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**LIMITE**

**JAI  
MIGR  
ASIM  
MAMA**

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**WORKING DOCUMENT**

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From:	Presidency
To:	MOCADDEM Roundtable
N° prev. doc.:	WK 12589/2024
Subject:	Action file on Tunisia

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In view of the Mocadem Roundtable of 26 September 2025, delegations will find attached the "Action file on Tunisia".

**Introduction / objectives**

Continue dialogue and intensified cooperation with Tunisian authorities on overall migration issues, including in the framework of the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding signed on 16 July 2023, in order to notably:

- Prevent irregular departures from, as well as irregular arrivals to Tunisia, strengthen counter-smuggling and anti-trafficking cooperation and border management, notably through the Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership, and increase search and rescue efforts;
- Reinforce protection of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, including most vulnerable individuals or groups;
- Increase assisted voluntary returns from Tunisia and sustainable reintegration in sub-Saharan Africa;
- Strengthen return, readmission and reintegration cooperation between Tunisia and the EU;
- Highlight the importance the EU attaches to legal migration in line with the mutual needs of Tunisia and the EU Member States, to the benefit of sectors of activity and occupations jointly identified.

The protection of human rights of all people on the move and the full respect of international law should be underlined in all engagements as guiding principles for the EU.

Joint priorities on migration have been spelled out in the Joint Press Statement following the visit of Commissioner Johansson on 27 April 2023, which identifies three key areas of action:

- 1) Operational Partnership on anti-smuggling;
- 2) Protection and support of voluntary return of irregulars from Tunisia to countries of origin;
- 3) Establishing a Talent Partnership on legal migration.

These priorities have then been further developed under the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding, notably under the pillar on migration and mobility.

To implement these objectives and agreed actions, enhanced coordination within and between MS and EU services, and between capitals and Tunis, will be needed. A thorough understanding of the migratory situation in Tunisia is useful to guide EU engagement.

In parallel, it is crucial for the EU to step up efforts to address the root causes of irregular migration through programmes in support of youth, access to quality education, creation of sustainable economic opportunities, decent jobs, vocational training and education, step up support to small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, the EU is willing to support the Tunisian authorities in establishing a legal and institutional framework for the management of migration, reception and asylum.



Action	Lead actor(s)	Timeframe	Actions completed, Results	Next Steps / Comments
			<p><i>with proposed updated detailed measures for the five pillars of the MoU, developed by the COM was transmitted to TUN on 13 November 2023.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Call at SOM level ( [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] ) on 21 November 2023)</i></li> <li>• <i>Joint mission at services level (COM and EEAS) on 16-18 January 2024 with detailed discussions on the five pillars of the MoU and update of the Matrix.</i></li> <li>• <i>An updated matrix with detailed measures for the five pillars of the MoU was transmitted to TUN on 27 August 2024 as basis for further discussions / joint mission.</i></li> <li>• <i>Bilateral meeting [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on 10 September 2024.</i></li> <li>• <i>Second joint mission at services level to follow up on the implementation of the Mou (29-30 October 2024).</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Action 2:</b> <i>Follow up at technical level of the joint press statement (27 April 2023), the operational conclusions of the EU-Tunisia sub-committee on migration, employment,</i></p>	<p><i>Commission, EEAS</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Continuation of implementation of all pillars of the MoU, including migration and mobility, with focus on border management, anti-smuggling, returns, protection and legal migration. Progress expected on all aspects, including the</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Organisation of the third technical MoU mission (NEAR/EEAS/HOME) focusing on all five pillars of the EU Tunisia MoU (date tbc)</i></li> <li>• <i>Signature of projects under 2024 Migration South AAP by the end of 2025.</i></li> </ul>

