

BORDER EXTERNALIZATION AND MIGRATION CONTROL IN MAURITANIA: RISKS FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



CEA(R)

Comisión Española
de Ayuda al Refugiado

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During the investigation, in order to analyse the impact of border externalisation and development cooperation policies linked to migration control, the CEAR team held meetings and interviews with Action Against Hunger, AMDH, Alianza por la Solidaridad, Augusto Delkádern (UCM researcher), CEAR Canarias, CONCORD, CONGDE, EuroMed Rights, EUTF, FAMSI, FIIAPP, OXFAM-INTERMÓN, IRIDIA, Javier Roldán (UGR professor), Lutheran World, MDM, OIM-Mauritania, OMN, Pepe Naranjo (El País), TDH, Government of the Canary Islands as well as activists, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. We would like to thank all of them for their contributions.

Cover image:

Mauritanian bank of the Senegal River. © Ana Rioja / FAMSI, 2016.

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The Spanish Commission for Refugees (CEAR) is a non-profit organisation founded in 1979 and engaged in voluntary, humanitarian, independent and plural action. Our aim is to work with citizens to defend the right to asylum. Our mission is to defend and promote human rights and the comprehensive development of asylum applicants, refugees, stateless persons and migrants in vulnerable situations and/or at risk of social exclusion. Our work approach is comprehensive, including temporary shelter, legal care, psychological and social care, training and employment, and advocacy and social participation.

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List of Acronyms

ACP: African, Caribbean and Pacific States

AECID: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional al Desarrollo (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation)

Asuntos Exteriores, UE y Cooperación (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and Cooperation)

AU: African Union

CGEF: Comisaría General de Extranjería y Fronteras (General Commissariat for Aliens and Borders)

CNDH: Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme (National Human Rights Commission)

EBA: Everything but Arms

EC: European Commission

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

EDF: European Development Funds

EPA: Economic Partnership Agreement

ERDF: European Rural Development Fund

EUTF: European Trust Fund for Africa

FIEM: Corporate Internationalisation Fund

FIIAPP: Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies)

FRONTEX: European Border and Coast Guard Agency

GIZ: German Society for International Cooperation

HR: Human Rights

ICEX: España Exportación e Inversiones (prior Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade)

ILO: International Labour Organisation

IMF: International Monetary Fund

INE: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Spanish National Statistics Institute)

IOM: International Organisation for Migration

MAEC/MAUC: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación (Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

MS: Member States (of the EU)

OAU: Organisation for African Unity

ODA: Official Development Assistance

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WB: World Bank

1. Introduction

A young country of ancient peoples, Mauritania is the gateway between the Maghreb and the Sahel. It has traditionally been a country of destination and transit for migrants, making it a strategic actor for the European Union and Spain in cooperation on migration issues¹.

Spain considers Mauritania a priority country in several master plans for development cooperation and its foreign action plan for Africa thanks to its strategic importance and status as a gateway country between the Maghreb, West Africa and the Sahel². Mauritania is a critical partner for controlling migration flows to Spain and Europe.

As of 2006, following the so-called 'Cayuco crisis'³ in the Canary Islands, the EU and Spain strengthened their relations with Mauritania. Since then, they have developed an extensive repertoire of political and legal instruments and operational and technical cooperation agreements aimed mainly at containing migration flows to prevent arrivals to the EU. These relations have grown more intense due to the increase in arrivals to the Canary Islands.

Given this context, and in line with its objective to defend human rights and the right to asylum, the Spanish Commission for Refugees (CEAR) conducted an investigation in 2021 as part of the 'Observatory on the right to asylum, migrations and borders' project. The study aimed to analyse the impact of border externalisation and conditional development cooperation policies in priority transit countries (Mauritania, Senegal and Algeria) on Spanish migration, asylum and development cooperation policies.

The work was carried out based on the analysis and review of bibliographic sources and interviews with various key actors such as institutions and official bodies, NGOs, migrants/refugees, journalists, researchers and academics.

2. Context

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania has an area⁴ of 1,030,700 km². It is bordered by Western Sahara and Algeria to the north, Mali to the east, Mali and Senegal to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

The territory was initially populated by sedentary black peoples, with nomads from Berber tribes arriving later. Subsequently, the Almoravid and Arab peoples came along. Mauritania currently has a population of 4.8 million⁵ comprising a white Moor minority known as Beydane (literally, 'the whites')

¹ that 'Mauritania is an anchor', a 'stable country and a solid ally of the EU'. He had already spoken about the country, saying that 'ideally we would have agreements with every country that get met like the ones we have with Mauritania'.

Borrell, also the Spanish Foreign Minister in 2019, further highlighted the very good cooperation with Mauritania on migration issues.

EUROPA PRESS. 22/04/2021. *Borrell destaca a Mauritania como un "ancla de estabilidad" en el Sahel en el inicio de su gira por la región* <https://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-borrell-destaca-mauritana-ancla-estabilidad-sahel-inicio-gira-region-20210422113034.html>,

CONSEJO DE EUROPA. 21/04/2021. Press <https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/events/20210421-eu-hr-borrell-visits-mauritania/130045-eu-hr-borrell-meets-president-of-mauritania-press-statement-20210421>

THE DIPLOMAT. 15/04/2019. *Borrell: "Ojalá tuviéramos con otros países la cooperación migratoria que tenemos con Mauritania"* <https://thediplotainSpain.com/2019/03/borrell-ojala-tuvieramos-con-otros-paises-la-cooperacion-migratoria-que-tenemos-con-mauritania/>

² Africa Plan 2006-2008. (ibid) Pgs. 43-44

³ In 2006, 31,678 people arrived to the Canary Islands from Senegal, Mauritania and Morocco.

⁴ Over twice the size of Spain. In contrast, it has a population of less than 4.8 million, as compared to Spain's 47 million inhabitants.

⁵ UNFPA (database) <https://www.unfpa.org/fr/data/world-population/MR>

who hold political and economic power, a black Moor majority known as Haratines, with black people (Fula, Soninke, Wolof and Bambara, among others) and mestizos making up the rest⁶. Its national languages are Arabic, Pulaar, Soninke, and Wolof, with Arabic being the official language⁷.

In 1960, Mauritania gained independence from France⁸ and, after 10 coups between 1960 and 2008, finally overthrew the government elected in the first democratic presidential elections (2007), putting General Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz in command. His party, the Union for Republic (UPR)⁹, currently remains in power¹⁰.

As for migration issues, Mauritania has traditionally been a country of origin, destination, and transit. During the conflicts between 1989 and 1991, a large part of the black population took refuge in Senegal¹¹. Years later, under the mandate of President Abdelaziz, the two countries have made efforts to improve their strategic relations through reparation¹² measures that continue to be insufficient in the eyes of some actors¹³. Currently, Mauritania is a country of destination mainly for regional and seasonal migration, as well as more than 60,000 Malians¹⁴ who have sought refuge there in recent years.

Mauritania is also, to a large extent, a transit country for people trying to reach Europe. In this case, it is worth highlighting the increase in the flow of people to the coast of Mauritania due to the tightening of Moroccan policies, the conflict in Guerguerat¹⁵, and the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2018, the port of Nouadhibou, that became in 2006 one of the main departure points of the Atlantic route, gained new importance as a point of embarkation to the Canary Islands.

Additionally, Mauritania is the leading country to receive deportation flights from Spain¹⁶ based on an agreement between the two countries that permits the deportation of Mauritanian nationals and third-country nationals who have transited through Mauritania¹⁷.

6 There is no recent statistical, demographic data on its composition given the controversy arising from the new census record. See: JEUNE AFRIQUE.. 01/10/2011 *Recensement : ce qui met les Noirs de Mauritanie en colère*. <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/153486/politique/recensement-ce-qui-met-les-noirs-de-mauritanie-en-col-re/>

The CIA Factbook 2021 makes the following division (without indicating the origin or date of the data): black Moors/Haratines 40%; white Moors/Beydane 30%; non-Arabic speaking sub-Saharan Mauritians 30%. CIA. (2021) *Mauritania-The World Factbook*. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mauritania/> In its country file, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAEC) makes the following division: informally, it is estimated that the population is made up of around 20-30% Moorish Arabs ('white Moors' or Beydane), 50% -'black Moors' (Arabised haratine-blacks), 20-30% black-Mauritanian ethnic groups (Pulaar, Wolof and Soninke, among others) and some percentage of mestizos. MAEC (2021). Diplomatic Information Office. Country file. Mauritania. http://www.exteriores.gob.es/documents/fichaspais/mauritania_ficha%20pais.pdf

7 Article 6 of the Mauritanian Constitution (1991) <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/mau135226F.pdf>

8 Since 1903 it was a French colony in the so-called 'French West Africa', which included Mauritania, Senegal, French Sudan (now Mali), Guinea, Ivory Coast, Niger, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), and Dahomey (now Benin).

9 It is worth noting that while both Spain and the EU (in resolution) condemned the 2008 coup d'état, they ended up collaborating with Abdelaziz' government when it won the 2009 elections. EL PAÍS. 07/08/2008. *Un golpe acaba con la joven democracia en Mauritania* https://elpais.com/diario/2008/08/07/internacional/1218060003_850215.html and EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. (2008). European Parliament resolution of 4 September 2008 on the coup in Mauritania (2009/C 295 E/21): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52008IP0411&from=PL>

10 Mohamed Ould El-Ghazouani has been the president of Mauritania since 2019.

11 Approximately 75,000 Mauritians were recognised prima facie in Senegal according to data from UNHCR 01/12/2021. Senegal Multi-Country Office (MCO): <https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/208>

12 These measures included the president leading the 'Kaedi prayer', in which he asked for forgiveness; the acceleration (in coordination with UNHCR and the Senegalese government) of the repatriation and resettlement of refugees, which ended in 2012 following the return of 20,000 people; readmission and compensation to civil servants and members of the armed forces affected. MAEC (2015). Diplomatic Information Office. Country file. Mauritania. <http://www.upv.es/contenidos/ORI/info/U0720091.pdf>

13 MENA Right Group.(2019) <https://menarights.org/en/articles/mauritanie-les-rescapes-du-passif-humanitaire-reclament-verite-et-justice-29-ans-apres-le>

14 UNHCR. (2021). Operational Data Portal. Mauritania - Situation map as at end of March 2021. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/86187>

15 On 21 October 2020, the passage of people and merchandise from Guerguerat, in the territory of Western Sahara, was blocked by Saharawi activists as a protest strategy to prevent the UN from abandoning the issue of Western Sahara. Morocco's response was to enter Guerguerat on 13 November, starting an armed conflict. See: EL PAÍS. 13 /11/ 2020. *El ejército de Marruecos y el Frente Polisario intercambian disparos en el sur del Sáhara Occidental* <https://elpais.com/internacional/2020-11-13/el-ejercito-marroqui-entra-en-el-sur-del-sahara-para-romper-el-bloqueo-del-frente-polisario.html>

Western Sahara has an excellent geostrategic position for the exchange of goods and the passage of people; the Guerguerat borders with Mauritania.

16 AIDA. (2020) Country Report. Spain, 2020 update. https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/AIDA-ES_2020update.pdf pg. 28

17 Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on immigration, drawn up in Madrid on 1 July 2003. <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2003/08/04/pdfs/A30050-30053.pdf>

3. Relations and cooperation with the EU on migration and development aid

Regarding the Mauritanian economy, exports are mainly from mining and fishing and subproducts thereof, and 70% of food and manufactured goods are imported¹⁸. Europe is an essential trading partner for Mauritania¹⁹. Classified as a least developed country—based on a list prepared by the UN and recognised by the EU—, Mauritania's products have tariff-free access to the EU thanks to the Everything but Arms (EBA) initiative.²⁰

According to the European Commission, the collaboration between the EU and Mauritania dates back more than 50 years, supporting development in various fields (road construction, transport, agriculture, mining, fishing and governance)²¹. Security, migration, economic growth/job creation and gender equality are among the current priorities in Mauritania²². It is also considered a strategic actor for the EU in the 'fight against trafficking in human beings and drugs, extremism and terrorism in the Sahel region'²³.

Mauritania participates in Euro-Mediterranean forums such as the 5+5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean²⁴ (whose areas of activity include the joint management of international borders; labour migration; migration for development, and the protection of the rights of migrants in the Western Mediterranean region).

Despite belonging to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)²⁵, Mauritania is not included in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)²⁶ of the EU. Still, it forms part of the ACP Group of States (Africa,

18 In terms of exports, the mining and fishing sectors predominated (90% in 2014) although, as of 2017, the sectors 'canned meat and fish' and 'stones, metals and jewellery' stood out the most, representing 53% of the total. This shows increased diversification.

