

Africa and Europe

Facts and Figures on
African Migrations

African Migrations: Back to facts

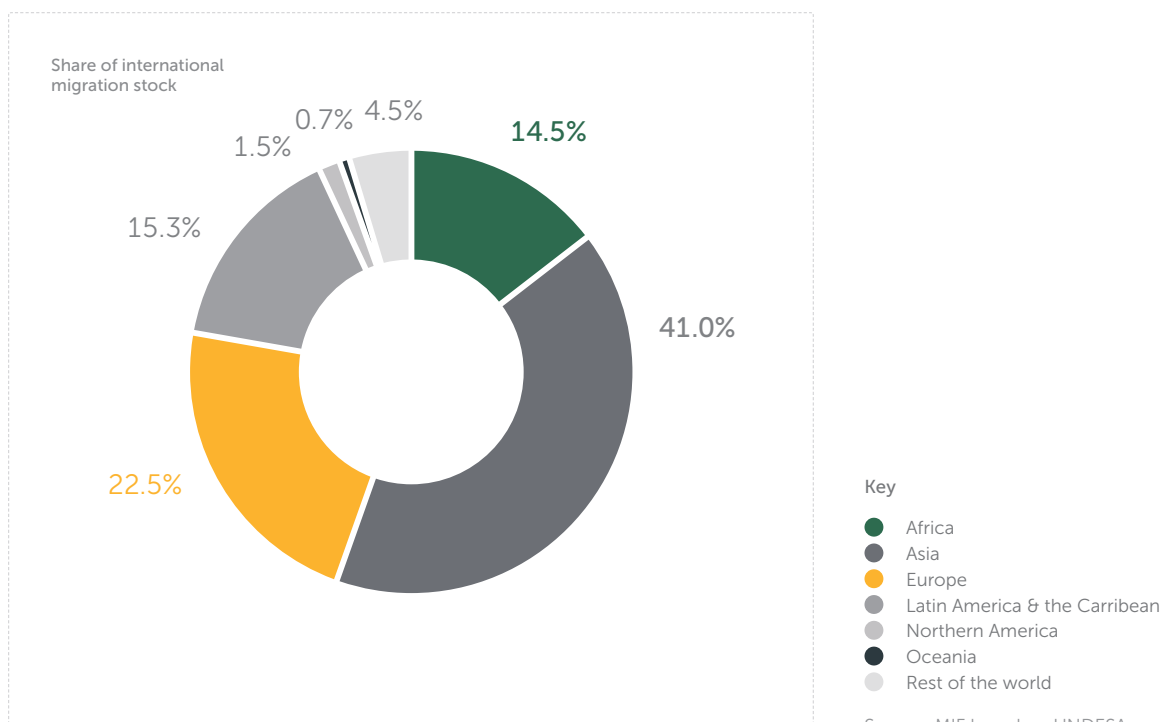
There is no “recent critical hike” in migration numbers

- Migrations are part of human history and have shaped most nations.
- The number of migrants has risen constantly in the last decades: in 2020, there are 127.6 million more people living outside their home country than in 1990.
- But migrants as a share of the global population increased only marginally: from 2.9% of the global population in 1990 to 3.6% in 2020.
 - Only 3.0% of the African population are living outside their home country in 2020 compared to 8.5% of the European population.
- Since 2010, in absolute numbers, migrations from Africa have increased more than from all other world regions but Asia, but this has **mostly been intra-African migrations**.
 - Intra-African migrations since 2010 have increased by +43.6% compared to +26.0% for Africa-Europe migrations.

