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# Irregular Migration and Routes to the European Union

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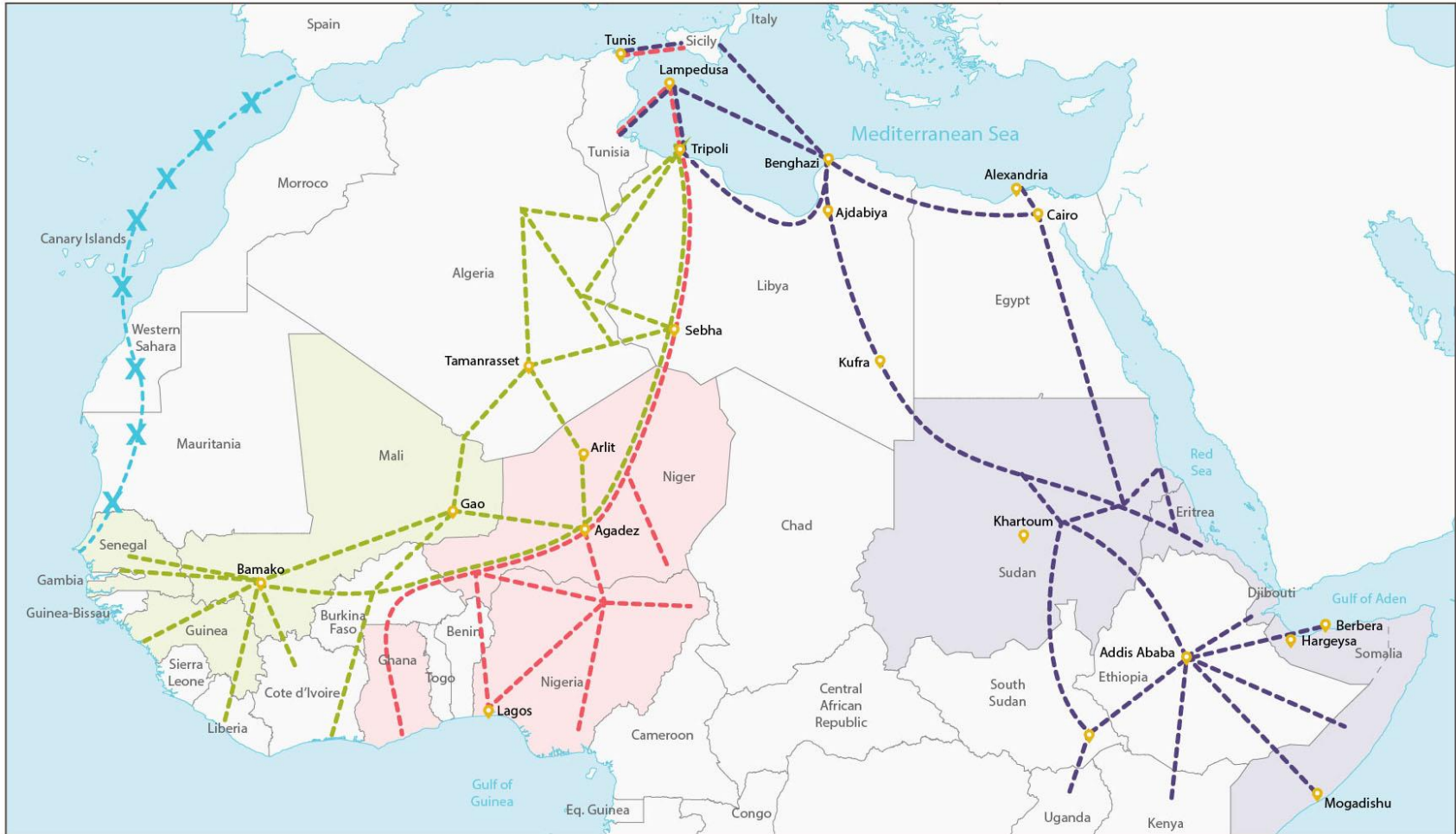


# Who is an irregular migrant?

- Entry versus Stay
- Modes of Entry
  - 1) entering a country without proper authority, either through clandestine entry or with fraudulent documents;
  - 2) entering with authorisation but overstaying that authorisation, and;
  - 3) deliberately abusing the asylum system

# Routes to the European Union

1. Country of origin to the borders of Europe
2. Cross the borders into the European Union
3. From the first EU country of entry to the country of destination in the EU