The latest data available shows that mining (iron) is once again the main sector, while precious metals (gold) and fishing vie for second place. See: OEC (s/f). Database. Country Profile. <https://bit.ly/3J6yn2u> and TREND ECONOMY <https://trendeconomy.com/data/h2/Mauritania/TOTAL>

19 Spain and Italy were respectively the 3rd and 4th greatest importers of Mauritanian products in 2020 (after China and Canada). As for the countries from which Mauritania imports, Spain was the main one, making up more than 14% of its imports. See: TREND ECONOMY (database) <https://trendeconomy.com/data/h2/Mauritania/TOTAL>

20 European Union initiative that eliminates customs tariffs on all imports into the EU from the world's least developed countries, except for arms imports. See: EUROPEAN COMMISSION (website). DG Trade. EBA. <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/everything-arms-eba>

21 European Commission (2018). Press Section. EU Support Mauritania. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_18_4304

22 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. (s/f) International Partnerships. Mauritania. https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/where-we-work/mauritania_en

23 European Commission (2018). Press Section. EU Support Mauritania. Op. Cit

24 It was established in Rome in 1990 as a Trans-Mediterranean Forum and a security initiative to achieve stronger cooperation between 5 EU and 5 Maghreb countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain) through political dialogue and economic cooperation and the promotion of more efficient resource management as a way to increase interdependence and regional development. See: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/dialogue-migration-western_en The last ministerial conference on Foreign Affairs took place on 1-2 March 2020.

25 Intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation which brings together all countries of the European Union and 15 countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean to promote dialogue, cooperation and the implementation of specific projects and initiatives with a tangible impact on citizens to address three strategic objectives: human development, stability and integration. See: <https://ufmsecretariat.org/>

In November 2021, the 6th Regional Forum was held, addressing common challenges to achieve a more peaceful, safe, green, prosperous and inclusive Mediterranean region. The issue of migration is not mentioned beyond the need to support Syrian refugees and UNRWA.

The final joint statement can be read at: EUROPEAN COMMISSION. 29/11/2021. UfM: Joint statement by the Jordanian and EU co-presidency on the Sixth Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news/ufm-joint-statement-jordanian-and-eu-co-presidency-sixth-regional-forum-union-mediterranean-2021-11-29_en

26 La Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) se aplica a Argelia, Armenia, Azerbaiyán, Bielorrusia, Egipto, Georgia, Israel, Jordania, el Líbano, Libia, Marruecos, Moldavia, Siria, Territorios Palestinos, Túnez y Ucrania. Ves más en: PARLAMENTO EUROPEO. Ficha PEV. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/es/sheet/170/la-politica-europea-de-vecindad#_ftn1

Caribbean and Pacific)²⁷, coordinating its relations through the 2000²⁸ Cotonou Agreement between the ACP countries and the EU. This agreement includes the 'issue of migration' as the subject of 'in-depth dialogue', the establishment of a prevention policy for illegal immigration and a cooperation clause regarding the return of its nationals. It leaves the door open to negotiations on the readmission of third-country nationals and stateless persons through the regional and bilateral negotiation agreements resulting from it, known as Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA)²⁹. The European Development Fund (EDF) is the main instrument for providing community aid for development cooperation in the ACP States and overseas territories³⁰.

Thus, EU development cooperation in Mauritania is mainly funded by:

- a. The regional funding programme for West Africa of the EDF, under its Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)³¹. The multi-annual 2014-2020 programme (11th EDF) granted a total of €1.15 billion to the region, of which €160 million was allocated to Mauritania³² to support the country in trade and development. These programmes are considered development aid as it is understood that, by improving economic relations, trade agreements³³ can reduce poverty and improve living conditions. As mentioned above, this funding is set out in the Cotonou Agreement, which includes a readmission clause for nationals in an irregular situation.
- b. The EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF)³⁴. As of September 2021, Mauritania benefits from nine national projects (see Table 1)³⁵ worth over €80 million and 16 regional projects (see Annex I)³⁶. Especially striking is the figure of €25 million allocated directly to the Mauritanian government for the project 'The EU for the security-resilience-development nexus', which consists of direct economic support to the Mauritanian government for governance, border management, maritime security, and migration (Table 1).

27 This is a group of 79 countries (48 African, 16 Caribbean and 15 Pacific) with which the EU has economic partnership agreements stemming from the Cotonou Agreement. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt are not part of the group.

28 The Cotonou Agreement (2000) set the goal of reducing poverty to eradicate it, supporting the sustainable economic, cultural and social development of partner countries, as well as facilitating the progressive integration of their respective economies into the world economy.

Migration issues are included in article 13.5 of the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States on the one hand, and the European Community and its Member States on the other. (2000) [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02000A1215\(01\)-20180531&from=ES](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02000A1215(01)-20180531&from=ES) For a summary of the document see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISUM:r12101&from=FR> The EU is currently negotiating the signing of a new agreement with a new framework (Post-Cotonou). The current agreement, which was due to expire in March 2020, has been extended. EUROPEAN COMMISSION. 15/04/2021. Press Zone: Questions and Answers on the new EU/Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Partnership Agreement. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/qanda_21_1553 Para saber más: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/policies/cotonou-agreement/>

29 Pursuant to the Cotonou Agreement, EPA negotiations began with the various regions in 2002. The objective of these agreements is to promote the economic development of ACP countries through the progressive and asymmetrical opening of the market to trade in goods and services, and the improvement of cooperation in areas related to trade. They also try to establish a transparent and predictable framework that promotes investment in these countries. To this end, they include chapters on trade in goods and services, investment, intellectual property and public procurement, among other topics. The agreements are accompanied by financial measures channelled through the European Development Fund (EDF) to mitigate the impact of the structural adjustment of the countries.

MINISTRY OF TRADE (s/f). Trade Agreements. Mauritania. ACP <https://comercio.gob.es/PoliticaComercialUE/AcuerosComerciales/Paginas/mauritania.aspx>

30 EUR-LEX (website). European Development Fund (EDF). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=LEGISUM:r12102>

For more information: EUROPEAN COMMISSION. (2002). The European Development Fund in a few words. http://aei.pitt.edu/40696/1/DE_112.pdf

31 Economic Partnership Agreement between the West African States, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), on the one hand, and the European Union and its Member States, on the other. Brussels, 3 December 2014 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13370-2014-INIT/es/pdf>

32 The EDF has not been an integral part of the EU's general budget but was funded by the Member States, in accordance with their financial rules, and run by a special committee. The new programme will be included in the Multi-annual Financial Framework and will be subject to EU financial regulations.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (webpage). EU and EDF annual accounts. https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/eu-and-edf-annual-accounts_en

EUR-LEX (web). European Development Fund (EDF). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=LEGISUM:r12102>

European Commission (website). Annual European Development Funds reports and accounts.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/annual-european-development-funds-reports-and-accounts_en

33 In practice, it is difficult to establish the development impacts of this programme or evaluate the specific impact on human development that these economic agreements have. The EPA foresees the creation of a 'Competitiveness Observatory' for the tool, but it is still pending despite having been allocated funds by the 11th EDF.

DAI. (2016) Identification and definition of indicators – proposal for the operational arrangements of the Competitiveness Observatory in the context of the EPA between the European Union and West Africa. https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2017/february/tradoc_155302.pdf

SMART AFRICA. 12/09/2021 ECOWAS Member States meet to review development of the African Trade Observatory. <https://smartcompany.africa/smart-partnership-ecowas-member-states-meet-to-review-development-of-the-african-trade-observatory/>

34 EU Trust Fund for Africa. See: European Commission. (website) EUTF https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/index_en

35 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. (s/f) EUTF. Sahel and Lake Chad. Mauritania. https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/mauritanie_en

36 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. (s/f) EUTF. Sahel and Lake Chad. Mauritania.. https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/mauritanie_en

TABLE 1. NATIONAL PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE EUTF (2015-2021) IN MAURITANIA	EUTF contribution (in €)	Partners
Partenariat Opérationnel Conjoint pour la Mauritanie (POC Mauritanie)	4.550.000	FIIAPP
Projet PECOBAT : Amélioration de l'employabilité des jeunes et des capacités des PME par le développement du sous-secteur du BTP	3.200.000	ILO
Renforcement des capacités pour une meilleure gestion de la migration afin de protéger l'enfance migrante contre l'exploitation et la traite	3.000.000	Save The Children
Contribuer au renforcement de la gouvernance et de la gestion des migrations et des frontières, et faciliter la protection, le retour et la réintégration durable de migrants en Mauritanie ³⁷	8.000.000	OIM
PROMOPÊCHE: Création d'emplois décents et consolidation de l'emploi existant pour les jeunes et potentiels migrants dans le secteur de la pêche artisanale	14.000.000	ILO and GIZ
PROMOPÊCHE: Promotion de l'emploi et amélioration des conditions de vie des pêcheurs artisanaux côtiers, jeunes et femmes aux alentours des espaces naturels protégés, secteur nord de Mauritanie	10.000.000	AECID
Résilience pour la cohésion sociale et culturelle en République Islamique de Mauritanie	6.000.000	Expertise France
Programme de renforcement de la résilience des communautés urbaines et rurales vulnérables en Mauritanie	10.000.000	Direct management, grants to NGOs
L'UE pour le nexus sécurité-résilience-développement en Mauritanie ³⁸	25.000.000	Mauritanian Government

Source: Own creation based on information from the EUTF website³⁹ as of 10/28/2021.

Mauritania is part of 16 regional EUTF projects (see table in Annex I). Two (Erasmus + and Protection and sustainable solutions for migrants and refugees along the Central Mediterranean route) fall under the 'improving migration management' section. At least another eight are related to security issues (G5 and border management and training of security forces).

In addition to these two funds (EUTF and EDF) related to development aid⁴⁰, it must be considered that there are other types of agreements that include monetary compensation in exchange for the exploitation of specific resources and which can play an important role in maintaining ties or making demands. In this sense, the sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAS) with Mauritania⁴¹ stand out, as they establish an annual financial compensation in exchange for access to Mauritanian

37 IOM. (s/f) project file. Strengthening border management, fostering protection and reintegration of migrants in Mauritania <https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd486/files/country/docs/mauritania/IOM-Mauritania-Strengthening-Border-Management-Fostering-Protection-and-Reintegration-of-Migrants-in-Mauritania.pdf>

38 See: EUTF website [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/mauritanie_en](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/mauritanie/lue-pour-le-nexus-securite-resilience-developpement-en-mauritanie_en)

39 EUROPEAN COMMISSION (website). EUTF. Sahel Region, Lake Chad/Mauritanie. https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/mauritanie_en

40 According to data from the African Development Bank, the EU was not the biggest donor in the 2016-2020 period but the third, after the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) and China.

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (2016). Country Strategy Paper. 2016-2020. pg. 11 and Annex 6. https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Mauritania_-_2016-2020_CSP_en.pdf

41 At the end of July 2021, Mauritania and the EU concluded negotiations for the new protocol, which is still pending signature. The previous protocol is still extended until November. For more information, see: EUROPEAN COMMISSION. 15/04/2021. News. Post-Cotonou negotiations on new EU/Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Partnership Agreement concluded https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/ip_21_1552 and EUROPEAN COMMISSION. Sustainable Fishing Agreements. https://ec.europa.eu/oceans-and-fisheries/fisheries/international-agreements/sustainable-fisheries-partnership-agreements-sfpas_en

fishery resources in support of the fishing sector⁴².

4. Relations and cooperation with Spain on migration and development aid

Traditionally focused on trade and development cooperation, Spain's relations with Mauritania have been expanded in recent years to cover the fight against terrorism, organised crime, irregular migration, cooperation on defence and investment promotion.

In this sense, we could say that the agreements and meetings held on security and migration control are already an intrinsic part of the relations between the two countries. Since the Cotonou Agreement (2000), there has been growing support for these fields, in line with the position of the EU, as well.

In this regard, the following instruments stand out: the aforementioned [Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on migration](#) (2003), as it includes the readmission of nationals and people who have transited through Mauritania; the Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania regulating labour migration flows between the two countries for stable, intern and temporary workers (2007); and the [Cooperation Agreement on Security](#) (in force since 2018), which includes cooperation in the fight against irregular immigration and human trafficking within the Mixed Commission created by the same agreement and which must meet at least once a year. The most recent activities were led by the Ministry of the Interior⁴³.

In the field of ODA, the Ministry of the Interior has also been gaining importance to the detriment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

42 Protocol establishing the fishing opportunities and financial contribution set forth in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for a period of four years from 1 December 2015, with modifications made in 2017. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017D0451&from=BG>

The current agreement allows 50 Spanish ships to continue with their activity or request licenses throughout the validity of the agreement. Due to its strategic importance, both in terms of fishing opportunities and the EU's financial contribution to a developing country, great efforts are being made in the negotiations to renew it. In March 2021, the seventh round of negotiations was held. ICEX. (s/f) Bilateral Relations. Mauritania. (website) <https://www.icex.es/icex/es/navegacion-principal/todos-nuestros-servicios/informacion-mercados/paises/navegacion-principal/el-pais/relaciones-bilaterales/index.html?idPais=MR>

The Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Mauritania (2014-2017, extended) among the political initiatives that Spain develops in Mauritania and that are most likely to generate synergies with the strategic guidelines for development cooperation prioritized in the CPF, it is worth highlighting this EU-Mauritania Fishing Agreement, as one of the commitments is the donation of a percentage of the fishing that will be incorporated into the programme to improve food security in which the AECID collaborates.

