BORDER EXTERNALIZATION AND MIGRATION CONTROL IN MAURITANIA: RISKS FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
This report was drawn up by the Advocacy Area of the Spanish Commission for Refugees (CEAR) as part of the project ‘Observatory on the right to asylum, migrations and borders’, funded by the Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional y Desarrollo (AEXCID).

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:
Year and place of publication: 2022, Mérida.

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 issues.

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 Sahel. Mauritania is a critical partner for controlling migration flows to Spain and Europe.

As of 2006, following the so-called ‘Cayuco crisis’ 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 area 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 million comprising a white Moor minority known as Beydane (literally, ‘the whites’).
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 rest. Its national languages are Arabic, Pulaar, Soninke, and Wolof, with Arabic being the official language.

In 1960, Mauritania gained independence from France 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), currently remains in power.

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 Senegal. Years later, under the mandate of President Abdelaziz, the two countries have made efforts to improve their strategic relations through reparation measures that continue to be insufficient in the eyes of some actors. Currently, Mauritania is a country of destination mainly for regional and seasonal migration, as well as more than 60,000 Malians 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 Guerguerat, 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 Spain based on an agreement between the two countries that permits the deportation of Mauritanian nationals and third-country nationals who have transited through the country.

6 There is no recent statistical, demographic data on its composition given the controversy arising from the new census record. See: JEUANE AFRIQUE. 01/10/2011 Recensement : ce qui met les Noirs de Mauritanie en colère. https://www.jeuneafrique.com/153489/policy/recensement-ce-qui-met-les-noirs-de-mauritanie-en-col-re/
7 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 Mauritanians 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’ (Arabicised haratine-black), 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.exteriore.gob.es/documentos/fichaspaas/mauritania_ficha%20paas.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).
10 Mohamed Ould El-Ghazouani has been the president of Mauritania since 2019.
11 Approximately 75,000 Mauritians were recognised prima facie in 1989 as refugees 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.upves/contenidos/ORI/info/00720091.pdf
15 On 21 October 2020, the passage of people and merchandise from Guerguerat, in the territory of Western Sahara, was blocked by Sahrawi 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 ejercito de Marruecos y el Frente Polisario intercambian disparos en el sur del Sáhara Occidental https://elpais.com/internacional/2020/11/13/el-ejercito-marrueco-entra-en-el-sur-del-sahara-para-romper-el-bloqueo-del-frente-polisario.html
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 imported. Europe is an essential trading partner for Mauritania. 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.

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). Security, migration, economic growth/job creation and gender equality are among the current priorities in Mauritania. 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.

Mauritania participates in Euro-Mediterranean forums such as the 5+5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean (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), Mauritania is not included in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) of the EU. Still, it forms part of the ACP Group of States (Africa,
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). 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 Mauritania to support the country in trade and development. These programmes are considered development aid as it is understood that, by improving economic relations, trade agreements 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). As of September 2021, Mauritania benefits from nine national projects (see Table 1) worth over €80 million and 16 regional projects (see Annex I). 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.
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.
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.
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 agreements are accompanied by financial measures channelled through the European Development Fund (EDF) to mitigate the impact of the structural adjustment of the countries.
34许存义, 范波, “EPA”与欧盟的经济政策构想与实施”, 《世界经济》2010年第10期,第116-123页.
38 The EDF foresees the creation of a ‘Competitiveness Observatory’ for the tool, but it is still pending despite having been allocated funds by the 11th EDF.
42 As of September 2021, Mauritania benefits from nine national projects (see Table 1) worth over €80 million and 16 regional projects (see Annex I).
44 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 Release. Questions and Answers on the new EU/Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Partnership Agreement. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/qanda_21_1553
## TABLE 1. NATIONAL PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE EUTF (2015–2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>EUTF contribution (in €)</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partenariat Opérationnel Conjoint pour la Mauritanie (POC Mauritanie)</td>
<td>4,550,000</td>
<td>FILAPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projet PECOBAT : Amélioration de l’employabilité des jeunes et des capacités des PME par le développement du sous-secteur du BTP</td>
<td>3,200,000</td>
<td>ILO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renforcement des capacités pour une meilleure gestion de la migration afin de protéger l’enfance migrante contre l’exploitation et la traite</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>Save The Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>8,000,000</td>
<td>IOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROMOPÊCHE : Création d’emplois décents et consolidation de l’emploi existant pour les jeunes et potentiels migrants dans le secteur de la pêche artisanale</td>
<td>14,000,000</td>
<td>ILO and GIZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>AECID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Résilience pour la cohésion sociale et culturelle en République Islamique de Mauritanie</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>Expertise France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme de renforcement de la résilience des communautés urbaines et rurales vulnérables en Mauritanie</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>Direct management, grants to NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’UE pour le nexus sécurité-résilience-développement en Mauritanie</td>
<td>25,000,000</td>
<td>Mauritanian Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own creation based on information from the EUTF website 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 aid, 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 Mauritania stand out, as they establish an annual financial compensation in exchange for access to Mauritanian waters.
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 Interior.

