Migration from Africa to Italy:
Trends and policy responses

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Outline

I. Key trends in African migration to Italy
II. 2011 as a turning point
III. European policy responses to the 2015-2016 “refugee crisis” and implications for African migration
IV. The challenges ahead of us
African migration in a “new” immigration country: key trends

• Contrary to other major European destinations, African migration to Italy started in the late 1970s and 1980s, in a largely post-industrial and not immediately post-colonial context

• During the 1990s and early 2000s, Italy experienced massive inflows of demand-driven labour migration...

• ... BUT the political transition in Eastern Europe and the process of EU enlargement facilitated intra-European migration, while legal avenues for African migration were radically reduced
2011: What changed and what didn’t

- Pre-2011: The key role of Khaddafi’s Libya in European external migration strategies
- Immediate and medium-term impact of 2011 conflict in Libya
- Since 2013, major surge in “mixed flows”, but migration geography not radically transformed: continuities and discontinuities in migration systems (Nigeria vs. Guinea)
Migrants arrived (apprehended/rescued) in Italy (2009-2016)
(Source: Min. Interior)

Re-escalation in Libyan civil war

In 2017 (until 29 Dec.): 119,310 arrivals

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Dead and missing migrants (Central Med-route, 2009-2016)

(Sources: Fortress Europe until 2013, IOM 2014-2016)

In 2017 (until 21 Dec.): 2,831 deaths

Victims grow more than arrivals: 18.7/1000 in 2015, 25.2 in 2016
West Africa as main source of irregular arrivals to the EU in 2017

Source: Frontex
European policy responses and implications for African migration

• Failure of attempts at dealing with the crisis through internal redistribution of asylum seekers

• Increasing (but asymmetrical) prioritization of external responses (containment and prevention)

→ Three geopolitical axes of this external strategy:
  - Turkey and “Balkan route”: the “statement” of March 2016
  - Priority sending/transit countries in SSA: Partnership Framework of June 2016 + Trust Fund
  - Central Mediterranean Route and upgrade of cooperation with/in Libya (particularly since summer 2017)
Specificity of the situation along the ‘Central Mediterranean route’

- Flows along Central Med Route: **low recognition rates**, at best forms of humanitarian protection
- BUT also **low return rate**

→ Large-scale exclusion + growing public hostility
Great variations in flows composition
(1st instance decisions, 2017 Q2 – Source: Eurostat)

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High inflows + low recognition rates + low return rates = Growing public anxiety

Are immigrants a threat for public order and security?
(Source: Demos & Pi 2017)
3 key challenges ahead of us

• Reconciling migrants’ fundamental rights and European migration control concerns, starting from Libya

• Channeling massive investments (together with political and intellectual resources) in large-scale and long-term strategies to reduce pressure on irregular channels by creating opportunities in loco

• Not bending to undifferentiated negative perceptions of migration and migrants, committing to a long-term cultural and political struggle to expand channels of legal mobility and migration within and across our two continents
شكرا جزيلا
Thank you!