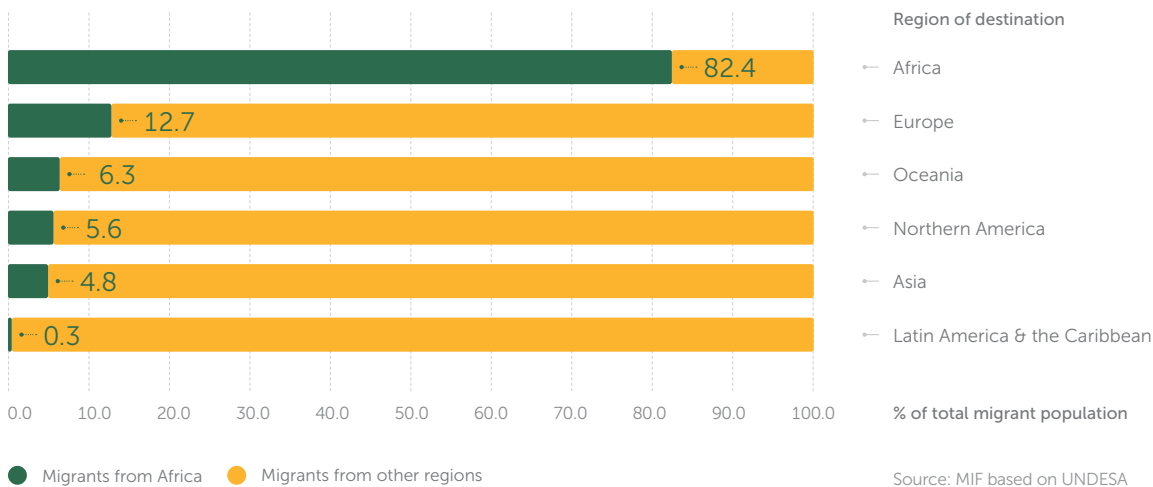
African migrants are not “overwhelming” Europe

- In 2020, the total number of African migrants is 40.6 million.
 - This is only 14.5% of the global migrant population, much less than Asia’s (41.0%) and Europe’s (22.5%) shares.
- Less than one-third (27.2%) of all African migrants live in Europe.
- African migrants constitute less than 15% of the total migrant population in all world regions other than Africa.

World regions: share of international migration stock (2020)



World regions: share of African migrants of total migrant population (2020)



Africa is not “a continent of massive exodus”

- In 2020, more than half of African migrants (51.6%) live within the continent.
- Africa hosts a growing part of the global migrant population, hosting +42.6% more migrants in 2020 than in 2010, with the number of migrants in Africa having increased from all world regions.

African migrations towards Europe are mainly economic migrations

- African migrants are not mostly “uneducated single men, looking for welfare coverage”.
- They are mostly young people, educated, looking for jobs. Almost half of them are women.
- Around 80% of African migrations are driven by the search for better economic prospects.
- Only 7.2% of African migrants in EU countries are refugees.
 - In 2020, the sole number of Syrian refugees in EU countries (≈1 million) was higher than the total number of African refugees in the EU (≈0.7 million)

African migrations into Europe are mainly regular

- Although regular channels to migrate to Europe remain limited, which causes many migrants to engage in unsafe travel across the Mediterranean, most migrants are still coming on regular routes.
 - In 2019, Frontex registered around 40,000 irregular border crossings into the EU from Africa, which represents less than 10% of the regular migrations from Africa to Europe between 2019 and 2020.
 - Irregular border crossings from Africa to Europe represent less than one-third of all irregular crossings into the Europe in 2019.
- According to the IOM, between 2011 and 2016, about 80% of all those arriving from Northern and Western Africa to Europe migrated through regular channels.

The rate of effective returns remains very insufficient, and has declined over the last years.

- In 2020, around 400,000 non-EU citizens were ordered to leave the EU. The two main countries to which people were ordered to return were Algeria and Morocco (8.6% and 8.5% of the total, respectively), behind Albania (5.8%).
- Of all return orders issued in 2020, only around 18% of people actually returned to their home country.
- Among the nationalities with at least 5,000 return orders, the return rate was particularly low for those coming from Côte d'Ivoire (2.0%), Mali (2.1%), Guinea (2.5%), Senegal (3.2%) and Algeria (4.8%).
- Among the 17 EU Member States reporting the breakdown on returns in 2020, 25% of the returns were assisted returns - persons returned received logistical, financial and/or other material assistance. 75% were non-assisted returns.

Migrants are not "a burden on local services"

- They are often a valuable and sought-after resource. In many countries, migrants constitute a key solution to labour shortages.
 - Europe's aging population will increase the demand for labour.
 - By 2055, Europe will have the world's largest and Africa the world's smallest dependency ratio. While in Europe there will be 78.2 dependent people per 100 working-age people, the ratio will be 58.9 in Africa.
 - Health care sector specific challenge: In many European countries, African migrants constitute a large part of the health care workforce.
 - In 2020, 13.7% of all doctors in Germany were migrants and around 8% of these were from Africa. The number of doctors from abroad has constantly been on the rise in Germany since the mid-1990s.
 - Africa's brain-drain in the health sector has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis with for example France or Germany issuing specific calls for foreign medical professionals.
- Migrants have a positive impact on the economy of the hosting country:
 - Migrants spend approximately 85% of their incomes in the hosting country.
 - The estimated contribution of migrants to national GDPs is estimated at 19% in Côte d'Ivoire, 13% in Rwanda, and 9% in South Africa.