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<p><i>and social affairs (03 July 2025); continue the implementation of the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding.</i></p>			<p><i>fundamental values' trajectory in Tunisia. A more regular technical dialogue to be put in place, to discuss projects and compliance with human rights.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>EUR 105 million earmarked for Tunisia in 2023 was contracted by the end of 2024 in the area of border management, anti-smuggling, returns and protection. From 2024 budget, Tunisia will benefit from approximately EUR 40 million along the same 4 priority areas. -</i></li> <li>• <i>The first technical MoU mission in January 2024 (NEAR/EEAS/HOME) focusing on all five pillars of the EU Tunisia MoU was followed by a second similar mission that took place on 29/30 October 2024.</i></li> <li>• <i>Subcommittee on Migration, Employment and Social affairs held in Tunis on 3rd July 2025</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Identification of projects for upcoming 2025-2027 funding.</i></li> <li>• <i>Association Committee planned for 26/09/2025 in Tunis</i></li> <li>• [REDACTED]</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Prevent irregular departures from, as well as irregular arrivals to Tunisia, strengthen anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking and border management cooperation and increase search and rescue efforts.</i></b></p>				
<p><b>Action 3:</b> <i>Roll out the Anti-smuggling Operational Partnership (ASOP) and launch of a new Anti-Smuggling programme</i></p>	<p><i>Commission, Member States</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Q2 2023:</b> <i>Appoint focal points at the EU side and Tunisian side, explore Tunisian and Member States' availability</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A mentorship programme between Tunisian mentees and EU mentors (AT, IT and ES) on migrant smuggling to start in October (EUROMED Police).</i></li> <li>• <i>2 regional info campaigns are underway since May and June 2023</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Organisation of the first Steering Committee of the new Anti-smuggling project in Q4 2025.</i></li> <li>• [REDACTED]</li> </ul>

Action	Lead actor(s)	Timeframe	Actions completed, Results	Next Steps / Comments
		<p><i>to launch a Joint Investigation Team under the ASOP.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Q4 2024:</b> <i>finalisation of the Anti-Smuggling contract for Tunisia to enhance investigative capacities and prosecution of smugglers/traffickers, strengthen international cooperation in the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings as well as to reinforce patrolling of border areas.</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>respectively: one covering Tunisia, Niger, Nigeria targeting the Central Mediterranean Route (consortium of organisations from IT, BE and GR); started on 1 May 2023, and the other covering Tunisia, Morocco (consortium of organisations from IT, FR and ES).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A new programme (EUR 18 million of NDICI 2023 budget), i.e. “Fight smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons in Tunisia” was signed in Q4 2024 and activities have started in 2025. The project aims to enhance investigative capacities and prosecution of smugglers/traffickers, strengthen international cooperation in the fight against smuggling and trafficking in human beings as well as to reinforce patrolling of border areas.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Action 4:</b> <i>Support the Tunisian Coast Guard and the Tunisian migration</i>	Commission, Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Q2-Q3 2023:</b> <i>Explore with Tunisian</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ongoing programmes of a total of EUR 35 million (adopted in 2021, contracted in 2022) and 65 million</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Handover of two boats for the Tunisian Navy in October 2025, as part of the SAR project.</i></li> </ul>

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<p><i>and border management system, while ensuring the safeguard of human rights of migrants.</i></p>		<p><i>authorities' ways of reinforcing cooperation at technical level, including at international airports.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Q2-Q3 2023:</b> <i>Encourage Tunisian dialogue with key countries of origin on factors driving irregular flows to Tunisia.</i></li> <li>• <b>2024-2025:</b> <i>Strengthen Tunisia's active participation in the ongoing border management projects, e.g. SAR, training academy and BMP projects.</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>(2023) to support for Search and Rescue operations, including to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and the training academy of the Garde Nationale Maritime of Tunisia.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Support search and rescue operations at sea in Tunisia (EUR 33.5 million)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Strengthening the Tunisian Coast Guard Training Pillar (EUR 13.5 million 2021 budget)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Border Management Programme Maghreb (Tunisia: additional EUR 35 million 2021 and 2023 budget)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Contract to support the Garde Nationale Maritime with one search and rescue vessel and trainings (EUR 18 million 2023 budget)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Deliveries spare parts for engines and engines to the Tunisian coastguards that are keeping at least 17 boats operational.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Signature of a support programme for the implementation of the Code of Conduct for the Tunisian security forces by Q4 2025.</i></li> <li>• <i>Signature of a support programme to strengthen health management at the borders and along migratory routes by Q4 2025.</i></li> </ul>

