this new partnership, EU will allocate about 2.38 billion euro to the origin and transit countries and in turn, African countries will stop the migration flows to Europe.

According to the first progress report of the New Partnership Framework, projects were mobilized in all five-priority countries under the EU Trust Fund for Africa and Niger, Nigeria and Mali have increased actions to combat migrant smuggling. Additionally, Senegal and Mali are cooperating and helping to finalize some procedures. These five African countries (especially Niger) respected their engagement in order to decrease the illegal migration flow. However, this situation of illegal migrants in these countries did not change until now. That is why the migration flows continue in another form through other target countries like Algeria and Chad. EU must strengthen its partnership with African countries in order solve the instability problems of these countries. After examining the interpretations, we emphasized that the only solution that will stop the migration flows, is good governance and foreign investments. The study suggest that African leaders have to cultivate good governance in the political management of their countries. And we suggest that EU invest in the private sector in order to decrease the unemployment in African countries. Additionally, EU must tie relationship with African Union in order to provide technology transfer within the continent. The question of unemployment must be solved by increasing the foreign direct investment flows to African countries.



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