The message that migration issues are now at the top of the EU’s external relations priorities has not yet been fully communicated to and appreciated by partners. It is essential that in close cooperation with all Member States it is made clear to our partners that a solution to the irregular and uncontrolled movement of people is a priority for the Union as a whole.

(European Commission 2016a: 3)

Introduction

A series of migrant boat tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea, and unusually high numbers of new migrants arriving on European soil in late 2015 and early 2016, have stressed the European Union (EU) to the point of a ‘crisis’ (Trauner 2016). In response, the EU has sought to deepen its cooperation with countries of migrants’ origin and transit. In March 2016, Turkey agreed with the EU on a deal in which it agrees to take back all migrants departing irregularly from its shore towards Greece in exchange for financial aid and some other incentives, such as an accelerated visa liberalisation scheme. Contested from a human rights perspective (Greene and Kelemen 2016; Collet 2016), the EU–Turkey deal may become a prototype for a new EU approach on migration in the wider European region. ‘Comprehensive partnerships’ (or ‘compacts’) that bring together EU instruments, mechanisms and leverage to ‘better manage migration’ (European Commission 2016a: 6) are to be signed with Jordan, Lebanon and a range of other priority countries. A third country’s willingness to prevent irregular migration into the EU should become a determining element of this country’s relation with the Union.

This chapter traces how migration has become a key priority in the EU’s relations with neighbouring states subsumed under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Looking at the EU’s external migration agenda vis-à-vis southern and eastern neighbours, the chapter seeks to provide a robust overview of the policy evolution and the related academic debates. In terms of structure, it starts by outlining the EU’s objective and policy instruments in the neighbourhood. This is followed by an investigation of the reaction of ENP countries and the political dynamics in the EU’s eastern and southern neighbourhoods.
EU objectives and instruments in the neighbourhood

Two conceptual approaches have informed the development of the EU’s external migration policies (Boswell 2003). The first approach is restrictive and control-oriented. Under it, the EU assists (or puts pressure on) third countries to tighten their entry controls and/or accept provisions for facilitating the removal of irregular migrants and rejected asylum seekers. In the literature, this approach has also been grasped with concepts such as ‘policy conditionality’, ‘externalisation’ or ‘extra-territorialisation’ (Rijpma and Cremona 2007; Trauner 2009; Bigo and Guild 2005). The second approach seeks to tackle the circumstances in the countries of migrants’ origin that make people migrate or flee to the EU by using foreign policy tools (such as sanctions for human rights violations), economic cooperation and/or development aid. Officially, this approach aims at eliminating the ‘root causes of migration’ – a frequent objective in the policy and academic debates.

Migration objectives at the advent of the ENP

The EU has repeatedly emphasised that it seeks to take both approaches into account. However, scholars pointed to the fact that the restrictive approach tended to dominate, notably at the advent of the ENP. Lavenex (2004) proposed an understanding of the ‘Wider Europe’ initiative of the EU as an attempt to govern externally in order to improve the problem-solving capacities of internal EU policies. ‘The EU will expand its sphere of governance in particular in areas which have become securitized inside and where vulnerability is attributed to development in the third countries in question’ (Lavenex 2004: 686). There was little doubt that migration would be among these ‘securitised’ areas (Huysmans 2000; Balzacq 2009).

A key migration-related theme at the beginning of the ENP in 2003 was the prevention of negative externalities stemming from the eastwards expansion of the EU (and its Schengen borders). To align with the EU acquis, the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe had to introduce new visa requirements for their neighbours to the East, including Russia, Ukraine and other countries from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The policy debates at the time of the 2004–2007 eastern enlargements revolved around the question of whether the EU would create new dividing lines in Europe and a ‘Schengen paper wall’ (Grabbe 2002). The Commission was aware of these concerns and promised to ensure that ‘the new external border is not a barrier to trade, social and cultural exchange or regional cooperation’ (Commission of the European Communities 2003: 11). While fostering good neighbourly relations has been a traditional objective of EU foreign policy actors, the more inward-looking EU ministries of the interior also added their priority: neighbouring countries should do more to curb unwanted migration and cooperate on the removal of irregular migrants. In their debate, a reoccurring theme was the contrast of a safe ‘inside’ (namely the EU territory) and an unstable and menacing ‘outside’ (Zhyznomirska 2011).

