

Informal meeting of EU heads of state or government 3 February 2017 in Malta

On 3 February, EU heads of state or government will meet in Valletta, Malta, for an informal summit. The meeting will consist of two parts.

In the morning, the 28 EU heads of state or government will address the external dimension of migration. They are expected to focus their discussions on the **Central Mediterranean route** and **Libya**.

Over lunch leaders are expected to exchange views on other **international challenges**. They are also likely to talk briefly about the follow up and implementation of European Council conclusions as well as ways how to better communicate their decisions.

The afternoon session will be an occasion for the 27 leaders to prepare for the upcoming **60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties on 25 March 2017**.

The meeting will be hosted by the Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and chaired by European Council President Donald Tusk. President Jean-Claude Juncker will represent the European Commission. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini will join for the session on the external dimension of migration.

The meeting will take place at the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta and the first working session on migration will start at 10.00.

After a family photo at 12.45 and a short cultural programme the leaders will have an informal working lunch at Fort Saint Angelo, starting at 13.45.

This will be followed by a press conference by Presidents Tusk and Juncker and Prime Minister Muscat, as well as national briefings, at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. This is expected around 16.00.

The second working session on the Rome anniversary preparations should start at 17.00. The meeting is expected to end around 19.30.

[Media programme](#)

[Informal meeting of the 27 heads of state or government in Malta](#)

[Invitation letter by President Donald Tusk](#)

- Press conferences by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>
- Video coverage in broadcast quality and photos in high resolution: <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

External dimension of migration

Since the start of the migration crisis the EU has managed to reduce significantly the number of irregular migrants entering Europe. Preliminary data from Frontex indicate a 72% decrease in detections in 2016 across the whole of the EU compared to 2015. By far the largest share of this reduction was recorded along the Eastern Mediterranean route, following the EU decision to fully apply the Schengen Border Code (end the wave-through approach) and the EU - Turkey Statement.

Today the main route for irregular migrants, accounting for around 95% of all irregular migrants entering the EU, is across the Central Mediterranean. The vast majority of arrivals using this route are of African nationalities and almost 90% of all departures are from Libya. Furthermore, and in contrast to the many refugees who arrived along the Eastern Mediterranean route, a large number of these nationals are likely to have their asylum requests rejected. In other words, many of them are irregular economic migrants who should be returned to their home countries.

Overwhelmingly, (around 90% according to Europol data from 2015) migrants are exploited by human smugglers and traffickers who make an estimated 3 - 6 bn euro yearly profit on this illicit trade, leading to an increased number of dead or missing at sea.

At the first working session in Valletta EU heads of state or government will discuss the external aspects of migration, with a clear focus on the Central Mediterranean route. With the spring approaching, leaders are expected to agree on a number of immediate and concrete measures to stem migratory flows, break the business model of smugglers and save lives.

Leaders will focus in particular on the need to step up cooperation with the Libyan authorities and provide them with support in the area of capacity building. The EU is expected to confirm its support for the Government of National Accord and step up its cooperation and assistance to Libyan regional and local communities as well as international organisations active in the country.

Among the priorities will be to train, equip and support the Libyan national coast guard, increase efforts to disrupt the smuggling business by involving Libya and relevant international partners and improve the socio-economic situation of local communities in Libya. Furthermore, leaders are expected to call for increased cooperation with UNHCR and IOM in particular when it comes to ensuring adequate reception capacities and conditions in Libya for migrants, enhancing information campaigns aimed at migrants and stepping up voluntary return activities. Leaders are also expected to emphasise the need to help reduce the pressure on Libya's land border by enhancing Libya's border management capacity and by working with neighbouring countries.

[Finding solutions to migratory pressures](#)

Preparations for the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties

The second working session in Malta will be devoted to preparations for the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties, that will be celebrated in Rome on 25 March 2017. It will be an opportunity for the 27 leaders to reach common understanding on what they would like the Rome meeting to offer. The discussions will build upon the political reflection on the future of the EU amongst the 27 member states which was launched immediately after the UK voted to leave the European Union on 23 June 2016 and which continued in Bratislava on 16 September 2016.