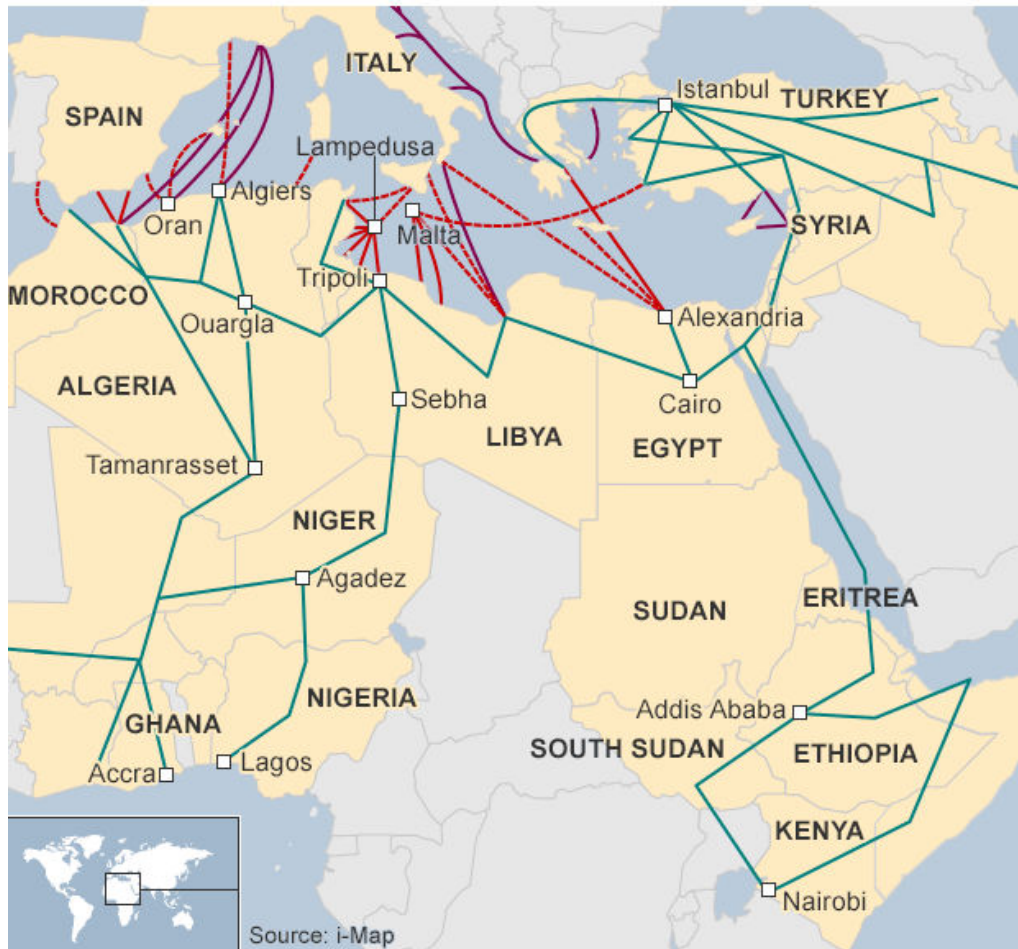
- Western Route - Main sources countries (shaded): Senegal, Guinea, Mali
- Central Route - Main sources countries (shaded): Nigeria, Ghana, Niger
- Eastern Route - Main sources countries (shaded): Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan (Darfur)
- Coastal Route to Spain (closed off)





### Key migration routes

- Major maritime routes
- Ferry routes used by migrants
- - - Minor maritime routes
- Major land routes



## Migrants detected entering the EU illegally, Jan-June 2015



\*Figs for Jan-July 2015

Source: Frontex

BBC

### Migrant route to Germany



Source: Europol



# Factors Influencing Migrants Routes

1. Safety and conflict along the routes
2. Weather conditions
3. Border surveillance and push-back policies
4. Changes in countries' political status or visa regimes



# Factors Influencing Destination Choice

1. Economic factors
2. The role of migrant smugglers
3. Access to information and social networks
4. Experiences and conditions in transit countries
5. The role of migration policy

# Economic Factors

- Resources of the migrant
- Perceptions of the economic situation in the destination country

# Migrant Smugglers

- 1) The routes and destination choices that they offer (or exclude) to the migrant,
- 2) Making the destination decision for the migrant
- 3) Deviating from an agreement with a migrant and delivering/ leaving them in a different destination than agreed

# Information and Social Networks

- Both attract and deter migrants
- Types of information that migrants have access to
- Information gained in transit
- Increasing use of social media

# Transit Countries

- 1) Poor conditions in transit countries can instigate onwards migration
- 2) Transit experiences can become settlement
- 3) Access to new sources of information in transit can redirect migrants' destination choices



# Migration Policy

- The role of asylum policies and economic support for refugees
- Extent to which restrictive asylum policies influence irregular migration