The instrument of EU visa facilitation agreements was eventually considered a catch-all solution: they gave the EU a strong lever to make some third countries sign readmission agreements and trigger reforms in their justice and home affairs sectors, while they also met major concern from neighbouring countries by relaxing the tight visa regime and offering facilitated travel opportunities (Trauner and Kruse 2008). The visa facilitation-readmission nexus became firmly established in Eastern Europe (Hernández i Sagrera 2010), but less so in the southern neighbourhood. In this region, cooperation on irregular migration has primarily been based on informal arrangements and non-standard bilateral readmission agreements (Cassarino 2007).

The specific objectives of the EU were outlined in the Action Plans for individual ENP countries. They tended to ‘offer little space to take into account of the diversity of migrant realities’.
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(Wunderlich 2010: 255) in the different countries. In most cases, they included comparable priorities relating to migration control, capacity building and alignment with international conventions. There have also been different relevant regional dialogues and consultative processes, aligned with external EU migration objectives such as the Budapest Process, the Söderköping Process, the Prague Process (including an Eastern Partnership panel on Migration and Asylum), the 5+5 dialogue in the Mediterranean and the Africa–EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment, the Khartoum process and the Rabat Process in the South.

The EU’s Global Approach to Migration and Mobility

From 2005, the EU started to make more efforts to go beyond a purely control-oriented external migration approach and put a stronger emphasis on legal migration and development issues (at least in its communications) (Council of the European Union 2005). The reasons for this shift were manifold and included the successful lobbying of ENP countries such as Morocco (Wunderlich 2010), and the dramatic events in Ceuta and Melilla in 2005, when at least fifteen migrants died while seeking to overcome the fences surrounding these two Spanish enclaves. Launched under the British Presidency in 2005, the Global Approach to Migration (GAM) initially had a focus on Africa and the Mediterranean region, but was quickly extended to other regions, notably Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Its flagship instruments have been ‘Mobility Partnerships’ seeking to open channels for circular and temporary migration in exchange for cooperation in the prevention and combat of irregular migration and trafficking in human beings (Council of the European Union 2005). The partnerships are legally non-binding, yet they politically commit the participating Member States, and the contracting third country, to implement certain projects and priorities. The priorities of ENP countries should also be considered. For instance, Moldova has been eager to implement measures in support of return migration in order to counter the consequences of its large emigration (Commission of the European Communities 2009). Scholars, however, considered the innovation that Mobility Partnerships offer to be limited. According to Lavenex (2010: 473), ‘they largely summarize existing bilateral cooperation programmes with individual member states under a new heading’ (for other discussions, see Parkes 2009; Reslow 2012; Weinar 2013).

The ‘Arab Spring’ exerted an influence on the set-up of the EU migration policy in the neighbourhood. The field of migration and mobility featured high in European debates on how to reinvigorate Euro-Mediterranean relations in the wake of the revolutionary events (European Commission 2011b). In 2011, the term ‘mobility’ was added to the heading ‘Global Approach to Migration’, to reflect the EU’s intention to promote people-to-people contacts. Other objectives of the renewed approach were to foster legal immigration, focus more on migrants’ rights, improve international protection of refugees and create a closer development-migration nexus. Mobility Partnerships ‘should be upgraded and promoted as the principle framework for cooperation in the area of migration and mobility between the EU and its partners, with a primary focus on the countries in the EU Neighbourhood’ (European Commission 2011b: 10). If an ENP country prefers not to negotiate readmission and visa facilitation agreements, an alternative framework should be the ‘Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility’ (CAMM). This cooperation framework is less ambitious and committing, because the contracting parties agree to open a dialogue on all migration matters, which is gradually expected to lead to major mutual understanding on such thorny issues as readmission. This explains why a CAMM might be upgraded to a Mobility Partnership at a later stage.