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			<p><i>On 4 June 2024, Tunisia announced the creation of its own Search and Rescue (SAR) Zone after having submitted documents to International Maritime Organization.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Arrivals from Tunisia in 2024 were 80% lower compared to 2023 (around 19,200, compared to around 96,000 in 2023). In 2025 so far, irregular arrivals are down by further 77% compared to the same period last year.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Action 5:</b> Intensify and formalise EU agencies' (Frontex, Europol, CEPOL, EUAA, Eurojust) cooperation with Tunisia.</p>	<p>Commission, EU agencies</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Good collaboration with CEPOL, with which Tunisia signed a working arrangement which has allowed for strong Tunisian participation in online courses.</i></li> <li><i>A 2-day familiarisation visit by a Tunisian delegation to Frontex took place on 13-14 September 2023. The visiting delegation was comprised of personnel from the Ministry of Defence, Navy, Coastguard and Border Police under the overall lead of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [REDACTED]</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[REDACTED]</li> <li><i>Tunisia to appoint EUAA and Europol focal points as agreed during the technical mission on the MoU implementation in October 2024.</i></li> </ul>

Action	Lead actor(s)	Timeframe	Actions completed, Results	Next Steps / Comments
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1070 252 1556 893"> <p>Frontex followed up with an invitation sent on 2 October 2023 to a Frontex SAR exercise (in Greece from 24-25 October 2023) [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] interest has been signalled for future SAR exercises. In 2024, Frontex once again invited Tunisia to Boarding and SAR drills on 1-2 August 2024 in Constantia, Romania within Multipurpose Maritime Operation Black Sea, [REDACTED]. Two maritime experts from MRCC Tunis participated to the SAR Workshop in October 2022 in Italy within JO Themis.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="1070 901 1556 1321"> <p>[REDACTED]</p> </li> </ul>	

Action	Lead actor(s)	Timeframe	Actions completed, Results	Next Steps / Comments
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioner Reynders sent a letter on 26 September 2023, to relaunch discussions for an international agreement on cooperation with EUROJUST.</li> <li>• Collaboration with EUAA has been restricted so far to participation in EUAA regional projects and will continue on case-by-case basis</li> </ul>	
<b>Increase assisted voluntary returns from Tunisia and sustainable reintegration in sub-Saharan Africa and reinforce protection of those in need.</b>				
<p><b>Action 6:</b> Support relevant partners, in particular IOM and UNHCR, in activities and operations for protection of migrants and assisted voluntary returns from Tunisia to sub-Saharan Africa.</p>	<p>Commission, EEAS and Member States</p>	<p>Ongoing since June 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023 COM signed a new project with UNHCR “Reinforcement de la protection et de l’accès aux services de base des réfugiés et demandeurs d’asile vulnérables en Tunisie” [budget: EU EUR 8 million + EUR 1 million from NL] to enhance reception and access to international protection for asylum seekers and refugees.</li> <li>• COM renewed the regional programme on “Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration in North Africa” with further top ups – phase 7 started in 2025. Total amount of the regional project is approximately EUR 100 million, including funding from other donors.</li> <li>• There has been an acceleration of voluntary returns from Tunisia since 2024. In 2024, IOM has facilitated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signature of an additional top up of the “Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration in North Africa” of around EUR 56 million will be signed by the end of 2025 to cover the increasing needs, in coordination with other donors Offering support to Tunisian authorities to develop a national asylum system, in close cooperation with UNHCR and in coordination with Member States and in the meantime finding an interim solution to the suspension of registration of new asylum seekers since mid-2024</li> </ul>

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			<p><i>the voluntary return of more than 6 800 migrants from Tunisia to their countries of origin (mainly the Gambia, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea) with funding from the EU and other donors. This is more than the double of the total figure of 2023 (with 2,558 returns).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>In 2025 so far, IOM has facilitated the voluntary return of more than 4,100 migrants from Tunisia to countries of origin. Moreover, more than 16 420 migrants have received protection and direct assistance thanks to the programme.</i></li> <li><i>Since 2023, UNHCR Tunisia has been able to register 13,679 asylum-seekers and refugees and finalise over 1000 refugee status determination (RSD) with the support of the Regional Development and Protection Programme (Budget: EUR 1,1 million EU-IT) despite the recent suspension of registration and refugee status determination (RSD) operations in the country.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Strengthen return and reintegration cooperation between Tunisia and the EU.</b>				
<b>Action 7: Strengthen EU and Member States' assisted voluntary return</b>	Commission, EEAS, Frontex	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Tunisia is one of the seven priority third countries chosen for the targeted joint return actions</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Meeting with the authorities to discuss the findings of the impact studies and the strategic review to</i></li> </ul>