Public opinion and approaches towards migration diverge between Europe and Africa

- Eight of the ten least accepting countries in Gallup's 2019 Migration Acceptance Index are in Europe while four of the ten most accepting countries at world level are in Africa (in order: Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Chad, Rwanda). No African country features among the ten least accepting countries.
- An IOM survey shows that in 2021 63% of the world's countries meet SDG target 10.7.2 on policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration, whereby only 4% meet the target in full.
 - Countries are falling short the most when it comes to granting migrants equal rights with only 16% of the world's countries fully providing this. 18% of countries in Africa are fully granting migrants equal rights, the second highest share of all regions, while only 11% of European countries do so.

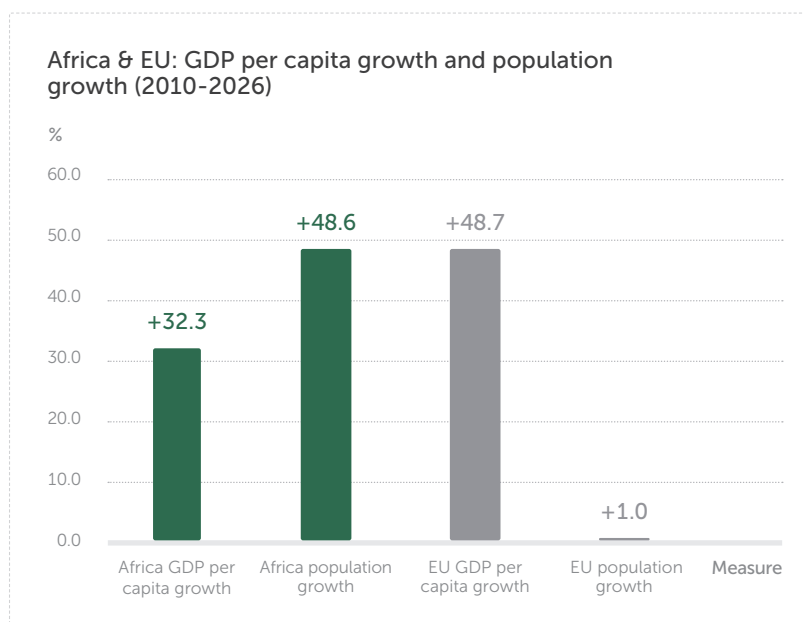
The key challenge: the lack of relevant job prospects for Africa's fast-growing youth

A massive youth bulge

- Around 60% of Africa's population is currently younger than 25 years.
- Between now and the end of the century, Africa's youth (15-34 years) is expected to grow by +168%.
 - Meanwhile Europe's youth will shrink by -24.7% and Asia's by -30.1%.
- By 2100, Africa's youth population could be equivalent to more than twice Europe's entire population.

Mostly devoid of prospects

- Deteriorating education outcomes:
 - The match between education and the skills needed by businesses is worse in Africa than in other world regions.
- Weak economic prospects: unemployment, informality... or migration and joining extremist groups and transnational criminal networks?
 - Africa's economic growth runs behind its demographic growth.
 - Between 2010 and 2026, while Africa's population is estimated to almost double, its GDP per capita is estimated to only grow by around one-third.
 - In 2026, the EU's GDP per capita is estimated to still be more than 18-times larger than Africa's.



Source: MIF based on IMF & UNDESA

- Though important, Africa's economic growth of the last decade has been mainly jobless.
 - African youth consider unemployment by far the most important problem that their governments need to address.
 - For example, in South Africa, the second largest GDP on the continent, 59.6% of young people are jobless.

- By 2030, 30 million youth are expected to enter the African labour market each year.
 - **In sub-Saharan Africa alone, while 18 million new jobs would be needed annually to absorb new entries in the labour market, only 3 million are currently being created.**
- Case study research on several violent extremist groups in Africa shows that many members are young people looking for 'job' opportunities when they are recruited.