[Political reflection on the future of the EU](#)

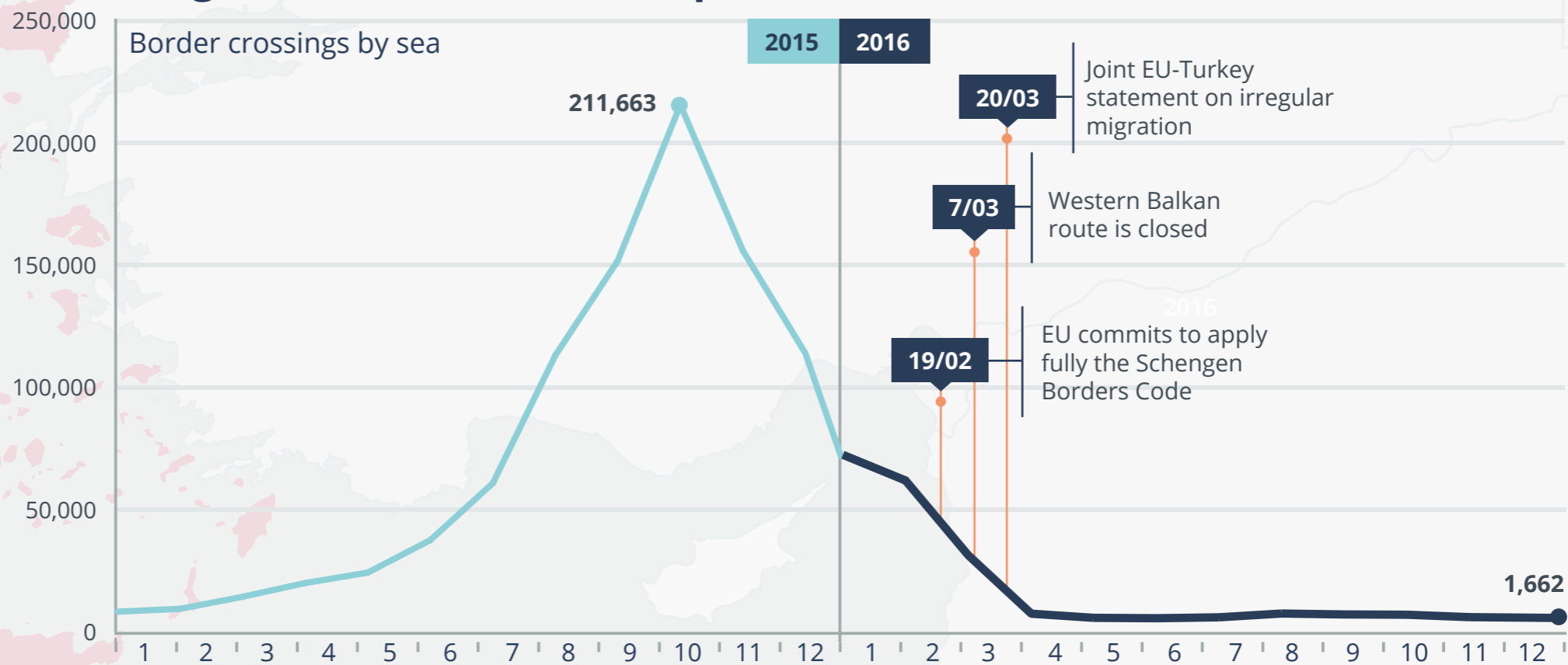
[Letter by President Donald Tusk to the 27 EU HoSGs on the EU future before the Malta summit](#)