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<p><i>and reintegration projects for Tunisian nationals, in particular on the basis of existing good practices, and promote synergies and coherence of these actions with EU Reintegration Programme (EURP), the EU-funded national reintegration support mechanism 'Tounesna' and the TEI of the Central Mediterranean route.</i></p>	<p><i>and Member States</i></p>		<p><i>proposed to the High Level Network for Return in October 2023.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ongoing evaluation and impact study of the national reintegration mechanism 'Tounesna' to redefine jointly with Tunisia and key partners a common vision, including maximising synergies between the different reintegration programmes funded by the EU, Frontex and Member States</i></li> <li>• <i>Support referral pathways for returnees to existing job creation and vocational training programmes, adopting an integrated approach to support the economic development of governorates prone to irregular migration while creating economic opportunities for Tunisian returnees in those areas.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ongoing EURP by Frontex to support reintegration of migrants returning from the EU at the request of Member States</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>adapt ongoing and upcoming support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review and amend 2 ongoing reintegration programs: Progres Migration (Expertise France/ OFII) and EDMEJ (GIZ) to align with the latest insights and strategic priorities.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 8:</b> <i>Pursue all opportunities to improve cooperation on readmission with Tunisian authorities, incl. by engaging on operational</i></p>	<p><i>Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ongoing</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [REDACTED]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Organisation of a technical meeting on readmission with Tunisian authorities.</i></li> </ul>



Action	Lead actor(s)	Timeframe	Actions completed, Results	Next Steps / Comments
	Luxembourg, Spain, Netherlands, Malta and Sweden)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>June 2024: Second Roundtable to review the progress made since the first Roundtable</li> <li>June 2025: Third roundtable to review progress, endorse joint roadmap and discuss next steps</li> </ul>	<p><i>for advancing Talent Partnership's objectives. It also allowed to explore concrete recommendations on the 3 themes discussed: Bringing together job offers and applications and employment agencies; Supporting vocational training and higher education systems for mobility; Return migration, circular migration and reintegration in Tunisia as part of mobility schemes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Third roundtable in June 2025 saw the endorsement of the joint roadmap.</li> <li>Multiple technical follow-up meetings on sectors of interests jointly identified organised and planned since 2nd roundtable in June 2024 (on transports and logistics, tourism and hospitality, etc.)</li> <li>Ongoing legal migration programmes and projects in Tunisia supporting the Talent Partnership include Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM+), Programme d'Appui au Secteur de l'Éducation (PASE) and Migration Partnership Facility (MPF), as well as the fourth being evaluated under Mobility</li> </ul>	<p><i>Tunisia's institutional and policy structures, promoting efficiency and scalability across all legal migration channels.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage new partners, including European and international financial institutions (IFIs), to support Tunisia in leveraging international mobility as a driver for sustainable development.</li> <li>Continuation and/or start of actions identified in the joint roadmap endorsed in June 2025.</li> <li>Continuation of sectoral approach focus on sectors of common interest jointly identified, with further technical meetings to be organised.</li> <li>Visit from TUN authorities in mid-November 2025 in Paris and Brussels (THAMM/OFIG - tbc).</li> <li>Signature of an additional top-up to THAMM+ (IOM-IT) by Q4 2025.</li> <li>Signature of one regional programme to strengthen data availability and systems for labour mobility pathways</li> <li>Signature of one contract to continue mobility schemes between Tunisia and France.</li> </ul>

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			<i>Partnership Facility (MPF) with a budget of EUR 5,7 million.</i>	

**ANNEX I: Member States actions**

- *Description of the action with the following details (content of the action – indication of the link to the Action file objectives, overall budget, timeframe, key implementors)*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<i>Title of the action</i>	<i>Link to the Action file objectives</i>	<i>Indicative budget</i>	<i>Foreseen timetable</i>