The Mobility Partnerships became more tailor-made regarding the commitments a country was willing to make. The signing of a readmission agreement has become no longer a precondition
for entering a partnership with the EU – the formal recognition of the willingness to cooperate on the removal of irregular migrants now suffices (European Commission, 2011a). With this renewed approach, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, in the southern neighbourhood, accepted a Mobility Partnership, in addition to Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus in the eastern neighbourhood. At the time of writing (Autumn 2016), the three Common Agendas on Migration and Mobility signed so far did not concern ENP countries but Ethiopia, India and Nigeria (see Table 35.1).

The migration dimension of the ENP post-2015 refugee crisis

The 2015 ‘refugee crisis’, when the numbers of newly arrived migrants reached an unprecedented level, created a sense of urgency in the EU to engage in a more comprehensive and determined way with neighbouring countries. This is also reflected in budgetary allocations. Around half the available ENP funding is now spent on migration-related issues (European Commission 2016b). However, the EU is still struggling to find a balance between the restrictive and the preventive approach of external engagement.

On paper, the restrictive approach clearly dominates. All the EU tools should be mobilised to give readmission ‘a central place in all dialogues with countries of origin and transit of irregular migrants’ (European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2015: 17). Pressures stemming from external migration would be ‘the new normal’, according to the European Commission (2016b: 5), so the EU needs a ‘more coordinated, systematic and structured approach to maximise the synergies and leverages of the Union’s internal and external policies’. The Partnership Frameworks or ‘compacts’ should achieve the threefold objectives of saving lives in the Mediterranean Sea, contributing to higher ‘return rates’, and enabling migrants and refugees to stay closer to their place of origin (ibid.).

The Partnership Frameworks institutionalise a shift to more informal, flexible and ad hoc arrangements, notably in the southern neighbourhood and in Africa (Cassarino 2017): ‘The paramount priority is to achieve fast and operational returns, and not necessarily formal readmission agreements’ (European Commission 2016b: 7). The compacts are to receive a substantial amount of money, up to EUR8 billion over 2016–2020. In the long-term, an External Investment Fund with up to EUR62 billion may be devoted to address the root causes of migration (European Commission 2016b). The EU develops country packages for sixteen countries in

### Table 35.1 EU Member States and ENP countries participating in EU Mobility Partnerships (as of October 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third country</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Participating Member States (at signature)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>BE, BG, CZ, DK, EE, FR, DE, GR, IT, LV, LT, NL, PL, RO, SE, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BG, CY, CZ, FR, GR, IT, LV, PL, RO, SI, SK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>BE, BG, CZ, FR, DE, IT, NL, PL, RO, SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>BG, CZ, FR, IT, NL, PL, SI, SK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>BE, FR, DE, IT, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>DE, BE, DK, ES, IT, FR, PL, PT, UK, SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>CY, DE, DK, GR, ES, FR, IT, HU, PL, PT, RO, SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>BG, LV, LT, HU, PL, RO, FI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ own elaborations based on different Mobility Partnerships. Names of countries refer to ISO 3166-1 (alpha-2 code).
North and Sub-Saharan Africa (Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Morocco, Pakistan, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia).

Unsurprisingly, the EU’s plan to use all available tools for migration-control purposes (and to present the EU–Turkey deal as an example for engagement in the neighbourhood) has received criticism. A total of 104 NGOs working with refugees signed an open petition to the EU in which they condemned the EU’s new approach to contain migration.

This new Partnership Framework risks cementing a shift towards a foreign policy that serves one single objective, to curb migration, at the expense of European credibility and leverage in defence of fundamental values and human rights.