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

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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-de-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.


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/GHUBAp6ztgsp/content/id/977082]

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]


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]

Table 2. MAIN AGREEMENTS BETWEEN SPAIN AND MAURITANIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Agreement Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2003</td>
<td>Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on migration (includes readmission)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2006</td>
<td>Joint patrol agreement. National Police, Civil Guard and Gendarmerie Surveillance in Nouadhibou, Mauritania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Agreement on legal assistance in criminal matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Agreement on the assistance of detained persons and the transfer of sentenced persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Extradition Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Agreement on legal assistance in civil and trade matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 July 2007</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>MoU for migration control (surveillance and effective return)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>MoU on the creation of mixed police cooperation teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>Treaty of friendship, good neighbourliness, and cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>Agreement on reciprocal investment promotion and protection (APPRI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2009</td>
<td>Joint air patrol agreement, GC-Mauritanian Fisheries Delegation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2011</td>
<td>Bilateral agreement for the transfer by the Air Force of a C212/200 aircraft equipped with maritime exploration radar and night vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2011</td>
<td>Bilateral Agreement on reciprocal suspension of visas in diplomatic passports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td>MoU Cooperation on Agriculture, Rural Development and Livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>Declaration of intent regarding the development of actions in matters of internal security and institutional strengthening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>Joint maritime and land patrol agreement: GC and Gendarmerie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2015</td>
<td>Security cooperation agreement (includes the fight against irregular immigration and human trafficking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2015</td>
<td>MoU on political consultations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2016, Madrid</td>
<td>1st Political consultation meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2017, Nouakchott</td>
<td>2nd Political consultation meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 March 2019, Madrid</td>
<td>New round of bilateral consultations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Own creation based on MAEC-MAUC (2020) and CEAR (2021) documents

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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’.


47 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.


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 region\(^5\). It focuses mainly on migration control, along with trade and economic interests.

The First Africa Plan (2006-2008)\(^5\) 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’\(^5\), 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’\(^5\).

The Second Africa Plan\(^5\) (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’\(^5\). 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 Compact\(^5\).

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50 According to Olivié 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.


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

53 Ibid. Pg 52


The third plan has also been criticised for lacking specificity. Its action programme, Focus Africa 2023-2026, 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 one of the priority countries for development cooperation, 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 Mauritania 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 Institute, ‘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’.

### 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 country.

Development cooperation activities with Mauritania date back to 1995 when the Technical Cooperation Office was officially created. In June 2014, the Country Partnership Framework 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 interest. However, despite this high level of prioritisation, Mauritania has never received more than 1.25% of the total global aid disbursed by Spain.

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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 IIIPA 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 IIIPA, MAEC-MAUC. (2021) Foco África. http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/ElMinisterioInforma/Documents/ESPF2023/ESPF2023_AFRICA%20REGIONES.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.


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.