The current and prospective features of the job market: a need to adapt

- Premature deindustrialisation in Africa:
 - Since 2010, manufacturing's value added to GDP has actually declined in more African countries than it has grown.
- Africa's skills gap: Africa suffers from a severe skills gap – the World Bank's Human Capital Index (HCI) measures the lost productivity of the future workforce as a consequence of neglected investment in human capital.
 - Only two African countries score above the global average (Seychelles and Mauritius) whereas the 25 lowest scoring countries are all in Africa with the exception of Yemen.
- The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR): a deep change in the skills profile of jobs
 - Between 2020 and 2022, 42% of core skills required to perform existing jobs will likely have changed.

The relevant strategy: organise mobility to dry out irregular migrations

Migration is a key dynamic that has always taken place over the centuries and that has shaped human history, built nations and contributed to wealth creation. Debates about “migration” should rather be about “mobility”. Given the current demographic and economic imbalances, just aiming at preventing migrations can only foster more irregular and dangerous parallel routes.

- In 2016, migrant smugglers' income worldwide was estimated up to \$7 billion, which is equivalent to the EU humanitarian aid in the same year.
- In 2019, there was an estimated revenue of at least €70 million for smugglers along the Western and Central Mediterranean routes.

Geographical mobility

- There is still a lot to be done to facilitate and better organise mobility within the continent.
 - The launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in January 2021 is a key step forward, but it must be accompanied by progress in other African initiatives such as the **Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons**.
 - So far, only four countries (Mali, Niger, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe) have ratified this Protocol.
 - ECOWAS is currently the only REC whose citizens can travel visa-free to all countries in the region.
 - Only nine African countries request no visa or just visa on arrival for all African citizens.
- Africa's **intracontinental transport network** is still very insufficient.
 - With around 204 km per 1,000 km², of which only one-quarter are paved, Africa's road network lags far behind the world average (944 km per 1,000 km², more than half of which paved)
 - In 2018, only five African countries had direct flights connecting to 20 or more other African countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa.

Educational and professional mobility

- Gambia, Rwanda and Uganda are the best scoring among low-income countries globally in the capacity to enable, grow and retain human talent.
- In 2019, only around 18% of sub-Saharan African students leaving to study abroad chose an African destination.
 - In contrast, more than 80% of European students chose a European country for their studies abroad.
 - China has become the second most popular destination for African students, after France.
- In 2016, African post-secondary institutions amounted to 1 per about 471,000 people, compared to 1 per 154,000 in the EU.
- For many businesses in Africa, it is often easier to employ a skilled non-African expatriate than a skilled African expatriate.

- Educational and professional mobility within the EU
 - Freedom of movement: EU citizens can look for a job and work in any other EU country without a work permit, reside in any other EU country and enjoy equal treatment with regards to working and social rights .
 - European Higher Education Area and the Bologna process: established in 1999 bringing coherence to higher education systems in Europe to facilitate student and staff mobility and ensure quality and comparability.
 - European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement: helps students move between countries and to have their academic qualifications and study periods abroad recognised and to get degrees recognised across the EU.
 - Erasmus+: scholarships for European students to study abroad which cover registration and tuition fees and a EU grant for living and travel expenses.

Digital connectivity

- The COVID-19 impact has enlarged and bolstered the use of digital connectivity.
- However, in Africa, although huge progress has been made, the digital divide remains a challenge. Both in terms of physical access to ICTs and in the resources and skills needed to use the technology effectively.
 - In 2019, there were only ten African countries where over 50% of households had internet access.
 - There is a wide gap between African countries: while 80.8% of Morocco's population have internet access, less than 1% of Burundi's population is connected.
 - There is also an urban-rural divide with most areas lacking internet coverage being predominantly rural.
 - In Africa, the proportion of women using the internet is notably smaller than for men with a gap of 17 percentage points (37% of male users compared to 20% of female users).
- In 2019, just over half (54.7%) of the 1.3 billion people living in Africa were connected to the electricity grid. Almost 600 million Africans remain off-grid, more than 1.3 times the population of the EU. This severely limits digital engagement for Africans.

Last but not least: Know your data

- Strengthening civil registration and vital statistics across the continent is key to better manage migrations.
 - **African countries represent more than 52% of the global unregistered population.**
 - Over 50% of children in Africa do not have a legal existence.
 - Only eight African countries have a complete death registration system.

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