(PICUM 2016)

Yet the compact with Jordan, the first of its kind, includes many aspects that can be attributed to the ‘preventive’ rather than the ‘restrictive’ approach of EU external migration policy (Boswell 2003). The EU has simplified the rules of origin for Jordanian exporters in their trade with the EU. This is expected to create jobs for Jordanians and Syrian refugees in the country. More concretely, the EU will open its market for manufactured goods produced in special industrial areas and development zones – if their producers employ a minimum percentage of Syrian refugees (15 per cent at the outset, progressively increasing to 25 per cent in three years). The overall objective is to provide Syrians with a possibility of a decent life in the country and to improve ‘Jordan’s resilience in light of the Syria refugee crisis’ (European Commission 2016d). The EU’s approach in Jordan largely corresponds to what migration scholars have long suggested, namely to ‘help refugees help themselves’ by facilitating their inclusion into labour markets through a special ‘zonal development model’ (Betts and Collier 2015). Yet, the credibility of these provisions will be contingent on local social, economic and political preconditions that will shape their rationale and concrete impact. In other words, the inclusion of Syrian refugees in the Jordanian labour market will depend on whether the Jordanian authorities and local business actors can attract substantial foreign investments. More importantly, it will also depend on its capacity to respond to its resilient domestic labour absorption problems, for the sake of social stability. The unemployment rate in Jordan remains reportedly high (14 per cent), especially for youth.

**Zooming in on the eastern and southern neighbourhoods**

This section looks in more detail at the similarities and differences of the politics of EU migration management in the eastern and southern neighbourhood.

**The Eastern Partnership countries and Russia**

The Eastern Partnership (eP) countries have more formalised and closer ties with the EU in the migration field compared to the EU’s southern neighbours. Their geographical position and close socio-economic ties with some Member States (for example, between Poland and Ukraine or Romania and Moldova) have contributed to an earlier EU acceptance of the nexus between visa facilitation and readmission (see Table 35.2). The EU’s experience of negotiating a readmission agreement with Russia in the early 2000s has also influenced the EU approach towards the entire region. The Russian Federation repeatedly, and successfully, asked for facilitated visa travel as compensation for concluding such an agreement (Hernández i Sagrera 2010; Korneev 2012).
After the signature of the EU–Russian visa facilitation and readmission agreements in May 2006, the same pattern of cooperation was soon accepted for and by Ukraine and Moldova, with agreements signed in June and October 2007. Moldova and Georgia were the first EaP countries with which the EU negotiated visa facilitation and readmission rights. At first glance, Azerbaijan seemed to be an exception. In January 2011, Commission President José Manuel Barroso promised to quickly grant visa facilitation, in return for an energy deal bringing 10 billion cubic metres of gas to Europe each year (EurActiv 2011). However, not all Member States agreed with the Commission President’s assessment that the gas deal justified a more relaxed visa regime. In the end, Azerbaijan and Armenia both signed visa facilitation and readmission agreements with the EU.

The EU has limited relations with the Belarusian regime. Yet, migration has been a tricky question for the EU. On the one hand, the widespread human rights violations of the Lukashenko regime prevent the EU from deepening or even cooperating on sensitive issues such as readmission. On the other hand, more travel opportunities are of high importance for ordinary citizens and may benefit Belarusian society at large (Council of the European Union 2011). Belarus is the country with the highest number of Schengen visas issued per capita in the world and one of the lowest refusal rates (European Commission 2016c). The EU has therefore an interest in a migration cooperation framework with Belarus, as is reflected by the signature of a Mobility Partnership in October 2016.