MAEC. (2014). Country Partnership Framework. CPF 2014-2017 <https://bit.ly/3ey89sh>

43 The first Mixed Commission was held in Madrid on 24/10/2018 and was directed by the Ministry of the Interior. http://www.interior.gob.es/prensa/noticias/-/asset_publisher/GHU8Ap6ztgsg/content/id/9477082

In recent times, this Ministry has maintained a great deal of activity with this country. See: EUROPA PRESS, 10/09/2021. *La comisaria de Interior y Marlaska viajan a Mauritania la semana próxima para intentar frenar el paso de cayucos*. <https://www.europapress.es/nacional/noticia-comisaria-interior-marlaska-viajan-mauritania-semana-proxima-intentar-frenar-paso-cayucos-20200910171710.html>

LA MONCLOA-GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN. 18/09/2020. *Grande-Marlaska y la comisaria europea de Interior refuerzan en Mauritania la cooperación en materia migratoria y en la lucha contra el terrorismo y la delincuencia*. <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/interior/Paginas/2020/180920-mauritania.aspx>

LA MONCLOA-GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN. 25/01/2021 *Grande-Marlaska y su homólogo mauritano reafirman la cooperación en materia migratoria y en la lucha contra el terrorismo y la delincuencia*. http://www.interior.gob.es/prensa/noticias/-/asset_publisher/GHU8Ap6ztgsg/content/id/12836088

EL INDEPENDIENTE. 27/06/21. *Interior dobla a países subsaharianos la ayuda para luchar contra la inmigración*. <https://www.elindependiente.com/espana/2021/06/27/interior-dobla-a-paises-subsaharianos-la-ayuda-para-luchar-contra-la-inmigracion/>

AGENCE MAURITANIENNE D'INFORMATION 02/06/2021. *La Direction générale de la sûreté nationale reçoit un don du ministère espagnol de l'Intérieur* <https://fr.ami.mr/Depeche-58682.html>;

AGENCE MAURITANIENNE D'INFORMATION 24/06/2021. *Arrivée à Nouadhibou du navire de guerre espagnol le Furor Nouadhibou* <https://fr.ami.mr/Depeche-59072.html>

Table 2. MAIN AGREEMENTS BETWEEN SPAIN AND MAURITANIA⁴⁴

July 2003	Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on migration (includes readmission)
August 2006	Joint patrol agreement. National Police, Civil Guard and Gendarmerie Surveillance in Nouadhibou, Mauritania
September 2006	Agreement on legal assistance in criminal matters
September 2006	Agreement on the assistance of detained persons and the transfer of sentenced persons
September 2006	Extradition Agreement
September 2006	Agreement on legal assistance in civil and trade matters
25 July 2007, published in the B.O.E. of 30 October 2007	Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on the regulation and management of labour migration flows between the two countries
June 2008 (renewable every six months)	MoU ⁴⁵ for migration control (surveillance and effective return) ⁴⁶
June 2008 (renewable every six months)	MoU on the creation of mixed police cooperation teams ⁴⁷
July 2008, not ratified	Treaty of friendship, good neighbourliness, and cooperation
July 2008, ratified March 2016	Agreement on reciprocal investment promotion and protection (APPRI)
November 2009	Joint air patrol agreement, GC-Mauritanian Fisheries Delegation
June 2011	Bilateral agreement for the transfer by the Air Force of a C212/200 aircraft equipped with maritime exploration radar and night vision
October 2011	Bilateral Agreement on reciprocal suspension of visas in diplomatic passports
June 2014	MoU Cooperation on Agriculture, Rural Development and Livestock
January 2015	Declaration of intent regarding the development of actions in matters of internal security and institutional strengthening
March 2015	Joint maritime and land patrol agreement: GC and Gendarmerie.
May 2015, entry into force May 2018	Security cooperation agreement (includes the fight against irregular immigration and human trafficking) ⁴⁸
November 2015	MoU on political consultations
May 2016, Madrid	1st Political consultation meeting
June 2017, Nouakchott	2nd Political consultation meeting
14 March 2019, Madrid	New round of bilateral consultations
Own creation based on MAEC.MAUC (2020) and CEAR (2021) documents ⁴⁹	

44 Over the course of our research, we requested the content of seven unpublished agreements with Mauritania from the Ministries of the Presidency, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Defence through the Transparency Portal. As of 20 December 2021, we had only been provided two of them.

45 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) are informal instruments for establishing agreements and represent an essential foreign policy instrument due to their flexibility and lack of oversight. They deal with all sorts of matters such as education, trade, economic matters, security issues, maritime control, repatriations or returns, and many of them are not public. They are established in Law 25/2014, of 27 November, on Treaties and other International Agreements, which mentions them under the name of 'non-regulatory international agreements', defined as 'international agreements that do not constitute a treaty nor an international administrative agreement between the State, Government, bodies, agencies and entities of the General State Administration, [...] and any other subject of public law with the competence to enter such an agreement, and which contain declarations of intent or establish political, technical or logistical action commitments, and do not constitute a source of international obligations nor are they governed by International Law'.

For more information: MARTÍN, J. (2015). *La ley de tratados y otros acuerdos internacionales: Una nueva regulación para disciplinar una práctica internacional difícil de ignorar* – Revista RED. <http://www.revista-redi.es/es/articulos/la-ley-de-tratados-y-otros-acuerdos-internacionales-una-nueva-regulacion-para-disciplinar-una-practica-internacional-dificil-de-ignorar/>

46 It establishes the creation of 'a Mixed Police Cooperation Team (ECI-NDB) with the following general objectives: the joint fight against organisations involved in migrant smuggling, contributing to the improvement of Mauritanian capacities in terms of surveillance, patrolling and repression of organised criminal networks and promoting cooperation and mutual operational collaboration'. CEAR was granted access to the MoU after making a request through the transparency portal since it had not been published.

47 See previous note.

48 Among many other collaboration points, the Mauritania country file prepared by the MAEC-MAUC (2021) includes the fight against organised crime, cooperation in the fight against irregular immigration and all forms of human trafficking, as well as the strengthening of the capacities of the Mauritanian services in terms of border surveillance and the infrastructure security. Joint commissions between the two countries are held annually to monitor the aforementioned agreement.

49 MMAEC-MAUC (2020). Mauritania country file. Op. cit.

CEAR (2021). Spain-Mauritania Outsourcing file. https://www.cear.es/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Ficha_Externalizacion_Espana_Mauritania.pdf

4.1. Mauritania in the Africa Plans

Since the so-called “*Cayuco crisis*” in 2006, diplomatic, trade and cooperation relations (especially relating to migration) between Spain and African countries, including Mauritania, have multiplied. It is no coincidence that the first Africa Plan was launched that year, redefining Spanish foreign policy in the region⁵⁰. It focuses mainly on migration control, along with trade and economic interests.

The **First Africa Plan (2006-2008)**⁵¹ reconstructed Spain’s foreign policy on the continent: in addition to increasing opportunities and the internationalisation of Spanish export companies, the plan sought to consolidate the partnership with Africa in terms of migration control (developing internal, bilateral and multilateral lines of action). Mauritania is listed as a priority country ‘due to its strategic importance and status as a gateway country between the Maghreb and West Africa and the Sahel’. The Plan reflects decisive reasons for cooperation with Mauritania ‘linked to the necessary regulation of migration flows’⁵², as well as its relevance in terms of security in the triangle formed by ‘Cape Verde, Mauritania and Senegal, as an extension of the Canary Islands axis, representing an area increasingly used for drug trafficking networks, illegal human trafficking and organised crime’⁵³.

The **Second Africa Plan**⁵⁴ (2009-2012) delved further into the line developed by the first plan. As for Mauritania, the plan underlined its strategic importance due to ‘its proximity to the Spanish coast and its political relevance at the regional level’, maintaining a significant bilateral relationship resulting from the historical and geographical link between the two countries, with exchanges of high-level visits. Economically, it was considered a country ‘of low human development that could be improved in the short term through adequate exploitation of its oil and gas deposits’⁵⁵. Among the objectives established for Mauritania in the second plan was progress ‘on issues of migration and defence cooperation’, including military training courses.

The first two plans mainly responded to Spain’s interests in Africa, treating the continent as an object and not as an active subject. In both plans, migration management is included, among other development actions.

In 2018, Spain became the main entry route by sea to Europe, with more than 57,000 migrants arriving on its shores. Given the situation, this instrument was taken up again, and the **tercer Plan África** was approved in 2019 (currently still in force). Its objectives include promoting sustainable development, promoting peace and security, strengthening institutions, and supporting orderly, regular and safe mobility. Although it mentions the positive impact of African mobility, the Plan focuses excessively on population growth and human mobility. According to the Group of African Studies, it offers a rather negative perception of the phenomena of African population growth and mobility, portraying them as ‘threats’ and emphasising the risks or ‘challenges’ they pose. Furthermore, it does not use the policy coherence for development approach or align its actions with other government commitments in development matters, such as the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda or the Global Migration Compact⁵⁶.

50 According to Olivé and Oya (2009), the Africa Plans are some of the few plans prepared by the Spanish administration that include a strategic vision of Spanish foreign action, contemplating all types of sectors, from development cooperation to defence policy. However, according to the authors, if we consider the potential of the instrument, the distribution (sectoral and geographical) of the foreign action included is a limit to its possibility of success.

See OLIVÉ, I., y OYA, C. (2009) *Desarrollo, coherencia y concentración: algunos comentarios al Plan África 2009-2012*. Análisis del Real Instituto Elcano (ARI), n.o 94: 1.

51 MAEC (2006). Africa Plan 2006-2008. <http://crea-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/LIBROPLANAFRICA.pdf>

52 Africa Plan 2006-2008. (ibid) Pgs. 43 and 44

53 Ibid. Pg 52

54 MAEC. (2009) Plan África 2009-2012 https://www.casafrica.es/sites/default/files/old_cms/casafrica/Inicio/PlanAfrica2009-2012.pdf

55 Africa Plan 2009-2012. (Op. cit.) pg. 109

56 African Studies Group-GEA (2020). *¿Más allá del “interés nacional” y la seguridad?: propuestas para otra política exterior española en África. Algunas reflexiones críticas desde el grupo de estudios africanos al III Plan*. <http://grupodeestudiosafricanos.org/noticias/el-gea-publica-un-analisis-critico-sobre-el-iii-plan-africa.html>

The third plan has also been criticised for lacking specificity. Its action programme, Focus Africa 2023⁵⁷, attempts to narrow down the plan's objectives by categorising them into seven priorities and specifying actions to be developed in the countries. Mauritania is among the priority countries for development cooperation⁵⁸, and is part of one of the 'priority areas in security': the Sahel. Therefore, 'the development of the military capacities of the armed and security forces will be strengthened and supported'.

In this sense, documents and declarations of the MAUC on Mauritania⁵⁹ stand out, stating that in the 'fields of Security, Interior and Defence, bilateral cooperation in the fight against illegal immigration continues to be excellent'.

According to a statement by an official of the Civil Guard in an article by the Elcano Royal Institute⁶⁰, 'Mauritania is not only a fundamental partner for Spain in the region but also enormously reliable. The extent and depth of relations between the two countries go beyond the ink on the pages of bilateral agreements, memoranda of understanding and cooperation projects'. As an example, he cites the collaboration that 'allowed the control and complete closure of a new route opened in 2016 through which Syrian citizens travelled to Mauritania to try later to make the leap to Spain by crossing the Sahara in the direction of Morocco or taking other routes in the direction of Algeria or Libya'⁶¹.

4.2. Evolution of Spanish ODA in Mauritania

Mauritania has traditionally been one of the first countries from the Maghreb and the Arab world to receive Spanish cooperation funds. According to data from the African Development Bank, from 2016 to 2020, Spain was the sixth donor to the country⁶².

Development cooperation activities with Mauritania date back to 1995 when the Technical Cooperation Office was officially created. In June 2014, the Country Partnership Framework⁶³ was completed, reflecting the relevance of Mauritania for Spanish cooperation.

Mauritania is included in all the Spanish Cooperation Master Plans as a country of high interest⁶⁴. However, despite this high level of prioritisation, Mauritania has never received more than 1.25% of the total global aid disbursed by Spain.

