

POLICYBRIEF

NEGOTIATING CIRCULAR MIGRATION FROM NIGER TO LIBYA AND BACK: BETWEEN POLICIES AND NON-POLICIES¹

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The document provides a critical discussion of the impact of Law 36-2015, which criminalises transit migration to Libya and Algeria through Niger, and especially its impact on Nigerien migrants.

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Introduction

Circular migration from Niger to Libya has historically been longstanding and Nigerien migrants continue to be the biggest migrant group in Libya today. This policy brief evaluates the impact of Law 36-2015, which criminalises transit migration to Libya and Algeria through Niger, on Nigerien migrants, based on fieldwork conducted in 2020. European actors have claimed that this law has little effect on Nigerien migration, as it targets only international migrants traveling through the country, and as they have allocated sizable funds for development aid and projects focusing on migration to Niger in return. Our analysis shows, however, that even though European externalisation policies in Niger aim at restricting international migration through Niger, they also impact the country on the national level by hampering regional circular migration as a resilience strategy. The law has affected Nigerien society on different levels and has also influenced the migration experiences of Nigerien migrants: Nigeriens' migration routes to Libya have shifted and have become more diverse, more dangerous, more expensive and more irregular – resulting in a decline in the official overall number of Nigerien migrants. Interviewees also reported an overall economic slowdown in Agadez as a result of the law, increasing corrupt practices from migration facilitators and local authorities, and a hierarchisation between migrant groups in the region in their access to humanitarian aid. The policy brief concludes by identifying potential protection and policy gaps and formulates recommendations for a more reflexive and holistic migration governance approach.

¹ This policy brief has been reviewed by Christiane Fröhlich (German Institute of Global and Area Studies) and Thibaut Jaulin (Sciences Po Paris) as part of the MAGYC's internal review process.

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Evidence and Analysis

1. Circular Migration from Niger to Libya as a longstanding resilience strategy

1.1 Nigerien circular migration to Libya and Agadez as a migratory corridor

Today, Niger is an origin, host and transit country for migrants. Historically, Niger has primarily been a country of internal migration and emigration with Nigeriens migrating to neighbouring countries. To this day, many Nigeriens leave the country with the intention of returning home after having met their financial needs abroad. Existing research shows that much of the country's migration is temporary, seasonal, and circular and is related to the agricultural nature of the Nigerien economy (Bacchi et al. 2016; Müller 2018; Afifi 2008; IOM 2020). As Libya's demand for foreign labour increased in the 1960s when oil reserves were discovered on state territory, it became particularly common for young male Nigeriens to move to Libya. With 20% of the officially registered foreign population in the country, Nigeriens today form the biggest migrant group in Libya (IOM/DTM 2021). Between March and May 2019, IOM estimated the number of Nigeriens living in Libya at 130,000 (IOM 2020a).

Because of its geographical position on the route between Sub-Saharan and North African countries, Niger has also become a major transit route for international migrants, particularly in the 1990s, following the closure of the border between Chad and Libya and growing insecurity on the route through Mali. As a result, Niger is now considered an important space within the trans-Saharan migration corridor and has become one of the main transit countries for various forms of migration (Molenaar et al. 2017; Issaka Maga 2019). To reach destinations in North African countries, both Nigerien and international migrants pass through the northern city of Agadez. As the city is located at the crossroads of the desert, it represents a focal point for migration routes to reach Libya and Algeria by crossing the Sahara, which have replaced the old caravan routes. From Agadez, there are two major migration routes towards the north: via Dirkou and Ségédine towards the Libyan border, and via Arlit towards Algeria. The fact that every migrant must make a stopover in Agadez to travel further north has led to the emergence of new local economic enterprises linked to migration, particularly in the transportation and accommodation sectors. As a result, migration created economic opportunities in a region where alternatives are scarce, and became an integral part of daily life (Molenaar 2017; Brachet 2012; Müller 2018).

1.2 Interconnected migration and return drivers

Interconnected economic, climate-related, security-related, and family-related factors drive Nigerien migrants to and from Libya. Concerning economic and labour market-related drivers, high unemployment rates and high prices for housing, education, and health care affect people's decision to migrate to Libya. The migration decision is often motivated by the wish to realise personal life aspirations and support parents or other family members financially. Niger ranks last on the Human Development Index, faces widespread poverty and is highly dependent on international aid. While tourism revenues provided the population with economic opportunities in the past, terrorist attacks and cases of kidnapping of foreign visitors led to a decrease in the number of tourists visiting the country. Resulting from the latter, economic opportunities in Niger reduced dramatically. Many of our respondents planned to earn money abroad to start a business upon their return, or to learn a profession which they could pursue after their return to Niger. The return decision hence often happens when these needs are met. Economic drivers are often intertwined with climate-related factors: Nigeriens tend to leave

after the harvest period is over, and return once the rain starts to fall, using temporary migration as a resilience strategy to counter droughts (e.g. 1970s and 1980) and floods.