In addition to Belarus, Mobility Partnerships have been signed with Moldova (May 2008), Georgia (November 2009) and Armenia (October 2011). They ease the way towards ‘Visa Liberalisation Dialogues’, although they are no prerequisite. Ukraine has entered a visa liberalisation process without committing to a Mobility Partnership. Moldova was the first EaP country to complete a visa liberalisation process. It was removed from Annex I of Regulation 539/2001 in April 2014, implying that the citizens of Moldova no longer needed a visa to enter the Union. In December 2015, the European Commission (2015a, 2015b) considered that Ukraine and Georgia would also meet all the benchmarks set by the EU and qualify for visa-free travel. In October 2016, the EU Member States agreed on visa-free travel for Georgia but demanded Ukraine make further efforts in the fight against corruption. At the same time as this decision, the Council agreed on a facilitated ‘suspension emergency mechanism’ that allows the re-introduction of restrictions to visa-free travel in case of an abuse (Zalan 2016; for a background on this mechanism, see Trauner and Manigrassi 2014).

### Table 35.2 EU migration agreements with EaP countries and Russia (as of October 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EaP country</th>
<th>Negotiating mandate</th>
<th>Agreements signed</th>
<th>Mobility Partnerships</th>
<th>Start of visa-free dialogue</th>
<th>Visa free travel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readmission</td>
<td>Visa facilitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Russia also queued for visa-free travel with the EU, but the dialogue was frozen as part of the sanctions imposed in the wake of the annexation of Crimea. The growing EU–Russian competition in the shared neighbourhood has influenced the EU’s migration approach in Eastern Europe. Russia’s efforts to prevent the EU’s eastern neighbours from integrating into the Euro-Atlantic institutions also builds upon migration-related instruments, such as more restrictive access to the Russian labour market or (the threat of) deportations of citizens of cooperation-unwilling neighbours (Ademmer and Delcour 2016). This is of relevance given the large share of foreign workers from Eastern Europe in Russia. Yet research has shown that the question of who influences whom in Eastern Europe does not have an easy and clear-cut answer. At times, Russia’s action pushed neighbouring countries towards quicker acceptance of EU policy conditions.

Georgia has been a case in point. Under the ENP framework, Georgia has largely refrained from triggering far-reaching reforms in justice and home affairs. After the EU signed a visa facilitation agreement with Russia in May 2006, Georgia maintained that the EU–Russia visa facilitation agreement would provide Georgian citizens living in the breakaway provinces, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, with an extra incentive to apply for a Russian passport – yet this argument was not strong enough to make the Georgian government accept a readmission agreement or comply with the security-related ENP requirements (Ademmer and Börzel 2013). After the August 2008 war between Russia and the separatist entities of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, on one hand, and Georgia, on the other, Georgia quickly progressed towards meeting the conditions regarding document security and accepting a readmission agreement. In other words, ‘the Georgian–Russian conflict and the EU-Russian visa-facilitation agreement reinforced the policy-specific conditionality of the EU for Georgia to engage in visa-facilitation talks with the EU’ (Ademmer and Börzel 2013).

The competition between Russia and the EU has become stronger since 2008. Russia has shown its capacity to ‘hinder compliance with EU demands in the area of migration and mobility if it links specific rewards to non-compliance with EU demands’ (Ademmer and Delcour 2016: 94). A key question for Russia has been whether it perceives the EU’s visa liberalisation process (and policies related to it) as a threat to its strategic interests in the shared neighbourhood.

The EU and Russia have tended to operate at different levels. ‘While the EU pushes for policy-specific changes, using conditionality and assistance, Russia mostly (dis)incentivizes broader geopolitical choices that challenge its pivotal interests in the region’ (Ademmer and Delcour 2016: 108). This can create a situation in which a neighbouring country opts for integration with the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union but continues to work on the policy-specific EU demands in migration and mobility. In the work of Ademmer and Delcour, Armenia was named as a country that sought to achieve such complementarity. Still striving for closer political ties and economic integration with the EU, Moldova, by contrast, has faced a harsher stance of and challenge by Russia, including in the field of migration. This ‘may indirectly hamper continuous compliance with EU requirements in the future’ (Ademmer and Delcour 2016: 108).