57 The Africa Focus 2023 (FA) defines itself as the action program of the III Africa Plan for the current legislature and the projection of Spain's external action with Africa, concretizing its actions until 2023. The Plan reflects the four strategic objectives of the Third Africa Plan (Peace and security; Sustainable development, inclusive and resilient economic growth; Institutionality; and Orderly, regular and safe mobility) and articulates them into seven priorities. Geographically, although it claims to focus on the countries indicated in the III PA as anchor countries and priority countries (a total of 10 countries), it distinguishes between economic, development and peace and security interests, introducing countries that were not initially contemplated in the III PA. MAEC-MAUC. (2021) Foco África. <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/ElMinisterioInforma/Documents/ESP%20DOCUMENTO%20FOCO%20AFRICA%202023.pdf>

58 In accordance with the provisions of the V Spanish Cooperation Master Plan, which considers Mauritania—as well as Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal—a country with serious deficiencies, low human development and significant vulnerability.

59 MAEC-MAUC.2021. Mauritania country file. Op. Cit. EL DIARIO.14/11/2021. *El enfoque de género de la embajadora de España en Mauritania, donde las mujeres reivindican sus derechos*. https://www.eldiario.es/canariasahora/politica/enfoque-genero-embajadora-espana-mauritania-mujeres-reivindican-derechos_1_8486403.html

60 ALTUNA,S. (2018). *La contribución española actual a la lucha contra el terrorismo en el Sahel*. Real Instituto El Cano. http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_es/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/terrorismo+internacional/ari116-2018-altuna-contribucion-espanola-actual-lucha-terrorismo-sahel

61 Approaches like these, on the one hand, ignore the fact that closing one route opens up others—usually longer and more dangerous ones—and, on the other, reveal the double discourse of protection vs. repulsion: Syrians, for whom international protection rates in Europe and Spain are very high, are not only not protected but also repelled on their way through the same countries that, if they managed to get there, would give them protection.

62 After the Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development (AFESD), China, the EU and the Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank. See: AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (2016). Op. cit.

63 Country Partnership Frameworks (CPF) are strategic planning instruments for development cooperation. The CPF with Mauritania, signed at the Seventh Mixed Cooperation Commission between Spain and Mauritania, is currently in force, having been renewed in October 2017. MAEC. (2014). Country Partnership Framework. CPF 2014-2017 <https://bit.ly/3ey89sh>

64 The name given to this high interest varies according to the plans: 'programme country' in the *First Master Plan* (2001-2004); 'priority country' in the *Second MP* (2005-2008); 'group A country: comprehensive partnership countries'⁴⁷ in the *Third MP* (2009-2012); and 'partner country' in the *Fourth MP* (2013-2017) and *Fifth MP* (2018-2021).

Table 3. CLASSIFICATION OF MAURITANIA ACCORDING TO MASTER PLANS AND ANNUAL ODA DISBURSEMENTS

Priority of Mauritania in each master plan	Year	Net aid disbursed (bilateral only) €	Net aid disbursed (bilateral and multi-bilateral) €	Gross aid disbursed (bilateral, multi-bilateral and multilateral) €
First Master Plan: PRO-GRAMME Country ⁶⁵	2002			19.547.939
	2003			15.642.202
	2004		9.238.706	9.654.450
Second Master Plan: PRIORITY Country ⁶⁶	2005	11.399.550	12.661.550	13.040.801
	2006	9.242.454	11.862.894	11.862.894
	2007	17.222.923	28.558.826	28.710.404
	2008	16.654.403	23.653.287	23.653.287
Third Master Plan: Group A: Comprehensive Partnership Country ⁶⁷	2009	29.288.484	32.128.341	31.466.032
	2010	25.242.863	26.189.085	26.224.085
	2011	25.006.250	25.271.903	26.061.093
	2012	6.883.231	7.048.231	7.048.231
Fourth Master Plan: Partnership country ⁶⁸	2013	11.175.424	11.175.425	11.984.126
	2014	5.867.822	6.165.823	6.233.735
	2015	15.725.560	15.725.561	14.525.974
	2016	2.305.237	2.409.237	4.742.952
	2017	1.448.409	1.973.409	5.139.653
Fourth Master Plan: Partnership country ⁶⁹	2018 ⁷⁰	3.492.810	3.892.810	7.076.594
	2019 ⁷¹	6.194.550	6.194.550	6.194.550

Source: <http://www.realidadayuda.org/analizar-la-ayuda/concentracion-de-la-ayuda> based on PACI Monitoring Reports 2001-2014, info@od and Spanish Cooperation Master Plans.

Regarding how funds are channelled to execute programmes, Spanish cooperation uses the following channels in Mauritania:

a. Bilateral cooperation

This channel is used when development cooperation activities are carried out by the public administrations of the donor country with the recipient country, either through partner governments or other local public or private actors (which could be called direct bilateral aid), entities of the donor country (indirect bilateral),

⁶⁵ Mauritania appears as a country within the Maghreb, 'the most interesting area for Spanish Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Arab World, since it is [...] with whom we share broad and intense political, economic and socio-cultural interests. The stability of this region is paramount for Spain and Europe, and to achieve this a joint development strategy for the area that includes solutions to the concerning phenomenon of migration is essential'. The plan envisaged maintaining the level of cooperation that had existed until then with Mauritania but redefining the sectors of intervention. Master Plan 2001-2004. Pg. 10.

⁶⁶ Mauritania is only mentioned because it belongs to the Maghreb, 'a region of great importance for Spanish foreign policy, a region with great shortcomings in terms of human development'. Master Plan 2005-2008. (pg. 77)

⁶⁷ Mauritania is only mentioned because of its classification as a 'Least Developed Countries, Low Income Countries or Lower Middle Income Countries in which there are opportunities to establish a long-term partnership framework, based on the principles of aid effectiveness, that allows the channelling of high volumes of ODA and the use of a wide spectrum of instruments'. Master Plan 2009-2012. Pg. 28

⁶⁸ Mauritania is mentioned once in the plan as one of the four countries in North Africa and the Middle East in which Spanish ODA would be focused. Master Plan 2013-2017. Pg. 37

⁶⁹ Mentioned as one of the African partners of Spanish Cooperation defined by the UN as least developed countries (LDC) and therefore as having 'serious deficiencies, low human development and great vulnerability'. Admitting that one of its main sources of external financing is ODA, which constitutes a significant percentage of its gross national income and being, 'in general, more dependent on ODA than other forms of funding such as internally generated resources or international investment'.

In these countries, the plan aims to guarantee the implementation of and access to basic social rights and services and to consolidate their institutions, using all the available instruments according to their degree of development, needs and demands. Master Plan 2018-2021. Pg. 47

⁷⁰ As of 2018, a new model for measuring funds equivalent to ODA grants came into use. It does not allow comparison with the previous net and gross ODA flows since it includes other official flows to developing countries that are not technically considered ODA because they do not meet the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria.

⁷¹ Ibid

or international organisations⁷² (multilateral aid)⁷³.

While it is not necessarily a causal relationship, it does seem significant that after the so-called “*Cayuco crisis*” in 2006, there was a substantial increase in the sums allocated to Mauritania: in 2007, the country received more than in 2006 and 2005 combined (see Table 2).

From 2008 to 2011, the sums disbursed remained very high. In 2012, the amount of Spanish aid to Mauritania fell drastically (from €25 million in 2011 to €7 million in 2012) and, although it increased in 2013 and 2015, as of 2016, it began to drop even more sharply⁷⁴.

As for the agencies that make bilateral ODA disbursements, it is striking how, as of 2009, the Ministry of the Interior always appears in the top positions as a donor, even surpassing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2010, 2011 and 2015⁷⁵.

In this regard, it should be noted that, according to data on the info@od application⁷⁶, there are ODA funds from the Ministry of the Interior with names such as ‘Scientific and Technical Cooperation’, ‘Police Cooperation With Other Countries’, ‘Police Cooperation Activities’ and ‘International Police Cooperation’, without specifying further details⁷⁷. The large quantities allocated to Mauritania under concepts related to police cooperation compared to the total ODA suggest that aid has drifted towards migration and security control⁷⁸.

Despite being occasionally outperformed by other ministries (in 2006 by Industry; 2010 and 2011 by Interior; and 2013 by Economy), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has always been among the top two donors to Mauritania, with its net disbursements fluctuating between just over €3.5 million in 2005 to almost €10 million from 2009 to 2011⁷⁹. From 2011 to 2019, however, the amount allocated by this ministry dropped,

72 Intergovernmental organisations (MDOs) to which donor countries make contributions to execute development programmes. To learn more about this type of aid, visit: <https://www.cooperacionspanola.es/es/canalizacion-de-la-ayuda-oficial-al-desarrollo>

73 The DAC of the OECD considers it a subtype of bilateral aid. Oxfam-Intermon (s/f). The Reality of Aid. Glossary. <http://www.realidadayuda.org/glossary>. Therefore, in the following paragraphs we refer to bilateral and multilateral aid jointly.

To find out more, consult the AECID Cooperation Modalities and Instruments Guide. (2014). <https://www.aecid.es/Centro-Documentacion/Documentos/Modalidades%20e%20instrumentos%20de%20cooperaci%C3%B3n/Guia%20de%20modalidades%20e%20instrumentos.pdf>

74 From 2007 to 2011, a total of €135 million was disbursed in multilateral aid. From 2008 to 2011 it exceeded €20 million, reaching €32 million in 2009.

The great importance of multilateral aid should be highlighted, especially in 2007 and 2008, when it accounted for more than 40% and 30% of total Spanish bilateral aid, respectively. These disbursements were made mainly by the MAEC and were directed especially at the UNDP in 2007 and to meeting the Millennium and Environment objectives in 2008.

As of 2012, and especially after 2016, the figures were very low, with the proportion of multilateral channelling becoming practically non-relevant. Regarding the last two years, the ODA data is not yet available, so it cannot be included in this analysis.

75 In 2010, the sums it contributed accounted for 38% of Spanish ODA (almost €10 million out of €26 million); in 2011, 48% (€12 million out of a total of more than €25 million), and in 2015, it accounted for 66% of the total aid allocated (€10 million under the brief title of ‘International Police Cooperation’). In contrast, the total sum of the different concepts of the MAEC did not exceed €3.6 million.

The total disbursement on Development Cooperation by the Ministry of the Interior to Mauritania from 2004 to 2018, based on the figures that appear on the Info@od portal, is €41,244,476.

76 The General Secretariat for International Development Cooperation (GSIDC) collects information on ODA flows from Spain through this application. Based on this information, a Monitoring Report on these flows is published each year and submitted to the DAC of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). <https://infoaod-info.maec.es/frontend/portada/seccion/inicio>

77 Other recent items with names such as ‘Surveillance, maritime rescue and the fight against irregular immigration and trafficking’ and ‘Direct aid for the IOM to collaborate on tasks related to the voluntary return of irregular immigrants in the north of Morocco’ do not have an assigned monetary value despite appearing in info@aod. We were able to confirm that this is because in the end they were not considered ODA but Other Official Flows (OOF) as they did not meet some of the eligibility requirements to be accounted for as ODA.

Other Official Flows (OOF) are transactions that take place between a donor country and a partner country included in the DAC’s list of recipients that do not meet any of the eligibility requirements to be accounted for as ODA. (This may happen because their primary purpose is not development or, in the case of loans, they do not reach the required threshold of concessionality.) OXFAM-INTERMON (web). The Reality of Aid. Glossary. AOTDS.

<http://www.realidadayuda.org/glossary/apoyo-total-oficial-para-el-desarrollo-sostenible-aotds>

78 AWe requested the figures and content of the cooperation projects managed by the Ministry of the Interior in Mauritania (as well as Algeria and Senegal) through the transparency portal of the Spanish Government. We received a partial response, offering just the name of some of the budget subheadings to which this aid belonged and the annual figure for some of them, without indicating in several cases the specific amounts for each country but the total sum for both Mauritania and Senegal. The response did not clarify whether these subheadings were the only ones disbursed or if there were also disbursements under other headings or subheadings.

The Ministry justified its partial response on the basis that giving more information would exceed the limits of its duty of transparency since ‘this aid also covers actions related to national and public security, as well as international relations developed by the Kingdom of Spain’. Response dated 21/09/2021 to request 001-060490.

79 Between 2006 and 2008 it was about €6 million annually.

hovering at €4 million per year. The main areas to which aid is directed are health, education, culture, social justice and food security. The projects funded in migration are practically anecdotal, but we must mention the 2006 construction of the controversial Nouadhibou migrant detention centre with funds from the AECID⁸⁰.

b. Delegated cooperation with the EU

Spain develops delegated cooperation projects⁸¹ in Mauritania both through the AECID and, primarily, through the FIIAPP. In the case of the AECID, there are no projects related to migration issues or border control, at least as a main component.