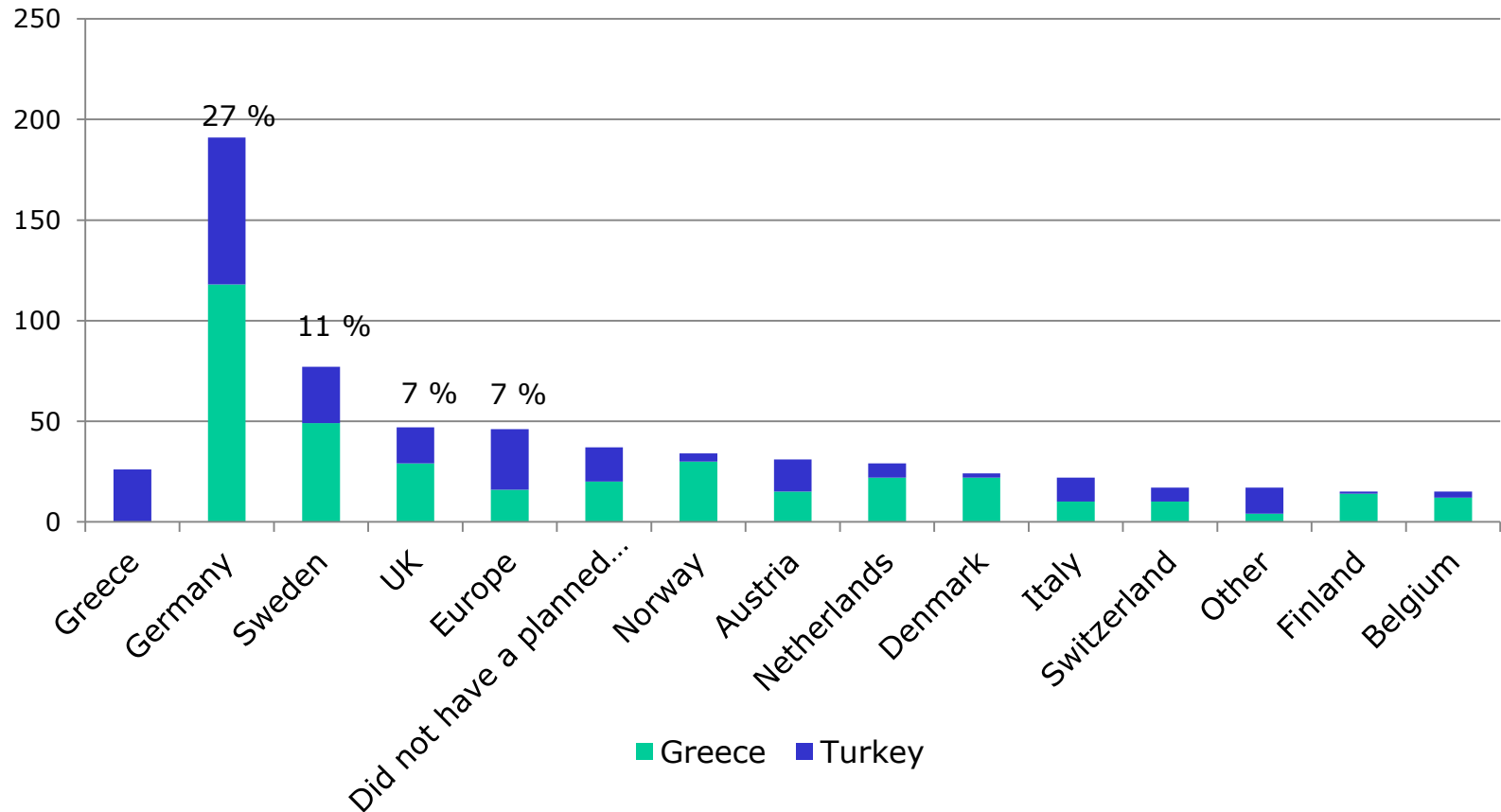
## Key Research Gaps

- Decision Making Factors in Transit
- Transit through the Western Balkans
- The Role of Migration Policy
- Role of smuggler in determining destination choice
- Use of and role of social media

# **Understanding Irregular Migrants Decision Making Factors in Transit**

- Survey with 1058 migrants in Athens and Istanbul (May-July 2015)
- Countries of origin included Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and Syria
- 60 follow-up interviews with survey participants

# Intended Destination Countries



# 66% (699) want to migrant onwards

	Greece	Turkey	Total
<b>1- Better living conditions in destination country</b>	364 93,33%	292 94,50%	656 93,85%
<b>2- Safe Country</b>	376 96,41%	270 87,38%	646 92,42%
<b>3- My intended destination country has good opportunities to become a citizen/resident</b>	359 92,05%	260 84,14%	619 88,56%
<b>4- My intended destination has good asylum seeker treatment</b>	353 90,51%	251 81,23%	604 86,41%
<b>5- My intended destination country has good social assistance/ health policies</b>	347 88,97%	256 82,85%	603 86,27%



# Conclusions

- Routes to the EU have changed since 2014 and will continue to respond to conflict, policy interventions, surveillance and weather
- Poor conditions in countries of transit and conflict in countries of origin will continue to result in large flows to the EU
- Further research is required to understand how changing policy environments impact destination choice

# Projects

- 1) Kuschminder, K., de Bresser, J. and Siegel, M. (2015). "Irregular Migration Routes to Europe and Factors Influencing Migrants Destination Choice." Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum, The Hague. Available at: <http://migration.merit.unu.edu/research/projects/routes-to-europe/>
- 2) *Irregular Migrants Decision Making Factors in Transit*. Funded by Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the Australian National University's Collaborative Research Programme on the International Movement of People. Results expected in 2016. More information is available at: <http://migration.merit.unu.edu/research/projects/irregular-migrants-decision-making-factors-in-transit/>