Concerning security-related drivers, most respondents mentioned conditions in Libya rather than in Niger as preventing them from migrating to Libya, but also as drivers for their return decision. However, other respondents believed that it is better to migrate to Libya than to stay in Niger despite this insecurity, given that Libya offers important employment opportunities and that according to them, Nigerien authorities do not care about their situation (Puig 2019). In Libya, the overthrow of Muammar Qaddafi in 2011 led to a devastating civil war that continues to this day. Not only does the security situation impact the local population, but the conflict poses a security risk to the entire region, and in particular to migrants in Libya. Respondents reported experiences of extortion, torture and imprisonment. While almost all respondents noted an increase in insecurity following the death of Qaddafi in 2011, some expressed that a lack of security as well as the on-going conflict were drivers to return to Niger. Some respondents indicated a willingness to migrate back to Libya once the situation stabilized. Another group of respondents highlighted strategies to adapt to these highly insecure conditions, for example by working for a previous employer who had provided safe working conditions, or by avoiding certain regions in Libya.

Family ties also influence and enable the migration and return decision. On the one hand, the need to financially support relatives in Niger drives the decision to migrate to Libya, while family and community networks provide migrants with the financial, local and mental support during their journey and stay. At the same time, the wish to start a family or to reunite with parents was often cited as a reason for returning to Niger.

2. Migration Policies and Regulations in Libya and Niger between a failing state and European Externalisation Practices

2.1 The Libyan migration policy context

The legal context Nigerien migrants in Libya face has been highly restrictive. The main Libyan legislative instrument governing migration until today is Law No. 6-1987 on 'Regulating Entry, Residence and Exit of Foreign Nationals to/from Libya', as amended by Law No. 2-2004 and Law No. 19-2010 on 'Combating Irregular Migration'. The 2010 law criminalises any irregular entry, stay or departure, with no distinction made between migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking. Article 19 of the law allows for the indefinite detention, as well as deportation, of irregular migrants. In 2007, entry visa requirements were introduced for people from Sub-Saharan African and Arab countries. Furthermore, Libya has neither signed nor ratified the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, though it has ratified the 1969 African Union (AU) Convention governing the 'Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa'. Nevertheless, it has not yet translated the AU Refugee Convention into national law (Healy and Forin 2017).

Libya's migration policies have been characterised by ambivalence since the 1970s: Already under Qaddafi's regime, restrictive migration policies coexisted with a rather open border policy. While legal regulations have been restrictive, they have not always been strictly implemented, which explains why the number of foreigners in Libya has remained high over time. In 2000, for example, 2.5 million foreigners lived in Libya, with only 1,700 possessing proper ID cards. Paoletti (2011) interprets Libyan migration policies as strategic policy actions of an authoritarian regime to influence the behaviours of other countries and to exert pressure on its neighbours in their diplomatic relations. For example, it was Qaddafi's support of Pan-Arabism until 1998 which led to the recruitment of cheap labour from Arab countries. Later, after the abandonment of Pan-Arabism in favour of Pan-Africanism, immigration from African

countries was facilitated, leading to a growing presence of Sub-Saharan Africans in Libya. At the same time, occasional expulsions of irregular migrants happened in an attempt to exert political pressure on origin countries. European states have implicitly supported the Qaddafi regime in this approach before 2011, as long as Libya could serve as a buffer state for migrants trying to reach Europe. In 2008, the ‘friendship’ agreement with Italy, for example, was established with the aim to stem the number of people trying to reach Europe. The 2008 EU-Libya Framework Agreement on migration had a similar function.

After 2011, Libya has been faced with recurrent conflict, the lack of governance structures, political instability and a strong regionalisation with different centres of power across the country as well as rivalling militias which are largely able to operate as they please, with some making huge amounts of money from exploiting migrants through a system called “credit house”, commonly called “Guidan bachi” in Houssa. This system consists of intercepting migrants once they enter Libyan territory and keeping them in a house where they will only be released after the payment of a sum requested by the kidnapers of approximately 500 dinars per person according to one respondent, corresponding to 180,000 CFA or 247 EUR (Migrant 3, Niamey, 2020). If this ransom is not paid, the person, instead of being released, can be executed immediately after the deadline expires. Despite these challenging conditions, the official number of migrants in Libya has remained high (571,464), with two thirds originating from Libya’s neighbouring countries Niger, Egypt, Chad and Sudan (IOM/DTM 2021).