Table. 4 CURRENT AECID DELEGATED COOPERATION PROJECTS (WITH OTHER AGENCIES) AND ORIGIN OF FUNDS

Project	Funds	Participating organisations
Promotion of Employment and Improved Living Conditions of Coastal Artisanal Fishermen, Youth and Women in the areas surrounding of the Protected Natural Areas of the North Zone of Mauritania (PROMOPECHE) ⁸² (2018-2022)	€10,000,000 EUTF - Trust Fund for Africa	AECID, MPEM, ENNAJAH, FNP, IMROP, ISSM, CFQMP, DREN-NDB
Institutional Strengthening in Mauritania for Agro-Pastoral Resilience (RIMRAP) ⁸³ (2016-2020) [in closing phase]	€27,000,000 EU (EDF-European Development Fund)	AECID, Directorates of Planning, International Cooperation and Statistics Agriculture and Livestock
Covenant of Mayors for Sub-Saharan Africa Created in 2016 CoM SSA ⁸⁴ (2019-2022) [Multi-country]	€27,500,000 EU contribution €25,000,000 (DCI-EU Development Cooperation Instrument)	AECID; AFD; Expertise France; GIZ

Source: Own creation based on the AECID report La Cooperación Delegada en la AECID (2011-2018)⁸⁵ and Memoria AECID 2018⁸⁶

As for the FIIAPP, it is noteworthy that seven of the 16 projects that appear on its website and in which the foundation has participated/participates in Mauritania have some aspect related to migration (the other seven being security projects related to terrorism, biological risks or chemicals and demining). The AECID funds three projects, while the rest are financed by the European Commission (three of them by the EUTF). Most of the projects (13) are developed at the regional level; that is, they are not implemented exclusively in Mauritania.

80 On which the AECID itself sponsored a 2008 report proposing its closure. CEAR. (2008). *Informe de evaluación del centro de detención de migrantes en Nouadhibou (Mauritania)*. <https://boletinderechoshumanos.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/informe-cear-nouadhibou-2009.pdf>

81 Modality of provision of ODA in which one or several agencies entrust one another to carry out all or part of the activities involved in the aid.

82 Promopêche Project (2018-2022). See: <https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/node/110> and <https://eutf.akvoapp.org/en/project/5912/#summary>

83 RIMRAP Project 2016-2020 <https://www.aecid.gob.es/es/TablonAnuncios/Documents/RIMRAP-UE%20-FED-2015-%20372-165/2.%20Convenio%20de%20Delegaci%C3%B3n.%20Versi%C3%B3n%20traducida.pdf> and <https://www.aecid.es/Centro-Documentacion/Documents/Publicaciones%20AECID/La%20Cooperaci%C3%B3n%20Delegada%20en%20la%20AECID%20-%20Resoluci%C3%B3n%20reducida.pdf> (pg. 46) <https://econservation.jrc.ec.europa.eu/project/3372165>

84 Launched in 2015, this initiative supports the EU Green Deal in the fight against the global challenges posed by climate change. See: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/projects/covenant-mayors-sub-saharan-africa-helping-cities-tackle-climate-change-and-access-energy_en

85 AECID (2019). *La cooperación delegada en la AECID (2011-2018)* <https://www.aecid.es/Centro-Documentacion/Documents/Publicaciones%20AECID/La%20Cooperaci%C3%B3n%20Delegada%20en%20la%20AECID%20-%20Resoluci%C3%B3n%20reducida.pdf>

86 AECID (2020). *Memoria AECID 2018*. <https://memoria2018.aecid.es/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Memoria-AECID2018.pdf> (pg. 71)

Table 5. PROJECTS DEVELOPED BY FIIAPP IN MAURITANIA

SECTOR	Project name	Geographic scope	Foreseen start and end date	Sponso	Total budget (€)	Collaborating institution
MIGRATION AND MOBILITY	Partenariat Opérationnel Conjoint pour la Mauritanie (POC Mauritanie) ⁸⁷	Mauritania	01/09/2021 31/12/2024	European Commission (EUTF)	4.550.000	FIIAPP
	MME – Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment	Regional	01/01/2010 30/12/2013	European Commission	3.600.000 €	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
	Surveillance and assistance in migration matters in Mauritania	Mauritania	03/10/2006 03/04/2007	European Commission	970.181 €	Spanish Red Cross, General Directorate of Police and General Directorate of the Civil Guard, Mauritanian Red Crescent, IOM, among others
	Project to support the third phase of the 'Rabat Process' – Migration	Regional	01/01/2013 29/09/2015	European Commission	2.185.975 €	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
SECURITY AND FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME ⁸⁸	NETCOP, creation of partnership of common operational networks	Regional	01/03/2021 28/02/2022	European Commission	1.662.532 €	Ministry of the Interior (National Police)
	Support to the G5 for Security in the Sahel	Regional	20/11/2019 20/11/2022	European Commission	9.998.500 €	Ministry of the Interior
	Support for maritime security in Mauritania ⁸⁹	Regional	01/03/2020 01/03/2022	European Commission (EUTF)	2.000.000 €	General Directorate of the Merchant Marine and Ministry of the Interior: Civil Guard, National Police
	GAR-SI SAHEL: Rapid action groups for Monitoring and intervention in the Sahel (GARS) ⁹⁰	Regional	28/12/2016 28/03/2020	European Commission (EUTF)	41.600.00 €	Ministry of the Interior: Civil Guard.
	Advanced Course on Humanitarian Demining for Mauritanian Military	Mauritania	17/09/2008 24/11/2008	AECID	106.000 €	Spanish Army/Academy of Engineers of Hoyo del Manzanares
	Risk mitigation on the African Atlantic coast: NRBQ 41	Regional	No consta	European Commission	3.000.000 €	Direction Générale de la Sécurité Civile et de la Gestion de Crise (DGSCGC); INERIS Développement SAS and European Institute for Integrated Risk Management EU-Vri (EEIG)
	CBRN (35) Chemical and Biological Threats Project: Africa	Regional	01/01/2014 31/03/2018	European Commission	3.871.800 €	Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification (AENOR) and State Agency Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC)
	CBRN 33 Threats Project: African countries	Regional	15/09/2013 14/02/2017	European Commission	2.700.000 €	Ministry of the Interior
	(CBRN 24) Threats Project: identification of materials and protection of citizens	Regional	07/01/2013 07/07/2015	European Commission	600.000 €	Ministry of the Interior
Fight against terrorism in the Sahel	Regional	01/11/2011 01/12/2015	AECID	6.696.750 €	Not included or provided	
SOCIAL POLICIES, FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS	Cultural cooperation: ACERCA I, II and III Programme	Regional	01/07/2014 03/01/2018	AECID	1.208.545 €	-
GREEN ECONOMY: CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES	Organisation of Artisanal Fisheries in Mediterranean and Atlantic waters	Regional	01/11/2012 31/12/2017	AECID	50.000 €	Instituto Social de la Marina
GOVERNANCE AND MODERNIZATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS	MASAR: Democratic Governance in the Arab World	Regional	01/11/2012 31/12/2017	AECID	5.000.000 €	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation - Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID)

Own creation based on the data available (as of 11/24/2021) on the FIIAPP website⁹¹ and * the EUTF website.

c. Cooperation for financial development: debt conversion programme with Mauritania

Of West African countries, Mauritania and Senegal have been provided with the most resources by the Secretaries of State, Trade and Economy⁹², with two financial protocols and a debt conversion programme⁹³.

The Ministries of Industry and Economy were among the largest donors of ODA from 2004 to 2016 (averaging 9% of total aid) through their credit disbursements—essentially aimed at infrastructure, fishing and electricity—from the Fondo de Internacionalización de Empresas (FIEM)⁹⁴. As of 2016, the Ministry of Industry has reimbursed many of these credits, explaining the negative figures in its net contributions to ODA.

5. Migration, border management and conditionality

5.1. Migrations and refuge in Mauritania

Mauritania has a very residual role as a country of origin of migrants: in 2020, there were some 130,000 Mauritians residing abroad (the majority in neighbouring African countries and only 26% in the EU)⁹⁵. According to INE data⁹⁶, the Mauritanian community in Spain has hovered in recent years at around 9,000 people (8,392 in 2020). The total Mauritanian refugee population across the globe, according to UNHCR data, was 37,931 in 2020 (having reached more than 80,000 in the mid-1990s)⁹⁷. Mauritania

87 It is also noteworthy that not all the programmes are updated [as of 11/24/2021] on the FIIAPP webpage. According to the information on the EUTF page, there is at least one other project being developed by the FIIAPP sponsored by the aforementioned fund (€4,550,000) under the name 'POC Mauritania' FIIAPP. (website) Projects. <https://www.fiiapp.org/resultados-proyectos/> EUROPEAN COMMISSION (web) EUTF. https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/mauritania/parteneriat-operational-conjoint-pour-la-mauritanie-poc_en. According to its action sheet, its overall objective is 'to contribute to effectively fighting the smuggling of migrants and improving capacities for managing irregular immigration through comprehensive support for the Mauritanian security forces'. Project. POC Mauritanie. Action sheet: https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/dec_-_t05-eutf-sah-mr-09.pdf

88 Based on our consultation in October 2021, FIIAPP changed the name of that sector to SECURITY, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT.

89 This project does not appear on the EUTF website, but through interviews with the EUTF administration and press reports, we have confirmed that it is sponsored by that fund.

FIIAPP. 30/09/2021. News. Strengthening capacities for the maritime security of Mauritania. <https://www.fiiapp.org/noticias/refuerzo-capacidades-la-seguridad-maritima-mauritania/>

90 GARSÍ SAHEL (Rapid action groups for monitoring and intervention in the Sahel) Led by FIIAPP with the Civil Guard in consortium with France, Italy and Portugal by direct attribution of the European Commission. Developed between 2016 and 2020 in the G5 Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, as well as Senegal. Under the security and development binomial, it aims to achieve stability in the region by strengthening the capabilities of its security forces and improving cross-border cooperation through the training and equipping of police units (the GARSÍ) by European gendarmes so that they can handle threats such as terrorism, organised crime, human trafficking and smuggling and ensure effective control of the territory.

91 FIIAPP. (website). Projects. <https://www.fiiapp.org/resultados-proyectos>

92 ICEX. (website). Bilateral relations (Op. cit.)

93 Article 5 of Law 38/2006, of 7 December, regulating external debt management establishes that 'Spain will promote the efficient exercise of the Spanish conversion policy, consistent with the other development cooperation policy activities and with the framework of the international financial system'. Debt-investment conversion programmes consist of transforming the payment obligations that a country has contracted with its creditor into financing investments that promote its economic and social development and reduction of poverty. TESORO. (website). Organization. International matters. Foreign Debt Management. Bilateral management. <https://www.tesoro.es/asuntos-internacionales/gestion-bilateral#:~:text=Los%20programas%20de%20conversi%C3%B3n%20de%20deuda%20en%20inversiones,econ%C3%B3mico%2C%20social%20y%20de%20reducci%C3%B3n%20de%20la%20pobreza>.

The conversion programme dates back to 2007 and was the result of the African Debt Conversion Plan. As of 31 May 2020, the total bilateral debt was €18.66 million, being entirely FIEM debt, with defaults of €1.19 million.

The Conversion Programme with Mauritania can be consulted at: <https://www.tesoro.es/asuntos-internacionales/gestion-bilateral/programa/144/programa-de-conversion-de-deuda-externa-de-mauritania-frente-espana-en-inversiones-publicas>

94 Fondo para la Internacionalización de la empresa (FIEM). Support instrument for the internationalisation of Spanish companies through reimbursable funding, thus generating debt with the Spanish State.

For more info: TESORO. (website). Origin of the Debt. <https://www.tesoro.es/asuntos-internacionales/origen-de-la-deuda> and MINISTRY OF TRADE (s/f) Informational leaflet FIEM. https://comercio.gob.es/Financiacion_para_internacionalizacion/FIEM/FIEMDocumentos/Folleto%20divulgativo%20para%20clientes%20extranjeros/Folleto%20FIEM%20Espan%CC%83ol.pdf

95 EUROPEAN COMMISSION. (Database). Atlas of Migration. <https://migration-demography-tools.jrc.ec.europa.eu/atlas-migration/data> and EXPANSIÓN. Datos Macro. <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/demografia/migracion/emigracion/mauritania>

96 INE. (website). Database. <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.htm?path=/t20/e245/p08/l0/&file=01005.px&L=0>

97 UNHCR. (database) Refugee Data Finder <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=V8qacB>

does not occupy a prominent position regarding asylum applications in Spain⁹⁸.

As a transit country, the reinforcement of border controls by Morocco and the difficulty crossing the border at Ceuta and Melilla (also closed since March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 health crisis), along with the conflict in Guerguerat (which resulted in the blocking of the crossing between Mauritania and Western Sahara), has all led to an increased flow of people travelling along the Mauritanian coast to take the Canary Islands migration route in the last two years⁹⁹. This route is one of the deadliest in the world, and 2021 was the year with the highest number of deaths and missing people since data is available¹⁰⁰.