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority of Mauritania in each master plan</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Net aid disbursed (bilateral only) €</th>
<th>Net aid disbursed (bilateral and multi-bilateral) €</th>
<th>Gross aid disbursed (bilateral, multi-bilateral and multilateral) €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Master Plan: PROGRAME Country⁶⁵</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>19,547,939</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>15,642,202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>9,238,706</td>
<td>9,654,450</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Master Plan: PRIORITY Country⁶⁶</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>11,399,550</td>
<td>12,661,550</td>
<td>13,040,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>9,242,454</td>
<td>11,862,894</td>
<td>11,862,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>17,222,923</td>
<td>28,558,826</td>
<td>28,710,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>16,654,403</td>
<td>23,653,287</td>
<td>23,653,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>25,242,863</td>
<td>26,189,085</td>
<td>26,224,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>25,006,250</td>
<td>25,271,903</td>
<td>26,061,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6,883,231</td>
<td>7,048,231</td>
<td>7,048,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Master Plan: Partnership country⁶⁸</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>11,175,424</td>
<td>11,175,425</td>
<td>11,984,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5,867,822</td>
<td>6,165,823</td>
<td>6,233,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>15,725,560</td>
<td>15,725,561</td>
<td>14,525,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2,305,237</td>
<td>2,409,237</td>
<td>4,742,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1,448,409</td>
<td>1,973,409</td>
<td>5,139,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Master Plan: Partnership country⁶⁹</td>
<td>2018⁷⁰</td>
<td>3,492,810</td>
<td>3,892,810</td>
<td>7,076,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019⁷¹</td>
<td>6,194,550</td>
<td>6,194,550</td>
<td>6,194,550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.realidadayuda.org/analizar-la-ayuda/concentracion-de-la-ayuda](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),

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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 organisations\(^7\) (multibilateral aid).\(^8\)

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 sharply\(^9\).

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 2015\(^\)\(^1\)\(^0\).

In this regard, it should be noted that, according to data on the info@od application\(^1\)\(^1\), 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 details\(^\)\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^\). 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 control\(^\)\(^1\)\(^3\).

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 2011\(^1\)\(^4\). From 2011 to 2019, however, the amount allocated by this ministry dropped,

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\(^7\) Intergovernmental organisations (MDOs) to which donor countries make contributions to execute development programmes. To learn more about this type of aid, visit: https://www.cooperacionespanola.es/es/canalizacion-de-la-ayuda-oficial-al-desarrollo


\(^9\) Therefore, in the following paragraphs we refer to bilateral and multibilateral aid jointly.


\(^11\) From 2007 to 2011, a total of €135 million was disbursed in multibilateral aid. From 2008 to 2011, it exceeded €20 million, reaching €32 million in 2009.

\(^12\) 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 control.

\(^13\) As of 2012, and especially after 2016, the figures were very low, with the proportion of multibilateral channelling becoming practically non-relevant.

\(^14\) 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.

\(^15\) 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

\(^16\) 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@od. 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.

\(^17\) 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.

\(^18\) 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 21/07/2021 to request 001-060490.
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Funds</th>
<th>Participating organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion of Employment and Improved Living Conditions of Coastal Artisanal Fishermen, Youth and Women in the areas surrounding the Protected Natural Areas of the North Zone of Mauritania (PROMOPECHE)</strong> (2018-2022)</td>
<td>€10,000,000 EUTF - Trust Fund for Africa</td>
<td>AECID, MPEM, ENNAJAH, FNP, IMROP, ISSM, CFQMP, DREN-NDB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Covenant of Mayors for Sub-Saharan Africa Created in 2016 CoM SSA</strong> (2019-2022) [Multi-country]</td>
<td>€27,500,000 EU contribution €25,000,000 (DCI-EU Development Cooperation Instrument)</td>
<td>AECID; AFD; Expertise France; GIZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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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.