Migration flows: Irregular arrivals in Greece

2016 vs 2015 decrease

-79%

Irregular arrivals in Greece per month, in 2015-2016



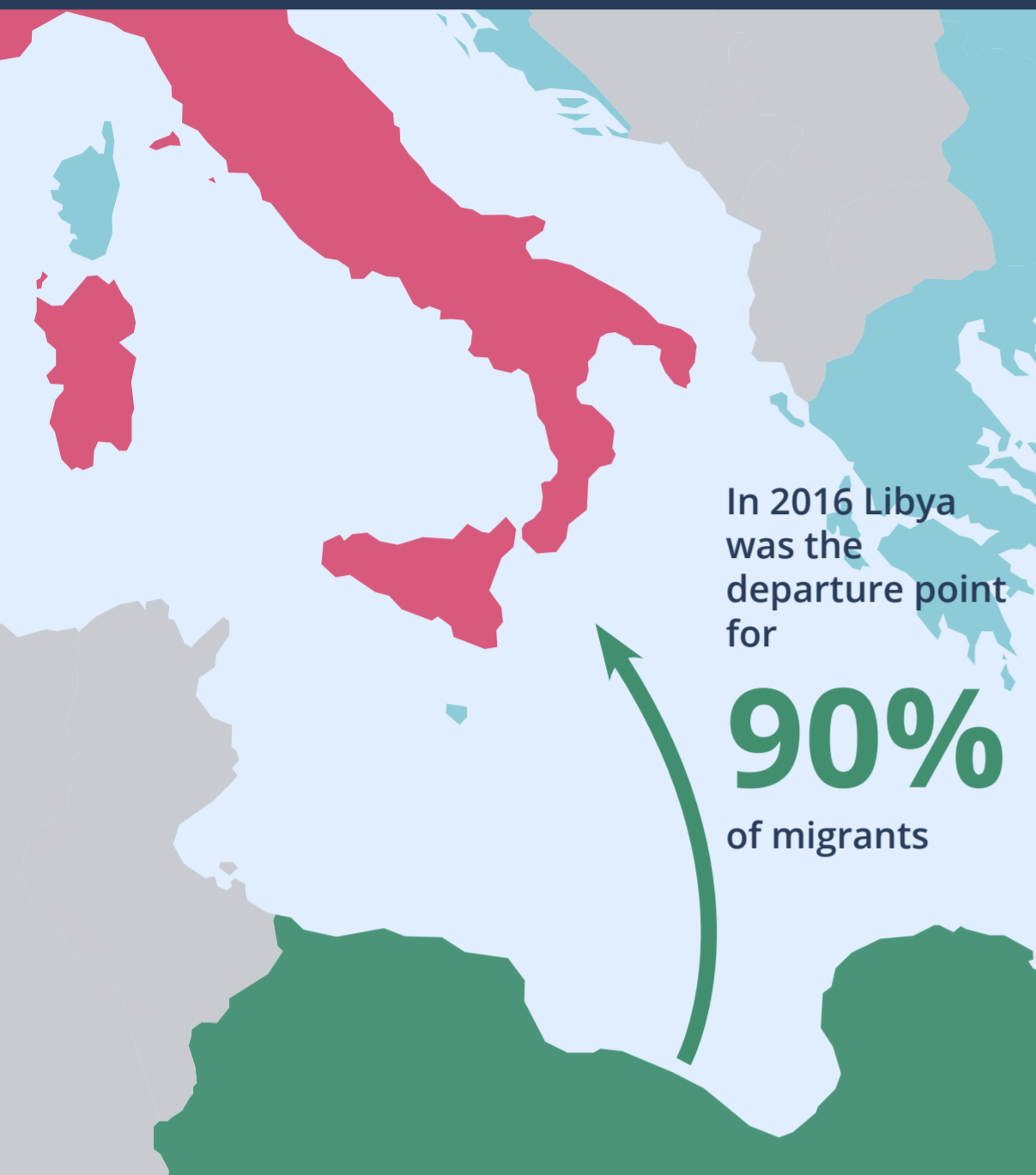
Source: UNHCR, Frontex