**The EU’s cooperation with southern neighbours**

A key question regarding the southern neighbours has been how much the EU can, and should, engage with authoritarian regimes to stem unwanted migration. Scholars have highlighted the ethical and human rights-related challenges that the EU faces in terms of working with southern autocrats to establish a buffer zone against uncontrolled migration (Wolff 2008; Cassarino 2010; 2014; Lutterbeck 2006; Klepp 2010; Demmelhuber 2011; Gil-Bazo 2006; Carrera et al. 2016).
Some researchers have noted that Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on migration offers opportunities as well. The EU’s involvement may lead to more transparent, accountable and participatory migration governance (Freyburg 2012; Freyburg et al. 2009). Building upon the case study of the 2003 Moroccan reform of migration law, Freyburg (2012) argues that the EU’s migration governance may be perceived as ‘Janus-faced’ – it weakens democratic governance at home but it improves these standards abroad.

As mentioned, the EU has long sought to conclude readmission agreements with southern neighbours as well. The Commission’s negotiating mandate for Morocco was given in 2000 and for Algeria in 2002. Even after many years of negotiations, the EU did not manage to make these states accept a formal EU readmission agreement. They particularly opposed the idea of readmitting sub-Saharan African migrants transiting their territory to the EU (Wolff 2014). While the southern ENP partners have refrained from formalising EU level cooperation on readmission, the network of bilateral agreements linked to readmission has intensified, often in the shadow of public debates (Cassarino 2007). Cooperation on removal of irregular migrants has been embedded in broader strategic frameworks of cooperation or other types of arrangements (such as police cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding). These arrangements are only linked to readmission, and are distinct from standard readmission agreements (Cassarino 2010). Informal patterns of bilateral cooperation on readmission are characterised by four elements, namely their invisibility, flexibility, limited costs of defection and adaptability to security concerns (Cassarino 2007). France, Greece, Italy and Spain have been drivers in developing this non-standard approach towards readmission. EU Member States tend to rely on material and non-material incentives – rather than on conditionalities – for cooperation on readmission and reinforced border controls. Material incentives include financial protocols to improve foreign direct investments and create job opportunities, as well as technical equipment and capacity-building programmes for law-enforcement institutions. Non-material incentives include international recognition of the cooperative governments and stronger support of their political demands in international affairs (Cassarino 2010; 2017).

The dense bilateral cooperation between individual Member States and North African states has paved the way for a stronger EU role. In 2006, Frontex had the first maritime operation to curb irregular migration from West Africa to the Canary Islands, thereby relying on bilateral agreements – for example between Spain and Mauritania – when engaging African states (Carrera 2007). Frontex and Spanish patrols off West Africa seem to have contributed to shifting migration routes, making the route from Libya to Malta and Italy more important (Carling and Hernández-Carretero 2011). Border and migration control in the wider Mediterranean region now built upon many more actors aside Frontex. In May 2015, the EU started a military mission called ‘EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia’ aiming to interrupt the activities of smugglers and traffickers of human beings. While the employment of a EU military mission to curb unwanted migration has been criticised as ‘warfare on the logistics of migrant movements’ (Garelli and Tazzioli 2016), Operation Sophia saved the lives of some 24,800 migrants crossing the Mediterranean by August 2016 (European External Action Service 2016). In a way, the EU’s military operation therefore replaces the live-saving activities of Italy, in the context of the Mare Nostrum operation active between October 2013 and October 2014. The drowning of migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea has not stopped. The year 2016 was even deadlier than the ‘crisis’ year of 2015 (UNHCR 2016).