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


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Geographic scope</th>
<th>Foreseen start and end date</th>
<th>Sponso</th>
<th>Total budget (€)</th>
<th>Collaborating institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIGRATION AND MOBILITY</td>
<td>Partenariat Opérationnel Conjoint pour la Mauritanie (POC Mauritanie)³⁴</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>01/09/2021 - 31/12/2024</td>
<td>European Commission (EUTF)</td>
<td>4.550.000</td>
<td>FIIAPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MME – Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>01/01/2010 - 30/12/2013</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>3.600.000 €</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surveillance and assistance in migration matters in Mauritania</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>03/10/2006 - 03/04/2007</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>970.181 €</td>
<td>Spanish Red Cross, General Directorate of Police and General Directorate of the Civil Guard, Mauritanian Red Crescent, IOM, among others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project to support the third phase of the ‘Rabat Process’ – Migration</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>01/01/2013 - 29/09/2015</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>2.185.975 €</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECURITY AND FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME³⁵</td>
<td>NETCOP, creation of partnership of common operational networks</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>01/03/2021 - 28/02/2022</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>1.662.532 €</td>
<td>Ministry of the Interior (National Police)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support for maritime security in Mauritania³⁶</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>01/03/2020 - 01/03/2022</td>
<td>European Commission (EUTF)</td>
<td>2.000.000 €</td>
<td>General Directorate of the Merchant Marine and Ministry of the Interior: Civil Guard, National Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GAR-SI SAHEL: Rapid action groups for Monitoring and intervention in the Sahel (GARSI³⁶)</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>28/12/2016 - 28/03/2020</td>
<td>European Commission (EUTF)</td>
<td>41.600.00 €</td>
<td>Ministry of the Interior: Civil Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced Course on Humanitarian Demining for Mauritanian Military</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>17/09/2008 - 24/11/2008</td>
<td>AECID</td>
<td>106.000 €</td>
<td>Spanish Army/Academy of Engineers of Hoyo del Manzanares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk mitigation on the African Atlantic coast: NRBQ 41</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>No consta</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>3.000.000 €</td>
<td>Direction Générale de la Sécurité Civile et de la Gestion de Crise (DGSCGC); INERIS Development SAS and European Institute for Integrated Risk Management EU-Vri (EEIG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CBRN (35) Chemical and Biological Threats Project: Africa</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>01/01/2014 - 31/03/2018</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>3.871.800 €</td>
<td>Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification (AENOR) and State Agency Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CBRN 33 Threats Project: African countries</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>15/09/2013 - 14/02/2017</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>2.700.000 €</td>
<td>Ministry of the Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ICBRN 24) Threats Project: identification of materials and protection of citizens</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>07/01/2013 - 07/07/2015</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>600.000 €</td>
<td>Ministry of the Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fight against terrorism in the Sahel</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>01/11/2011 - 01/12/2015</td>
<td>AECID</td>
<td>6.696.750 €</td>
<td>Not included or provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL POLICIES, FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS</td>
<td>Cultural cooperation: ACERCA I, II and III Programme</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>01/07/2014 - 03/01/2018</td>
<td>AECID</td>
<td>1.208.545 €</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREEN ECONOMY: CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES</td>
<td>Organisation of Artisanal Fisheries in Mediterranean and Atlantic waters</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>01/11/2012 - 31/12/2017</td>
<td>AECID</td>
<td>50.000 €</td>
<td>Instituto Social de la Marina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOVERNANCE AND MODERNIZATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS</td>
<td>MASAR: Democratic Governance in the Arab World</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>01/11/2012 - 31/12/2017</td>
<td>AECID</td>
<td>5.000.000 €</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation - Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Own creation based on the data available (as of 11/24/2021) on the FIIAPP website³⁴ 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 Economy\(^8\), with two financial protocols and a debt conversion programme\(^9\).

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)\(^10\). 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 Mauritanians residing abroad (the majority in neighbouring African countries and only 26% in the EU)\(^11\). According to INE data\(^12\), 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)\(^13\). 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 project not being developed by the FIAPP sponsored by the aforementioned fund (€4,550,000) under the name 'POC Mauritania' FIAPP (website) Projects. https://www.fiiapp.org/resultados-proyectos/ EUROPEAN COMMISSION (web) EUTF. https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/dec_-_t05-eutf-sah-lch-mr-09.pdf
88 Based on our consultation in October 2021, FIAPP 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.
91 GARSI 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 5 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 GARSI) 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.
93 ILEX (website). Bilateral relations (Op. cit.)
94 Article 5 of Law 38/2006, of 7 December, regulating external debt management establishes that ‘Spain will promote the efficient exercise of the Spanish conjoint policy, consistent with the other development cooperation policy activities and with the framework of the international financial system. Debt-in-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.tesorero.es/asuntos-internacionales/gestion-bilateral/
95 As of 2016, 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.
96 UNHCR. (database) Refugee Data Finder https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=V8qacB
100 INE. (website) Database. https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.htm?path=it20/e245/p08/0&file=01005.xlsx&L=0
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 Mauritanian 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 years. 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 available.

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) 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).

- 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 age, siendo el 59% de las personas tendrían menos de 18 años. Around 54% of the people registered in M’bera are women.

- 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 3,3652 asylum seekers are from Mali, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Guinea.

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

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99 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.


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


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 resolution.  