Mauritania also plays a significant role as a destination country for migrants (in many cases, temporarily until they save enough money to continue their journey or return to their countries of origin after seasonal migration) and refugees (especially the refugee camp in M'bera, which houses more than 60,000 people).

The latest net migration data (2017)¹⁰¹ showed a positive balance of 25,000 people; that is to say, more people were arriving in Mauritania than leaving. The number of migrants in Mauritania is around 200,000, representing about 4.5% of the total population.

Regarding their distribution, the following data stands out:

- Foreigners of various nationalities, potentially exceeding 140,000 people. (In June 2019, it was estimated that there were 83,930 sub-Saharan people in Nouakchott, 85% from Senegal, Mali or Guinea)¹⁰²
- 70.720 registered Malian refugees in the Bassikonou region (of which 69,368 were in the M'bera camp and 1,352 outside the camp), with 59% of the people under 18 years of age¹⁰³, siendo el 59% de las personas tendrían menos de 18 años. Around 54% of the people registered in M'bera are women¹⁰⁴.
- 10.832 refugees or asylum seekers of other nationalities in urban areas (77% in Nouakchott, 23% in Nouadhibou). The 7,450 refugees are mainly from Mali, Central African Republic, Syria, Ivory Coast, Palestine and Senegal. The 3,3,652 asylum seekers are from Mali, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Guinea¹⁰⁵. The number of asylum applications and refugees has been increasing in recent years (see graph below and table in annex), mainly due to the large number of Malians who sought protection in their

⁹⁸ There were 42 Mauritanian applicants in 2017, 54 in 2018, 57 in 2019, 42 in 2020 and 171 in 2021.

As for the rate of recognition, in 2019 and 2020 it was around 20%. However, it was 0% in 2021, when the 52 applications studied by the OAR were denied.

See data from the Ministry of the Interior: 2019 statistics yearbook, OAR 'Asilo en Cifras' reports and *Avance mensual de datos de protección internacional acumulados hasta diciembre de 2021* <http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/oficina-de-asilo-y-refugio/datos-e-informacion-estadistica>

Some of the individuals from civil society interviewed for this report indicated that fleeing for reasons that could constitute grounds for asylum (slavery, gender violence, etc.) is not common, as there is a kind of resignation or normalisation regarding certain practices based on a strongly rooted class-ethnicity system. This would explain the low number of Mauritanian applicants for international protection.

⁹⁹ The coastal city of Nouadhibou, has once again become an important departure port in recent years (as it was in 2006), as confirmed by civil society organisations and other experts interviewed.

¹⁰⁰ CEAR, 29/12/2021. "2021, el año más letal en la ruta canaria desde que se conocen datos" <https://www.cear.es/2021-el-ano-mas-letal-en-la-ruta-canaria-desde-que-se-conocen-datos/>

¹⁰¹ WORLD BANK. (database). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicador/SM.POP.NETM?locations=MR>

¹⁰² IOM. (2019). *Nouakchott - Cartographie et profils des migrants* https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/DTM%20Mauritanie_NKC_Rapport1_Final.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=7395

¹⁰³ Data as of end of February 2022. UNHCR. (2022) Mauritania - Situation map as at end of February 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/91249>

¹⁰⁴ Data (as of June 2021) provided by NGOs present in Campo de M'bera.

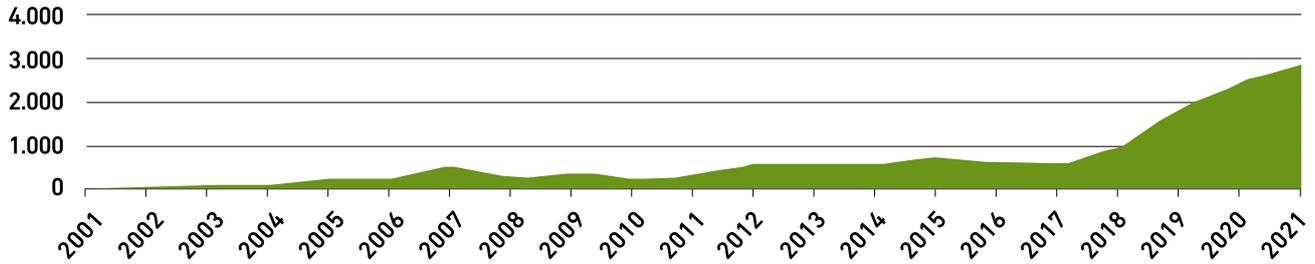
¹⁰⁵ Data as of end of February 2022. UNHCR. (2022) Mauritania . Op cit.

Data on nationalities as of June 2021. Refugee Data Finder

UNHCR. Refugee Data Finder <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=9hdXk8>

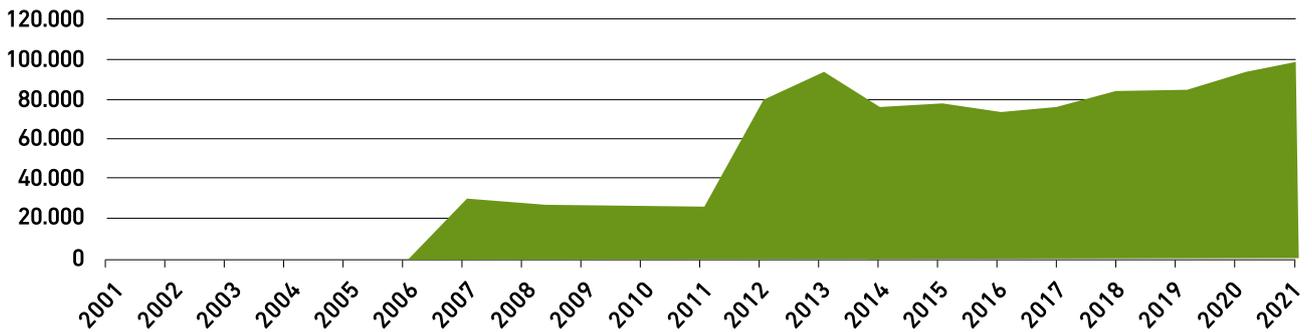
neighbouring country after the outbreak of the war in Mali in 2012. The total number of refugees in Mauritania in mid-2021 was 99,057 people, with 2,768 asylum applications pending resolution¹⁰⁶.

GRAPH 1. ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN MAURITANIA



Own creation based on UNHCR data (Refugee Data Finder)

GRAPH 2. REFUGEES IN MAURITANIA



Own creation based on UNHCR data (Refugee Data Finder)

5.1.1. Legal framework for migration and asylum

Decree 022/2005¹⁰⁷ is the legal instrument that includes the definition of refugee and establishes the modalities of access to asylum, in addition to certain socio-economic rights, as there is no existing asylum law in Mauritania¹⁰⁸. The UNHCR registers asylum applications¹⁰⁹ and determines de facto whether or not refugee status is granted¹¹⁰. The Mauritanian Government facilitates the documentation of Malian refugees through a decree.

According to the international organisations and institutions interviewed, remarkable progress has been made in migration and asylum legislation. However, the real and suitable application of these laws is a challenge to be addressed. Other issues to be emphasised include the need to update regulations (such as those related to the residence and entry of foreigners) and create new ones for the protection of

¹⁰⁶ UNHCR. Refugee Data Finder <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=zvBs4F>. De ellas 1289 de malienses.

¹⁰⁷ It defines how the Geneva Convention and its protocols and the OAU Refugee Convention are applied. See: *Décret No. 2005-022 du 2005 fixant les modalités d'application en République Islamique de Mauritanie des Convention internationales relatives aux réfugiés*. <https://www.refworld.org/country,LEGAL,,DECREES,MRT,492530d02,0.html>

¹⁰⁸ Which the National Human Rights Commission of Mauritania itself highlights as a deficit in terms of rights for the protection of migrations and migrants. CNDH. (2020). Op. cit.

¹⁰⁹ Asylum seekers have the right to be documented, to not be returned (non-refoulement), freedom of movement in the territory, access to civil, social and health services. Those who hold refugee status also have access to the labour market, in addition to being eligible for certain refugee care services. Information was obtained through an interview with UNHCR Mauritania.

¹¹⁰ UNHCR. (2020). SYNTHÈSE PAYS DU CADRE DE REVUE DES POLITIQUES RELATIVES AUX REFUGIES (RPRF) – Situation de référence au 30 juin 2020

migrants (such as on the maintenance of nationality of migrants in the diaspora), as well as to continue simplifying the complex Mauritanian bureaucratic system.

Table 6. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN MAURITANIA

International instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV Geneva Convention Relative To The Protection Of Civilian Persons In Time Of War Of 12 August 1949 and its protocols of 1977. • Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its protocol. (It is not part of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. • OAU¹¹¹ Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969. • International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families of 1990¹¹² • Kampala Convention¹¹³ (African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa) of 2009 with entry into force in December 2012, 'for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in Africa' as a response to the problem of internal displacement on this continent. It includes public and private actors as drivers of displacement.
National legislation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree on the Immigration Regime 15-12-1964 (modified in 1965). • Law No. 65-046 of 23-02-1965 on criminal decisions related to the immigration regime. • Collective agreement of 1974 that applies to migrant workers and their family members. • Law 2004-017 of 06-07-2004 on the labour code that protects migrant workers. • Decree 022/2005 of 2005 establishing the modalities of application in the IR of Mauritania of the international conventions related to refugees. • Decree no. 0782 on the establishment of the Identification Card for Malian refugees in M'Berra (Moughataa de Bas-sikounou, Wilaya du Hodh Charghi), 29 October 2018¹¹⁴ • Decree No. 2009-224 of 29-10-2009 that establishes a work permit for foreign workers • Law relating to the entry and residence of foreigners in Mauritania (Decree 65,100 of 1965)¹¹⁵ • Law 2010-021 of 10-02-2010 on the smuggling of migrants • Law 031-2015 of 09-15-2015 penalising slavery and slavery practices • Law against human trafficking and Reform of the Law against migrant smuggling (of 7 July 2020)¹¹⁶

111 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its Sixth Ordinary Session, Addis-Ababa, 10 September 1969 <https://www.unhcr.org/about-us/background/45dc1a682/oau-convention-governing-specific-aspects-refugee-problems-africa-adopted.html>

112 UN. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families Adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/158 of 18 December 1990 <https://www.ohchr.org/sp/professionalinterest/pages/cmwa.aspx>

113 AU. African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). Mauritania signed it in 2013 and ratified it in 2015. <https://www.acnur.org/5c7408004.pdf>

114 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/60a501d74.html>

115 'The legislation on foreigners dates back to 1965 and is currently obsolete and poorly adapted to the current context of migration and the evolution of international standards ratified by Mauritania'. This is reflected in the action sheet of an EUTF project developed by the FIAPP https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/dec_t05-eutf-sah-mr-09.pdf The organisations interviewed also highlighted the need to update these laws.

116 IOM. 07/17/2020. News. Emblematic Reform of laws against human trafficking and migrant smuggling. <https://www.iom.int/es/news/mauritania-reforma-emblematica-de-leyes-contrala-trata-de-personas-y-el-trafico-de-migrantes> The Reform aimed to align the national anti-trafficking legislation adopted by Mauritania in 2003 with the UN Palermo Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, which the country ratified in 2005.

5.1.2. Assistance and support for migrants and refugees

Regarding care for refugees and international protection applicants, several of the organisations interviewed highlight the lack of means to address all the current needs in the M'bera camp. They also show their concern about the lack of financial support.

Several people interviewed from civil society organisations in Mauritania express the need for long-term planning for the care and inclusion of refugees and their regularisation. They point out that it must be possible to provide them with a future, because after 10 years in the country, 'there are and will be many who are going to stay in Mauritania'¹¹⁷.

According to the organisations present there, the tension between the refugees and the native inhabitants of the populations surrounding the camp¹¹⁸ has been dwindling thanks to improved access. Still, it is another example of the long-term vision that is missing.

The Mauritanian CNDH¹¹⁹, admits that 'although public authorities have developed structures and signed agreements and pacts with certain neighbouring countries and the EU to manage migration flows better and protect the rights of migrants'¹²⁰ there are barriers to the protection of these people, such as the expensive cost of the residence card -which prevents certain migrant families from regularising their situation-, the difficulties minors from migrant communities face in going to school and the poor involvement of migrant community associations in decision-making that affects them¹²¹.

Regarding its relations on this matter with Spain and the EU, the CNDH expressly mentions the two agreements between Spain and Mauritania on the regularisation and management of migration flows and the agreement between Mauritania and the EU as part of the migration management support project¹²², in addition to past projects such as the creation of a migrant reception centre in Nouadhibou (with funding from Spanish cooperation) that was colloquially called 'Guantanamo'.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Interview with a civil society representative in Mauritania.