## **ANNEX II: Common messages**

### **General messages (complemented by the lines to take agreed in the MaMa Working Party)**

- Recall the long-standing, close and comprehensive partnership between the EU and Tunisia and express the EU's will to continue and deepen this mutually beneficial cooperation, based on mutual commitments, shared priorities, democratic values, and the respect for human rights. The EU-Tunisia partnership encompasses the full range of shared interests – political, economic, and sectoral in addition to migration – and must be deepened across the board to be effective.
- On the economic front, the European Union is convinced that the implementation of structural reforms is a key element in ensuring the country's macroeconomic stability and future prosperity. The EU and its Member States stand ready to accompany the Tunisian authorities at every stage of this process by supporting socio-economic reforms that create jobs and investment.
- The holding of the EU-Tunisia Association Council meeting on 28 October 2025 will provide an opportune moment to take stock of the various areas of our bilateral cooperation.
- Recall the EU's intention to work closely with Tunisia through the prism of the implementation of the five pillars of the Memorandum of Understanding on a strategic partnership concluded on July 16, 2023, and the Ten-Point Plan for Lampedusa presented by the European Commission on September 17, 2023. The European Union remains ready to implement all the commitments it has made in recent months, in all areas of our partnership.

### **Complementing messages on migration**

- Thank the Tunisian authorities for the efforts to prevent the loss of human lives at sea and underline the need to strengthen these efforts, with the support of EU and Member States, while respecting human rights of rescued migrants.
- Recognise the efforts of the Tunisian authorities to prevent irregular migration. Measures need to continue in order to ensure a sustainable impact.
- Emphasise the importance of the protection of human rights of all migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, including access to an asylum procedure, basic services and infrastructure, as well as of preventing and addressing human rights abuses and all forms of violence against people on the move including arbitrary and forced deportations.
- Encourage Tunisia to consider ways to improve management of arrivals to Tunisia e.g. at airports and the land border with Libya, as well as mitigating consequences of visa free regimes. Stress the importance of accurate data on migration. One key opportunity would be for Tunisia to implement INTERPOL regional programme HIMAYA that enhances connectivity to INTERPOL databases, including to counter document fraud.
- Stress the EU's willingness to strengthen support to Tunisia in the field of border management, search and rescue, and through capacity building in the field of migration and reception, based on an updated assessment of the needs of the Tunisian authorities and on ensuring the protection of migrants' human rights. Encourage active participation of relevant Tunisian actors in the SAR project.
- Highlight that the fight against the networks of migrant smugglers and human traffickers will be further supported through the Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership, launched on 27 April 2023 and through enhanced cooperation with EU agencies. On border management, developing cooperation between Tunisia and Frontex would be an important step forward. In this regard, Frontex has proposed to the Tunisian authorities a number of light capacity building and

familiarisation activities in the border management domain through the EU4BorderSecurity programme. Stepping up operational cooperation with EU MS law enforcement authorities would also be a significant step forward.

- Underline EU's willingness to continue to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in Tunisia and countries of origin of those migrating to/through Tunisia, focusing particularly on youth by supporting education, vocational training, entrepreneurship, and job creation.
- Underline the potential of the Talent Partnership, bringing together several Member States' engagement in the field of legal migration (Italy, France, Germany, Belgium – as participating MSs - and Luxembourg, Spain, Netherlands, and Sweden – as observer MSs) and creating a platform for exchanges on labour market needs and concrete follow-up actions, including the facilitation and scaling-up of mobilities, in line with the mutual interests of Tunisia and the EU. Look forward to the conclusion of Joint Roadmap later this year (technical meeting expected for Q4).
- Highlight the regional TEI (Team Europe Initiative) for the Central Mediterranean migration route, which should enable us to strengthen, in an integrated and coordinated manner, the support of the EU and the Member States to Tunisia, taking into account all the migration matters that arise along the route, in dialogue and cooperation with Tunisia and other participating states.
- Stress the need for Tunisian authorities to continue facilitating assisted voluntary returns from Tunisia to countries of origin, sustainable reintegration and protection of those in need, in full respect of the human rights of all migrants and reiterate the EU's commitment to step up support. Welcome the removal of fees for departures.
- Recall that the EU and Tunisia remain committed to effective cooperation with each other in the field of return and readmission with all Member States. Underline the readiness of both the EU and its Member States on one side and Tunisia's on the other to work on returns (both voluntary and non-voluntary) and reintegration of Tunisian nationals, including in the framework of the EU supported national Tounesna mechanism, as well as the EU Reintegration Programme (EURP) and other EU and Member States reintegration projects.
- Highlight that the EU and its Member States are open to discuss the prospect to facilitate the issuance of short-stay and multiple entry visas, provided there are positive developments on readmission cooperation.
- Stress that the EU is following with concern the developments in Sudan, and its already visible impact on the migratory situation in the region, including Tunisia.