Graph 1. Asylum Applications in Mauritania

Graph 2. Refugees in Mauritania

5.1.1. Legal framework for migration and asylum

Decree 022/2005 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 Mauritania. The UNHCR registers asylum applications and determines de facto whether or not refugee status is granted. 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...
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN MAURITANIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>International instruments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• OAU(^{111}) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families of 1990(^{112})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kampala Convention(^{113}) (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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National legislation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decree on the Immigration Regime 15-12-1964 (modified in 1965).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Law No. 65-046 of 23-02-1965 on criminal decisions related to the immigration regime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collective agreement of 1974 that applies to migrant workers and their family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Law 2004-017 of 07-06-2004 on the labour code that protects migrant workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decree 022/2005 of 2005 establishing the modalities of application in the IR of Mauritania of the international conventions related to refugees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 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 2018(^{114})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decree No. 2009-224 of 29-10-2009 that establishes a work permit for foreign workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Law relating to the entry and residence of foreigners in Mauritania (Decree 65,100 of 1965)(^{115})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Law 2010-021 of 10-02-2010 on the smuggling of migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Law 031-2015 of 09-15-2015 penalising slavery and slavery practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Law against human trafficking and Reform of the Law against migrant smuggling (of 7 July 2020)(^{116})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{114}\) 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 FIIAPP https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/dec__2005-eutf-sah-mr-09.pdf The organisations interviewed also highlighted the need to update these laws.

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 Mˈbera 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 camp has been dwindling thanks to improved access. Still, it is another example of the long-term vision that is missing.

The Mauritanian CNDH,¹¹⁹ 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 them.¹²¹

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 project, 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 ‘Guantanamito’.¹²²

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.
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/3vKIEQg
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]’
¹²² Mauritania CNDH. (2020:103)

In 2006, the Spanish Army transformed an old school (École Six de Nouadhibou) into the Nouadhibou Detention Centre, colloquially called ‘Guantanamito’, 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 Project:
- Two common police/gendarmerie units (for non-exclusive use by migrants): the Baghdad Police Station (Nouakchott) and the Regional Directorate of Security (DRS) in Nouadhibou.
- The Nouadhibou Detention Centre, 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 expulsion.

5.2. Mauritania, a country of returns

Since 2019, Mauritania has been the leading country to receive deportation flights from Spain. 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); 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 flights. 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

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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](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.


127 Information obtained through interviews with civil society organizations.


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](https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2003/08/04/pdfs/A30050-30053.pdf)

in international treaties and the FRONTEX Regulation by returning citizens, even indirectly, to places that imply a risk to their safety\textsuperscript{131}. In 2020, according to a subsequent report by the Ombudsman,\textsuperscript{132} no progress had been made and deportations continued\textsuperscript{133} (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 artificial\textsuperscript{134}) and geopolitical (having been part of the Economic Community of West African States: ECOWAS\textsuperscript{135}, 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 nationals\textsuperscript{136}. 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

\textsuperscript{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-19 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/esp/2020-03-19/la-restricciones-por-el-coronavirus-paralizan-las-expulsiones-de-inmigrantes.html
\textsuperscript{134} 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.
\textsuperscript{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/3cZUZA
\textsuperscript{136} 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/
mentioned by both partners as milestones in their foreign policy relations. 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 relations.

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.

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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


139 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.

140 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.
## I. List of Regional Projects Funded by the EUTF in Mauritania