This person stressed that it is essential to go beyond emergency situations and integrate a process that includes the development of people after crisis situations.

¹¹⁸ EL PAÍS. 21/06/2021. *El retorno imposible de los refugiados del Sahel*. <https://elpais.com/internacional/2021-06-21/el-retorno-imposible-de-los-refugiados-del-sahel.html>

¹¹⁹ The CNDH is the NHRI (National Human Rights Institution, equivalent to the figure of the Ombudsman) created in Mauritania in 2006 following the Paris principles and with the assistance of the AECID. For more information see: <https://bit.ly/3vKIEOg>

¹²⁰ Providing examples such as the development of a multi-stakeholder institutional instrument on migration issues; agreements on the free movement of persons with West African countries such as Gambia, Guinea, Senegal and with the Arab Maghreb States; the development and adoption of the national multi-stakeholder migration management strategy. Mauritania CNDH. (2020). Op. cit.

¹²¹ The CNDH adds that the public powers, however, 'have carried out a series of actions to take into account the difficulties encountered by migrants, in terms of access to education, health, professional training, employment and the socio/economic integration of immigrants. [Own translation] Mauritania CNDH. (2020:105). Op. Cit.

¹²² Mauritania CNDH. (2020:103)

¹²³ In 2006, the Spanish Army transformed an old school (*École Six de Nouadhibou*) into the Nouadhibou Detention Centre, colloquially called 'Guantanamo', with funding from the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (AECID). CEAR-Euskadi. Dictionary. 'Centro de Detención de Nouadhibou' <https://diccionario.cear-euskadi.org/centro-de-detencion-de-nouadhibou-mauritania/>

Detention centres in Mauritania

There have been at least three detention centres for migrants in Mauritania, according to the Global Detention Project¹²⁴:

- Two common police/gendarmerie units (for non-exclusive use by migrants): the Baghdad Police Station (Nouakchott) and the Regional Directorate of Security (DRS) in Nouadhibou¹²⁵.
- The Nouadhibou Detention Centre¹²⁶, an ad hoc centre built in 2008 and permanently closed in 2012.

Regarding the care given to migrants, civil society organisations inform us that, currently, they are sent to detention centres. NGOs are not allowed access to assist them or carry out any intervention before their expulsion¹²⁷.

5.2. Mauritania, a country of returns

Since 2019, Mauritania has been the leading country to receive deportation flights from Spain¹²⁸. This is one of the pillars of the good relations between Spain and Mauritania.

These flights are based on the Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on Immigration (2003)¹²⁹; article 9 includes the repatriation of nationals from third countries through Mauritania 'provided that it is presumed that the national of a third State has transited through the territory of the requested Contracting Party'.

In 2019, the Ombudsman began to supervise repatriation flights¹³⁰. According to a report by the Ombudsman, in accordance with the aforementioned Agreement, nationals from Mali, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Gambia and Ivory Coast were repatriated to Mauritania from Spain. On these supervised flights, 'none of the return resolutions that justified these repatriations indicated that the place of origin of the boats on which the repatriated people arrived was Mauritania or that they had transited through it'. The report states that there was no reference to the aforementioned agreement, which is why the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture expressed concern about 'conditions of respect for fundamental rights in Mauritania and the situation of those countries from which the returnees are nationals and to whose authorities Mauritania allegedly hands them over'. At the same time, the case of Malian nationals stood out, as some came from areas declared by the UNHCR as at risk. In this sense, the report concludes that 'Spain may be violating the principle of non-refoulement established

124 Global Detention Project (web) Mauritania. Detention Centers. <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/africa/mauritania#detention-centres>

125 They were temporarily closed during the COVID pandemic, and there is currently no data available on when they would have been put back into operation. We do know through interviews that arrests continued to take place in 2021, although we could not confirm whether they were in those two centres.

126 Known as 'Guantanamo'. In 2008, after a report by Amnesty International denouncing that up to 300 people were detained every month without following any legal process, CEAR visited the Centre to evaluate the situation, verifying that people were detained without formal procedures, without administrative resolutions or the possibility of filing appeals before the administrative or legal authorities or receiving the assistance of a lawyer or interpreters. CEAR. (2008) *Informe de evaluación del centro de detención de migrantes en Nouadhibou (Mauritania)*. <https://boletinderechoshumanos.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/informe-cear-nouadhibou-2009.pdf> and CEAR-Euskadi. Dictionary. 'Centro de Detención de Nouadhibou'. Op. cit.

According to Akkerman (2021:29), the centre was closed in 2012, and a police station in Nouakchott was later used to detain migrants attempting to reach Europe from West Africa. AKKERMAN, M. (2021) *Externalizar la Opresión*. TNI <https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/externalizar-la-opresion-tni.pdf>

127 Information obtained through interviews with civil society organizations.

128 AIDA (2020). Op. cit. pg. 28

129 Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on immigration, drawn up in Madrid on 1 July 2003. The Spain-Mauritania readmission agreement is public, unlike that of other countries. You can access it at: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2003/08/04/pdfs/A30050-30053.pdf>

130 According to the information provided by the General Commission on Immigration and Borders (CGEF) in the Annual Report of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, in 2019, 669 people were repatriated, in 19 joint operations with FRONTEX; six of the 19 operations went to Mauritania, totalling 146 people. OMBUDSMAN. (2020). 2019 Annual Report National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture. https://www.defensordelpueblo.es/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Informe_2019_MNP-1.pdf

in international treaties and the FRONTEX Regulation by returning citizens, even indirectly, to places that imply a risk to their safety'¹³¹. In 2020, according to a subsequent report by the Ombudsman,¹³² no progress had been made and deportations continued¹³³ (see the table on Spain-Mauritania deportation flights in 2020 in Annex III).

5.3. Conditionality in migration

The direct correlation or conditionality of the provision of Spanish aid in the form of ODA for border control in Mauritania cannot be established beyond the possibility of relating relevant events (such as the so-called *Cayucos* crisis) with a significant increase in disbursements. The general purpose of the aid falls in line with what might be called the genuine objectives of development cooperation. However, some indicators lead us to believe that what occurs in some cases is a conditional relationship. On the one hand, the sum fluctuates depending on the migration context. On the other hand, the reasons for considering it a priority country in Spanish foreign action plans due to its importance in terms of migration.

Mauritania is a vast but sparsely populated country which, as the Spanish authorities relayed, in the area of cooperation, needs third countries in its productive structure (presenting great potential for ODA). In addition to economic and technical support, Mauritania needs workforce to cover jobs that nationals won't do. Therefore, the reception of migrants—mainly seasonal migrants—has always been a constituent part of its economy and society. Added to this is the context of freedom of movement due to reasons both socio-historical (as its border is highly artificial¹³⁴) and geopolitical (having been part of the Economic Community of West African States: ECOWAS¹³⁵, which allows regular movement between its member countries).

Thus, Mauritania's socio-political position on migration is determined by the fact that it is not a country of origin but rather a country of destination (especially for temporary/seasonal migration) and transit for migrants. This means that there is no public opposition to the presence of migrants, and there is no social unrest arising from a mobility control policy as it does not affect Mauritanian nationals¹³⁶. As a result, cooperation on migration between Mauritania and the EU and Spain, in which collaboration on police surveillance and control stands out, is not only publicly recognised but is also constantly

131 OMBUDSMAN. (2020). 2019 Annual Report National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture. Op. cit. Pgs. 206 and 207

132 OMBUDSMAN. (2021). *Informe anual Mecanismo Nacional de Prevención* https://www.defensordelpueblo.es/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Informe_2020_MNP.pdf

133 In 2020, the Mauritanian authorities placed an informal moratorium on arrest warrants due to the COVID-19 crisis (the police forces in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou reported that they did not detain immigrants) and deportations from Mauritania were stopped, along with deportation flights from Spain. See: Global Detention Project. (2020). Covid-10 Updates. <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/africa/mauritania# covid-19-updates> and El País. 19/03/2020. *Las restricciones por el coronavirus paralizan las expulsiones de inmigrantes*. <https://elpais.com/espana/2020-03-19/las-restricciones-por-el-coronavirus-paralizan-las-expulsiones-de-inmigrantes.html>

As of November 2020, there is no evidence of any other deportation flight from the Canary Islands. This does not mean that small-scale deportations on regular commercial flights were not carried out, as several of our interviewees indicated.

134 Resulting from the membership and subsequent independence of the French colony of 'West Africa' made up of Mauritania, Senegal, French Sudan (now Mali), Guinea, Ivory Coast, Niger, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) and Dahomey (now Benin).

In 1960, Mauritania gained its independence (unrecognised by Morocco until 1969 for territorial reasons).

Thus, as confirmed by civil society organisations in Mauritania, the borders are permeable and, although there are border posts, they are rarely crossed. Similarly, the presence of migrants is visible and accepted and, in some way, incorporated into the established class-ethnicity system occupying positions not covered by nationals.

135 ECOWAS aims to establish an economic union in West Africa to improve the living conditions of the population and economic stability, in addition to promoting relations between member states and contributing to the progress and development of the continent. (The exemption of entry visas for citizens from member countries is worth noting). Although its objectives were initially limited to economic cooperation, the areas of cooperation were reviewed and expanded to include the maintenance of security, peace and stability through good neighbourliness. To learn more see: <https://www.ecowas.int/> and <https://bit.ly/3sCZUTA>.

Mauritania was a member from its foundation in 1975 until 2000, when it withdrew. However, Mauritania continued to respect the agreements signed by the countries of this regional subgroup on freedom of movement and in 2017 signed an agreement to become an associate member.

AFRICA NEWS. 08/05/2017. Mauritania Signs Partnership Agreement with ECOWAS. <https://www.africanews.com/2017/05/08/mauritania-signs-partnership-agreement-with-ecowas/>

136 Internally, this represents no political expense or credibility problems for Mauritania and serves as a cover letter for being a 'good partner'.

mentioned by both partners as milestones in their foreign policy relations¹³⁷. As a result, cooperation on migration between Mauritania and the EU and Spain, in which collaboration on police surveillance and control stands out, is not only publicly recognised but is also constantly mentioned by both partners as milestones in their foreign policy relations¹³⁸.

Civil society organisations and experts in Mauritania interviewed for this project have no doubts that development cooperation (both European and Spanish) is conditioned by the management of migration flows. They sometimes reproached the prioritisation of border security when there is no security in the country itself.

137 In 2008, police and civil guards arrived to work on a team with their Mauritanian counterparts. In 2020, the national police were still present in Mauritania, with an international police cooperation team comprising six police officers from each party and, according to the MMC, in November 2020, 28 Civil Guards stationed in Mauritania, supported by the aforementioned technical means. According to a key informant interviewed by the aforementioned organisation, the Spanish Civil Guard assists in patrolling the coast: if their helicopter or ships locate a migrant boat, they notify the Mauritanian Coast Guard, who then intercepts it.

EL PAÍS. 16/09/2015 *Así se detuvo el éxodo de migrantes en cayucos desde África occidental*. https://elpais.com/internacional/2015/09/15/actualidad/1442308752_629804.html

MIXED MIGRATION CENTER (2021). Research Report. A Gateway Re-opens: the growing popularity of the Atlantic route, as told by those who risk it <https://bit.ly/3HB9Cdv>

The Civil Guard operates 'two patrol boats, a BO-105 helicopter and periodically an ocean-going vessel; as well as, occasionally, a CN-235 maritime patrol plane to support maritime surveillance in coordination with the Mauritanian Coast Guard'. MAEC-MAUC. Mauritania country file (2021). Op. cit.

138 On the one hand, cooperation on returns is considered a model by Spanish institutions, despite the fact that, as we have seen, Spain is using readmissions in contravention of international law, as the Spanish Ombudsman has already denounced. Likewise, the Spanish Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior congratulate themselves regarding cooperation with Mauritania in the "fight against illegal immigration (sic) through bilateral Cooperation Agreements between the two Ministries of the Interior", and which has allowed joint National Police and Civil Guard teams to be set up in Nouadhibou with the Mauritanian Police and Gendarmerie.

EL PAÍS. 29/04/2016. "Somos un modelo de referencia para Europa en política migratoria" https://elpais.com/politica/2016/04/29/actualidad/1461939788_786313.html and MAEC (2021). Op.cit.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- Historically speaking, Mauritania is a priority country for development cooperation for Spain and the European Union and has gained importance in recent years thanks to its collaboration and relevance in issues of migration. As for the EU, the EUTF has played a vital role in funding many national and regional projects directly linked to migration and border control.

As far as Spanish ODA is concerned, most of the cooperation is mainly focused on the population's needs. However, there is an amount of ODA funds from the Ministry of the Interior earmarked for police cooperation activities, which could include migration control aspects, does stand out. This ministry has allocated the most ODA funds to Mauritania in several years.