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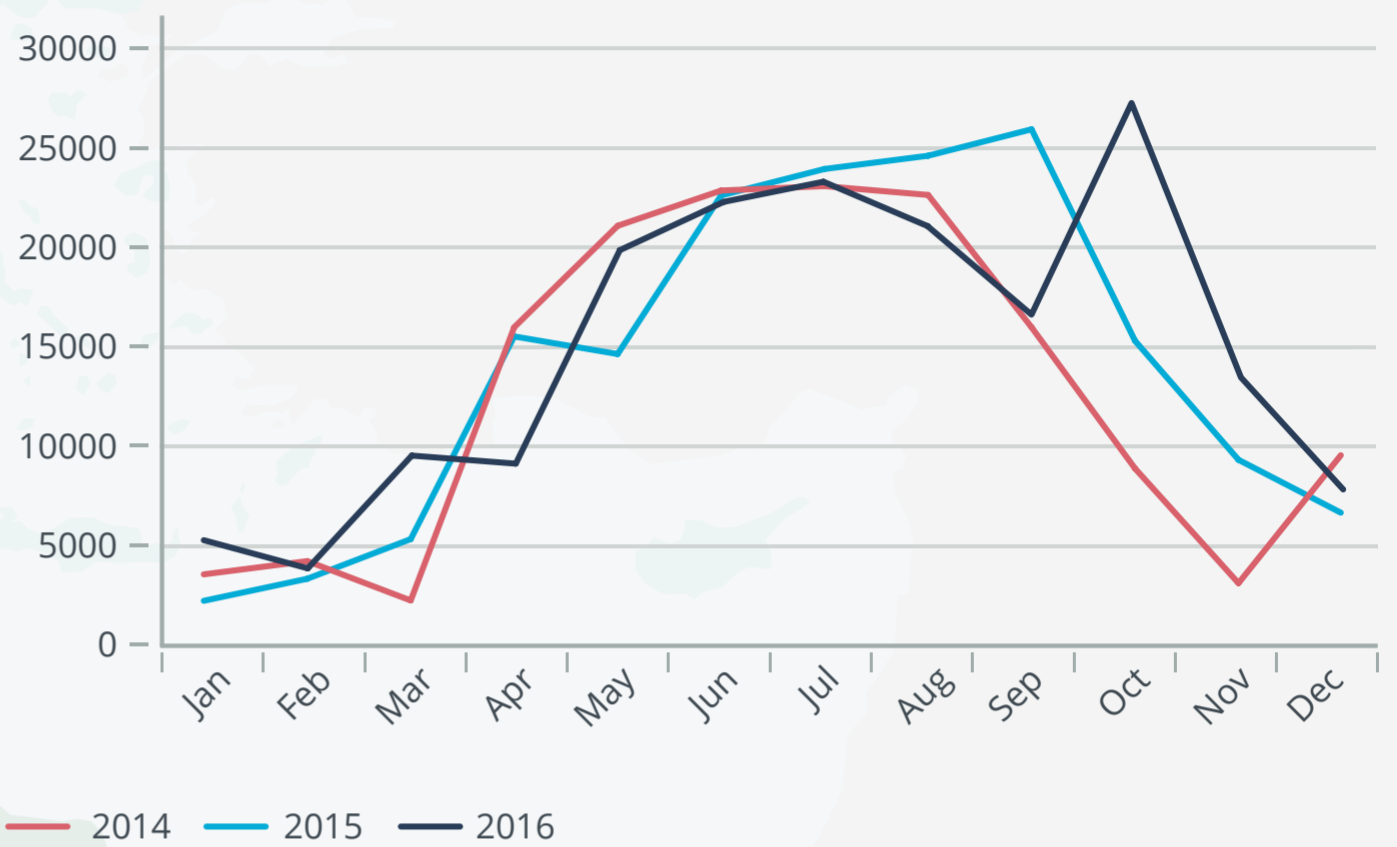
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Migration flows: Irregular arrivals in Italy