### Regional Projects in Mauritania Funded by the EUTF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name / date approved</th>
<th>Receiving countries</th>
<th>Budget (€)</th>
<th>Organism executing the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radio Jeunesse Sahel - Appui européen à la phase de démarrage de la radio 10/2020</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad</td>
<td>2.050,000</td>
<td>International Organisation of La Francophonie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution au financement du Secrétariat de la Coalition pour le Sahel (SCS) 05/2021</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad</td>
<td>510,000</td>
<td>Expertise France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appui à la coopération régionale des pays du G5 Sahel et au Collège Sahélien de Sécurité 10/2016</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad</td>
<td>7.200,000</td>
<td>Civipol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support to the strengthening of police information systems in the broader West Africa region 10/2016</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad</td>
<td>8.000,000</td>
<td>Interpol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GAR-SI SAHEL (Groupes d'Action Rapides – Surveillance et Intervention au Sahel) 01/2016</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad and Senegal</td>
<td>66.600,000</td>
<td>FIAPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania</td>
<td>20.000,000</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>La voix des jeunes du Sahel 04/2017</strong></td>
<td>Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger Chad</td>
<td>2.200,200</td>
<td>Centre pour le dialogue humain-HD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erasmus+ in West Africa 12/2017</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Gambia Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Mauritania, Senegal, Chad, Ghana, Cameroon</td>
<td>10.000,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Costa de Marfil, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Senegal, Cameroon, Ghana</td>
<td>15.800,000</td>
<td>Investors and partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ARCHIPELAGO: an African-European TVET initiative 05/2018</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania and Mali.</td>
<td>15.000,000</td>
<td>CPOCAF; EUROCHAMBRES; SEQUA gGmbH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protection and sustainable solutions for migrants and refugees along the Central Mediterranean route 12/2017</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Senegal, Chad, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria</td>
<td>115.000 000 Co-funded UNHCR 8 500 000 €</td>
<td>IOM and UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitoring and Learning System for the EUTF Sahel and Lake Chad (s/l) 04/2019</strong></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Chad, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Niger</td>
<td>5.000,000</td>
<td>Altai Consult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme d’urgence pour la stabilisation des espaces frontaliers du G5 Sahel (PDU) 11/2018</strong></td>
<td>Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad</td>
<td>144.479.592</td>
<td>GIZ; Lux.Dev; Centre pour le dialogue humain-HD; AFD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme d’Appui au G5 pour la Sécurité au Sahel (PAGS) Phase II 04/2019</strong></td>
<td>Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger</td>
<td>10.000,000</td>
<td>Civipol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution au financement de l'Unité de Coordination de l’Alliance (UCA) Sahel 04/2019</strong></td>
<td>Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger and Mali</td>
<td>2 000 000 Co-funded German Coop. Min: 2 000 000</td>
<td>GIZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad</td>
<td>20.000,000</td>
<td>Danish Institute for Human Rights; ACNUDH-OHCHR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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II. NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN MAURITANIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Refugees under UNHCR mandate</th>
<th>Asylum seekers</th>
<th>Asylum applications</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Refugees under UNHCR mandate</th>
<th>Asylum seekers</th>
<th>Asylum applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>80,500</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>92,767</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>75,629</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>77,390</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>74,147</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>77,425</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>30,465</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>83,184</td>
<td>1,126</td>
<td>1,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>27,036</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>84,901</td>
<td>1,540</td>
<td>1,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>26,789</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>93,609</td>
<td>1,960</td>
<td>2,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>26,709</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>99,057</td>
<td>2,768</td>
<td>2,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>26,535</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>368</td>
<td></td>
<td>Own creation based on the UNHCR database <em>(The data for 2021 is only until the middle of the year)</em> (^{140})</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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)* \(^{140}\)


\(^{141}\) Ibid.
II. SPAIN-MAURITANIA DEPORTATION FLIGHTS 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Deportees</th>
<th>Country(ies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20/01/2020</td>
<td>47 men</td>
<td>35 Malians, 4 Senegalese, 7 Mauritanian and 1 Ivorian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/01/2020</td>
<td>42 men</td>
<td>38 Malians, 3 Senegalese, 1 Mauritanian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/02/2020</td>
<td>51 men</td>
<td>36 Malians, 13 from Senegalese, 1 Ivorian, 1 Gabonese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/03/2020</td>
<td>23 people</td>
<td>22 Malians and 1 Senegalese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/2020</td>
<td>22 people</td>
<td>20 Senegalese, 1 Guinean and 1 Mauritanian.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Own creation based on information from the Mechanism against Torture of the Ombudsman and the press.

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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. [Link](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. [Link](https://www.defensordelpueblo.es/gestionDocumentalWS/rest/matrixSeguimientoMNP/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’. [Link](https://elpais.com/politica/2020/02/06/actualidad/1581003885_273856.html)
EL PAÍS, 10/11/2020. Interior expulsa a Mauritania a 22 inmigrantes llegados a Canarias. [Link](https://cutt.ly/BHvHrHn)


AECID. (2014). Guía de Modalidades e Instrumentos de Cooperación. https://www.aecid.es/Centro-Documentacion/Documentos/Modalidades%20e%20instrumentos%20de%20cooperaci%C3%B3n/Guia%20de%20modalidades%20e%20instrumentos.pdf


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