



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 3 March 2014

EU and Tunisia establish their Mobility Partnership

Tunisia and the EU today formally established a Mobility Partnership. A joint declaration was signed by Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Mr Tahar Cherif, Tunisian Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union, and the Ministers of the ten EU Member States involved in the Partnership: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

'This Mobility Partnership aims to facilitate the movement of people between the EU and Tunisia and to promote a common and responsible management of existing migratory flows, including by simplifying procedures for granting visas. The EU will also support the Tunisian authorities in their efforts in the field of asylum, with a view to establishing a system for protecting refugees and asylum-seekers. Through this Partnership, the EU and Tunisia will not only develop their bilateral relations in the fields of migration, mobility and security, but will cooperate together to better meet the challenges faced in the Mediterranean', said Ms Malmström in the margins of the Home Affairs Council in Brussels.

One of the initiatives that will come out of the implementation of the Partnership is that the EU and Tunisia will begin negotiations on an agreement to facilitate the procedures for issuing visas.

One objective of the Partnership is to improve the information available to qualified Tunisian citizens on employment, education and training opportunities available in the EU and also to make mutual recognition of professional and university qualifications easier.

The EU and Tunisia are committed to encouraging better integration of Tunisian nationals legally living in the EU and of migrants legally living in Tunisia. They have also made a series of commitments to maximise the impact of migration on development, especially by strengthening the role of Tunisian communities abroad involved in the development of Tunisia.

On the subject of irregular migration, besides opening negotiations on an agreement for the readmission of irregular migrants, the EU and Tunisia also promised better cooperation to prevent human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants and to improve the security of identity and travel documents and border management.

As part of this Partnership, Tunisia and the EU will also work together to support the establishment and strengthening of the Tunisian authorities that will be responsible for identifying those migrants on their territory who are eligible for international protection, processing their asylum applications, applying the principle of 'non-refoulement' to them and providing them with lasting protection arrangements.

Background and key figures

The EU and Tunisia began a Dialogue on Migration, Mobility and Security in October 2011, and negotiations on the Political Declaration for the EU-Tunisia Mobility Partnership were finalised on 13 November 2013.

The Mobility Partnership with Tunisia is the second of its kind with a country bordering the Mediterranean, following the signature of the first such Partnership with Morocco in June 2013. It follows those entered into with the Republic of Moldova and Cape Verde in 2008, with Georgia in 2009, with Armenia in 2011 and with Azerbaijan in 2013.

Negotiations for a similar agreement are also in progress with Jordan.

Mobility Partnerships provide a flexible and non-legally binding framework for ensuring that the movement of people between the EU and a third country can be managed effectively. They form part of the global migration approach developed by the EU in recent years ([IP/11/1369](#) and [MEMO/11/800](#)).

125 594 requests for Schengen visas were submitted to consulates of Schengen countries in Tunisia in 2012, an increase of 14% over the figure for 2010. France receives the most visa requests (81 180), followed by Italy and Germany with around 10 000 requests each.

According to Eurostat data on residence permits, 343 963 Tunisian nationals were legally resident in the EU in 2012, over half of them in France (185 010), with 122 438 living in Italy and 20 421 in Germany.

For more information

Commissioner Malmström's [homepage](#)

Follow Commissioner Malmström on [Twitter](#)

DG Home Affairs [website](#)

Follow DG Home Affairs on [Twitter](#)

Contacts:

[Michele Cercone](#) (+32 2 298 09 63)

[Tove Ernst](#) (+32 2 298 67 64)

For the public **Europe Direct** by telephone **00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11** or by [email](#)