

In 2014, there has been more than a fourfold increase in irregular migration from Egypt to Italy across the Central Mediterranean from 8 433 to 14 405 irregular migrants. Despite this fourfold increase the total number of migrants is on a smaller scale than irregular migratory flows from Libya. Most of the migrants along this route are Syrian and Egyptian and these Egyptians often claim to be Syrian in order not to be repatriated to Egypt and to be able to obtain asylum. The main final destinations of these migrants were Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands.

In relation to boats/incidents stemming from Tunisia, they all involved small fibreglass or inflatable boats with not more than a dozen migrants on-board that were targeting either Pantelleria or Lampedusa. Despite the favourable weather conditions for sea crossings, the low number of arrivals is related to the traditionally good level of cooperation between the Tunisian and Italian authorities as well as effective border controls conducted on the Tunisian coast by the local authorities and the non-existence of facilitation networks. Moreover, Tunisian migrants are aware of the readmission agreement between Tunisia and Italy and the fact that they will be repatriated immediately upon apprehension by the Italian authorities.

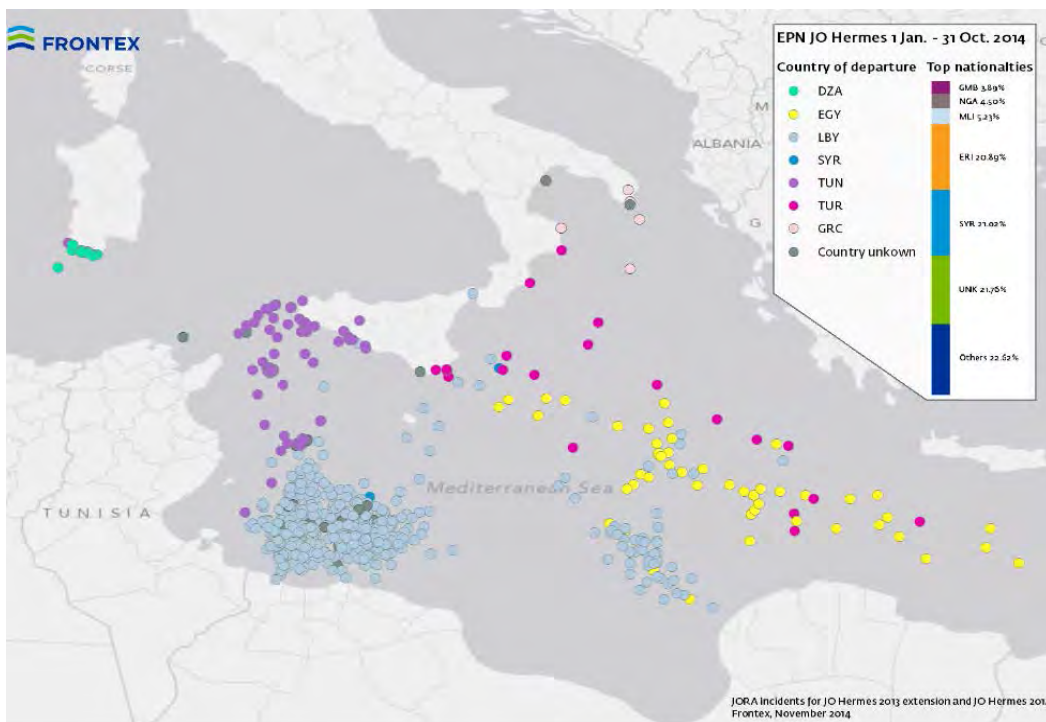


Figure 3: Boats detected by the assets of operation Mare Nostrum and Joint Operation Hermes (1 Jan – 31 Oct 2014), and percentage of nationalities detected. The coloured dots indicate the last country of departure.