Irregular arrivals in Italy per month

Border crossings by sea, 2014-2016

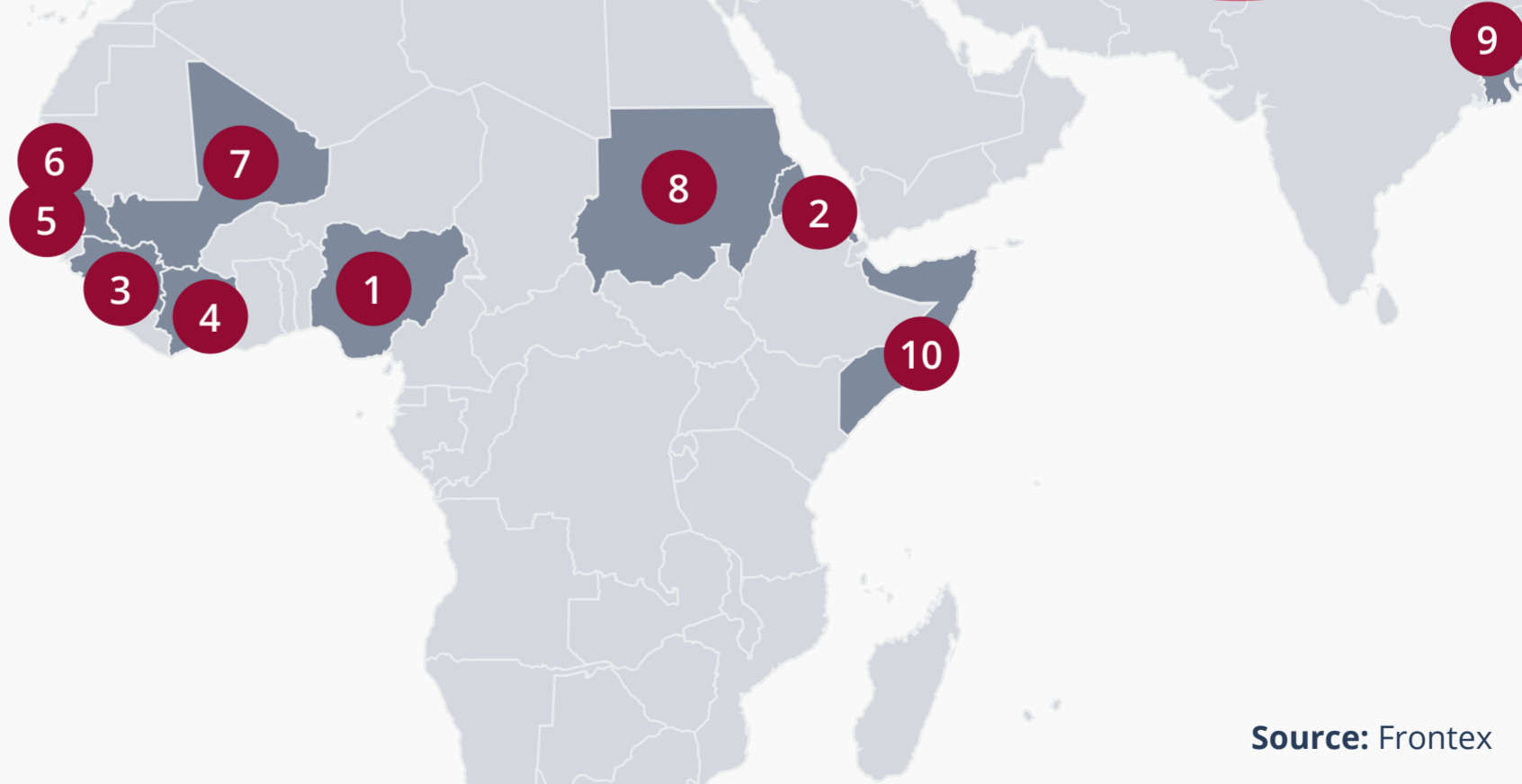


Irregular arrivals in Italy per country of origin in 2016

Top nationalities
Number and % of total arrivals

- 1 Nigeria 37,554 - 21%
- 2 Eritrea 20,721 - 11%
- 3 Guinea 13,550 - 7%
- 4 Côte d'Ivoire 12,399 - 7%
- 5 Gambia 11,929 - 7%
- 6 Senegal 10,329 - 6%
- 7 Mali 10,008 - 6%
- 8 Sudan 9,406 - 5%
- 9 Bangladesh 8,131 - 4%
- 10 Somalia 7,290 - 4%

181,126
total arrivals
2016

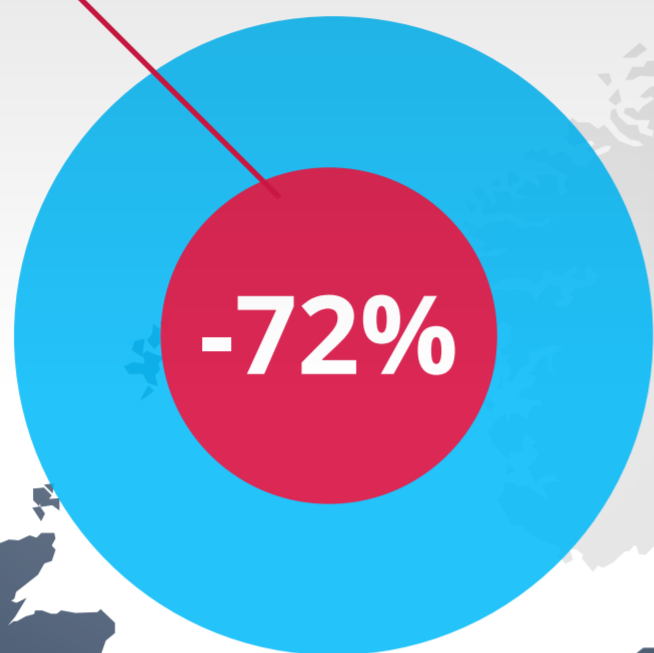


Source: Frontex



Irregular arrivals in the the EU, 2015-2016

Overall decrease in irregular arrivals to EU in 2016



-79%
Eastern
Mediterranean

885,386
182,534

+18%
Central
Mediterranean

153,946
181,126

2015
2016

Source : Frontex



EU Mediterranean operations: over 110 000 lives saved in 2016

3 EU operations are patrolling the Mediterranean to secure EU borders, target migrant smugglers and rescue migrants at risk

Operation Triton

- » Frontex border surveillance operation
- » Central Mediterranean
- » Launched 2014

EU NAVFOR Med Operation Sophia

- » CSDP military operation to target migrant smugglers
- » Southern Central Mediterranean
- » Launched 2015
- » October 2016 - Training of the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and Libyan Navy

Operation Poseidon

- » Frontex border surveillance operation
- » Eastern Mediterranean
- » Launched 2006

total saved

110 532

dead and missing

4 699



48 405
rescued



21 714
rescued



40 413
rescued

Sources: Frontex, EU NAVFOR Med, UNHCR
These figures correspond to the period 1 January 2016 - 30 November 2016.
Figures refer to EU co-ordinated rescue operations only.



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