At the same time, the migration theme has empowered the EU’s Mediterranean neighbours. They tend to capitalise on migration and border controls and exert a kind of ‘reverse leverage’ on their EU counterparts (Cassarino 2007; 2017). For example, the concessions which Libya’s Muammar al-Gaddafi gained from Italy (and the EU) for curbing irregular migration have been
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well-documented in this context (Paoletti 2011; Wolff 2012). Also, the Tunisian government selectively incorporated elements of the EU’s migration policy toolbox to enhance its own strategic options regarding surveillance and control over Tunisian society at large (Cassarino 2014). North African states may exert agency, not only during the negotiation phase of a readmission deal, be it formal or not. By investigating the implementation of the French readmission policy in Morocco, El Qadim (2014) highlights the relevance of mid-level bilateral practices of brokering. The level of Franco-Moroccan cooperation often depended on issue-specific bargains, for instance on a French immigration liaison officer offering technical advice and training in exchange for more operational cooperation on readmission.

Morocco is an interesting case for discussing the feasibility of the EU’s ‘more-for-more’ approach that is supposed to guide the EU’s external activities post-refugee crisis. The flow of migrants entering Spanish territory from Morocco has considerably decreased due to intensified cooperation with Spain and the EU (including the signing of a Mobility Partnership). Which lessons can the EU learn from the Moroccan case? According to Carrera et al. (2016), Morocco is becoming more and more a country of destination, yet it struggles to uphold the responsibilities that come with such change. Migrants are often blocked for years in Morocco and face considerable challenges to get along, let alone to integrate into society. This is also the case for refugees fleeing from the Syrian war. They do not face the risk of a *refoulement* from Morocco. However, access to public services, jobs and health is severely limited in the case of Syrians living in Morocco. A (widely reported) practice of ‘hot returns’ or ‘pushback operations’ conducted by Spain at the borders of Ceuta and Melilla has been challenged as a human rights violation before the European Court of Human Rights. Overall, Carrera et al. (2016: 10) caution against duplicating the Moroccan model for other ENP countries. ‘The “model” of border surveillance and control [. . .] comes at a considerable human cost for migrants, creating a situation of vulnerability, insecurity and human rights violations’, as noted by the authors.

Conclusions

This chapter has investigated how migration moved to the centre of the ENP. Migration-related projects now count for half the ENP’s spending. Migration issues increasingly influence, if not dominate, the political relations of the EU and its ENP partners.

The chapter has drawn attention to the struggles that the EU faces to balance a more restrictive approach of external engagement, focusing on migration control, with a more preventive one, trying to tackle the ‘root causes’ as to why people flee or migrate. It is tempting to conclude that the EU focuses primarily on the restrictive approach and short-term interests – notably a reduction of irregular migration from the neighbourhood – if necessary, even at the expense of the human rights and dignity of the migrants concerned. The focus on ‘root causes’ may only serve as a rhetorical ‘add-on’ that helps with justifying the external migration control agenda in the EU’s neighbourhood, yet *de facto* it lacks substance and prioritisation.

While some scholars referred to in this chapter have argued in this direction, there are two caveats to such a conclusion. First, the argument tends to underestimate the agency of ENP countries. Across the southern and eastern neighbourhoods, migration has become part of the wider geopolitical dynamics. ENP countries’ governments and competing regional actors, such as Russia, exploit the salience of the migration issue for their own interests and purposes in their interactions with the EU. They are far from being only the passive ‘recipients’ of the EU’s externalisation agenda. Second, there may also be a gap between the EU’s increasingly tough rhetoric *vis-à-vis* countries of migrants’ origin and transit and the actual outcome of the external engagement. The latter will predictably remain contingent on local conditions that cannot be
dismissed offhand. The EU’s ‘compact’ with Jordan is a case in point. Providing new economic opportunities and facilitating the integration of Syrian refugees into the local labour market constitute daunting challenges when considering Jordan’s social economic and political realities.

That said, the EU should have an interest – and probably even has a responsibility – to engage more to safeguard human rights, as well as improve the socio-economic situation of migrants and refugees stuck in neighbouring countries. Based on everything that is known from the past, simply saying ‘out of sight, out of mind’ will not work for long in the field of migration.

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