On the other hand, the FIIAPP executes projects related to border control and outsourcing as part of the cooperation delegated by the EU.

- The correlation or conditionality of the provision of aid in the form of Spanish ODA to border control in Mauritania cannot be established directly. In any case, it is important to bear in mind that conditionality may not be easily visible and may not only be related to monetary items for development cooperation but to other aspects such as investments, geostrategic alignments or diplomatic relations.
- Throughout this project, we experienced difficulties obtaining specific information on cooperation, ODA budget items disbursed by the Ministry of the Interior, and expulsions, which denotes a lack of transparency in these matters.
- Regarding the future of relations, we must consider variations in migration flows and routes that may occur in the coming years and pay attention to how this impacts the consideration or importance Mauritania receives and its situation as a receiving country of ODA.

ANNEXES:

I. LIST OF REGIONAL PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE EUTF IN MAURITANIA

REGIONAL PROJECTS IN MAURITANIA FUNDED BY THE EUTF			
Name /date approved	Receiving countries	Budget (€)	Organism executing the project
Radio Jeunesse Sahel - Appui européen à la phase de démarrage de la radio 10/2020	Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad	2.050.000	International Organisation of La Francophonie
Contribution au financement du Secrétariat de la Coalition pour le Sahel (SCS) 05/2021	Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad	510.000	Expertise France
Appui à la coopération régionale des pays du G5 Sahel et au Collège Sahélien de Sécurité 10/2016	Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad	7.200.000	Civipol
Support to the strengthening of police information systems in the broader West Africa region 10/2016	Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Benin	8.000.000	Interpol
GAR-SI SAHEL (Groupes d'Action Rapides – Surveillance et Intervention au Sahel) 01/2016	Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad and Senegal	66.600.000	FIAPP
Renforcement de la résilience et de la capacité d'autonomisation des réfugiés, des rapatriés et des personnes déplacées internes liés au conflit du Nord Mali. 25/05/2017	Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania	20.000.000	UNHCR
La voix des jeunes du Sahel. 04/2017	Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad	2.200.200	Centre pour le dialogue humanitaire - HD
Erasmus+ in West Africa 12/2017	Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Mauritania, Senegal, Chad, Ghana, Cameroon	10.000.000	-
Soutenir les entrepreneurs et les très petites et moyennes entreprises (TPME) en Afrique de l'Ouest (en appui à l'initiative IPDEV-2). 12/2017	Burkina Faso, Costa de Marfil, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Senegal, Cameroon, Ghana	15.800.000	Investors and partners
ARCHIPELAGO: an African-European TVET initiative 05/2018	Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania and Mali.	15.000.000	CPCCAF; EUROCHAMBRES; SEQUA gGmbH
Protection and sustainable solutions for migrants and refugees along the Central Mediterranean route 12/2017	Burkina Faso, Senegal, Chad, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria	115.000 000 Co-funded UNHCR 8 500 000 €	IOM and UNHCR
Monitoring and Learning System for the EUTF Sahel and Lake Chad (s/f)	Burkina Faso, Chad, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Niger	5.000.000	Altai Consult.
Programme d'urgence pour la stabilisation des espaces frontaliers du G5 Sahel (PDU) 11/2018	Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad	144.479.592	GIZ; Lux.Dev; Centre pour le dialogue humanitaire - HD; AFD
Programme d'Appui au G5 pour la Sécurité au Sahel (PAGS) Phase II 04/2019	Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger	10.000.000	Civipol
Contribution au financement de l'Unité de Coordination de l'Alliance (UCA) Sahel 04/2019	Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger and Mali	2 000 000 Co-funded German Coop. Min: 2 000 000	GIZ
Appui aux forces de sécurité des pays membres du G5 Sahel pour la lutte contre l'impunité et le renforcement de leurs liens avec les populations 07/2019	Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad	20.000.000	Danish Institute for Human Rights; ACNUDH-OHCHR

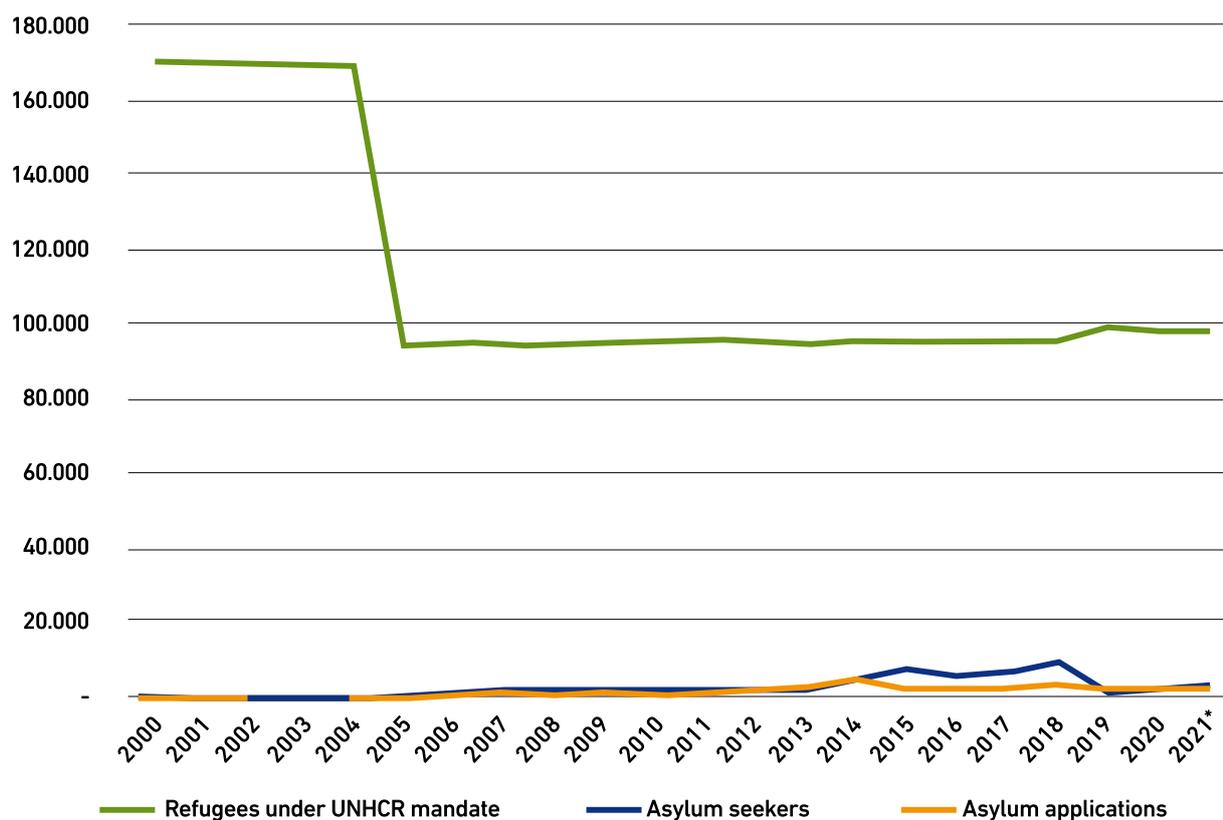
Source: Own creation based on the information from the EUTF website as of 28/10/2021¹³⁹

¹³⁹ EUROPEAN COMMISSION (website). EUTF https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/mauritanie_en

II. NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN MAURITANIA

Year	Refugees under UNHCR mandate	Asylum seekers	Asylum applications	Year	Refugees under UNHCR mandate	Asylum seekers	Asylum applications
2001	363	27	46	2012	80.500	796	603
2002	398	15	54	2013	92.767	839	660
2003	475	50	127	2014	75.629	417	604
2004	473	110	128	2015	77.390	492	771
2005	627	92	279	2016	74.147	573	653
2006	771	92	307	2017	77.425	746	612
2007	30.465	18	574	2018	83.184	1.126	1.029
2008	27.036	53	312	2019	84.901	1.540	1.868
2009	26.789	112	396	2020	93.609	1.960	2.493
2010	26.709	237	273	2021	99.057	2.768	2.910
2011	26.535	269	368	Own creation based on the UNHCR database *(The data for 2021 is only until the middle of the year ¹⁴⁰)			

Nr of refugees, asylum seekers and asylum applications per year

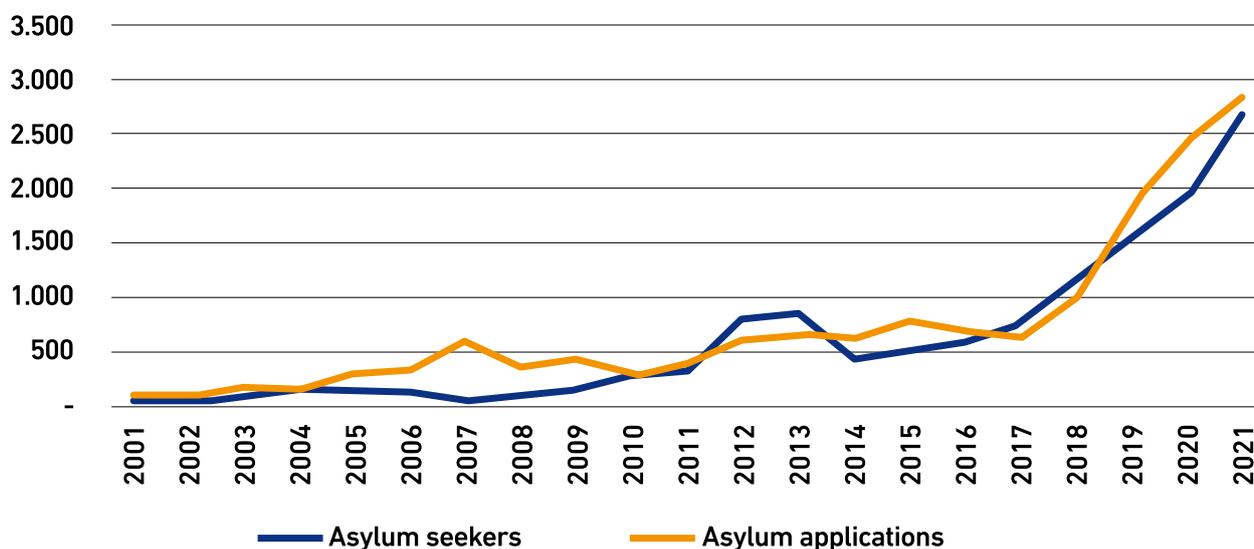


Own creation based on the UNHCR database. *(The data for 2021 is only until the middle of the year)¹⁴¹

140 UNHCR (database). Refugee Statistics. <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=yi5pE3>

141 Ibid.

Nr. of asylum seekers and asylum applications per year



Own creation based on the UNHCR database. *(The data for 2021 is only until the middle of the year)¹⁴²

III. SPAIN-MAURITANIA DEPORTATION FLIGHTS 2020

Spain-Mauritania deportation flights 2020 Date and origin of the deportees	
20/01/2020	47 men: 35 Malians ¹⁴³ , 4 Senegalese, 7 Mauritanians and 1 Ivorian.
27/01/2020	42 men: 38 Malians, 3 Senegalese, 1 Mauritanian.
17/02/2020	51 men: 36 Malians, 13 from Senegalese, 1 Ivorian, 1 Gabonese.
02/03/2020	23 people: 22 Malians and 1 Senegalese.
11/2020	22 people: 20 Senegalese, 1 Guinean and 1 Mauritanian.
Own creation based on information from the Mechanism against Torture of the Ombudsman ¹⁴⁴ and the press ¹⁴⁵	

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ EL DIARIO. 31/01/2020. *Devoluciones exprés de Canarias a Mauritania: Interior ha expulsado a malienses que declararon su intención de pedir asilo* https://www.eldiario.es/canariasahora/365-dias-de-migraciones/volver-expulsiones-irregulares-solicitantes-interior_132_1003403.html

¹⁴⁴ Ibid and follow-up visit file DP 07/2020 <https://www.defensordelpueblo.es/gestionDocumentalWS/rest/matrizSeguimientoMNP/20002337>

¹⁴⁵ EL PAÍS. 07/02/2020 *Uno de los deportados por España a Mauritania: "Después de tres días in comer, nos abandonaron en Mali"* https://elpais.com/politica/2020/02/06/actualidad/1581003885_273856.html LA VANGUARDIA. 02/03/2020 *Mauritania deporta a Mali a 23 inmigrantes expulsados en vuelo desde Canarias* <https://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20200302/473926009912/mauritania-deporta-a-mali-a-23-inmigrantes-expulsados-en-vuelo-desde-canarias.html>

EL PAÍS, 10/11/2020 *Interior expulsa a Mauritania a 22 inmigrantes llegados a Canarias*, <https://cutt.ly/BhYvHtn>

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