2.2 European externalisation practices in Niger

Especially since 2015, international migration to and from Niger has increasingly attracted European interest. Over the past five years, the EU has begun to follow a crisis narrative which understands ‘international migrants’ exclusively as a group crossing into Libya via Niger with the intention to reach Europe, posing a threat to the stability of the EU. As a result, international migrants transiting through Niger have been observed with increasing concern by European actors. By framing migration as a security issue, security-related responses have been pushed to the regions of origin with the goal of reducing migration flows to Europe. The ‘Law against Illegal Migration Smuggling’ (*Loi 2015-36 Relative au Trafic Illicite de Migrants*), which was issued on 26 May 2015 under the new Partnership Framework, aims to justify EU engagement in Niger by linking the stability in the Sahel to the security in the EU. It prohibits Nigeriens from transporting international migrants northward from the city of Agadez and was implemented in 2016 (Davitti & Ursu 2018). While international migrants are not punished under the new law, those who transport them are. After the law was passed, people who facilitated migrant journeys were ordered to immediately suspend their activities. In exchange for ending transportation activities at the local level, former migration facilitators were promised alternative financial support through the approval of project proposals for the creation of new businesses, supported and financed by European partners (Jegen 2019).

Building on the international involvement in Niger, the EU held the Valetta Summit on Migration in November 2015, which was supposed to bring European and African countries together to establish a partnership to find common solutions to mutual challenges. As a result, the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) was established. The EUTF finances projects to combat the causes of flight and secure borders in 26 African countries. With a budget of 279 million EUR, Niger is one of the top recipient countries (Oxfam 2020). The project scale includes, for example, a scheme to strengthen the sustainable management of the consequences of migration flows in cooperation with the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) with a budget of 25 million EUR; a ‘Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism’ facilitated by the IOM with a budget of 7 million EUR; and the creation of a joint

investigation team for the fight against criminal networks linked to irregular immigration, trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants in cooperation with the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies with a budget of 11.5 million EUR. In total, 25% of the EUTF budget is dedicated to border management and security. And only 6% of the budget is allocated to short-term economic alternatives (Davitti & Ursu 2018; International Crisis Group 2020).

To this day, Law 36-2015 remains the subject of a heated debate among academics, policymakers, civil society actors, and the local population. The European Commission has highlighted its importance for countering smuggling and reducing the flow of irregular migrants: In a press communication from December 2016, the European Commission states that “*Niger has maintained a strong engagement with the EU in particular to counter migrant smuggling and to reduce the flow of irregular migrants becoming a showcase of how the EU and its Member States can combine the various instruments and tools available in a comprehensive manner*” (European Commission, 14/12/2016).⁴ For the local population in Agadez on the other hand, the law came as a surprise and it remains unclear why this law was passed in the Agadez region in particular – a city which economically depends on facilitating migration in different ways – even though migrants pass through other regions before arriving in Agadez without much concern. Additionally, most migrants transiting through Niger originate from ECOWAS member states and therefore enjoy the freedom of movement within the ECOWAS region. By implementing the law in Agadez, scholars argue that it *de facto* violates the right of ECOWAS members to freely enter and travel within Niger (Tubiana, Warin, Saeneen 2018, 23). This situation has led to the local population qualifying this law as “villainous”, with its implementation occurring at a time when Niger did not have a national policy on migration. It took five years after the adoption of Law 36-2015 for the Nigerien government to validate a national policy document on migration in September 2020, which is valid for the period 2020-2035 and includes a five-year action plan.

3. Side Effects of Law 36-2015

3.1 Overall side effects: an economic slowdown, clandestine routes, increasing insecurity, donor dependency

The intended effect of Law 36-2015 can be understood as achieving a decrease in the number of migrants transiting the area. Statistically speaking, the implementation has been a success: Since the ratification and implementation of the above-mentioned policies, the official number of migrants has declined considerably. While the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) detected 350.000 people leaving Niger towards Libya and Algeria in 2016, only 140.000 people were counted in 2017. However, these numbers are retrieved at Flow Monitoring Points (FMP) that are monitored by the IOM and funded by the European Union, the US, the Netherlands, and the UK. Even though European partners emphasize the success reflected by the numbers, others warn of their possibly flawed nature, since FMPs were established at strategic transit points in 2016 and do not monitor the numbers passing on newly developed migration routes (Jegen 2019).

Besides this reduction of migrants (passing through official transit points), the law has also had several unintended effects: i) an economic slowdown, ii) the development of more clandestine routes, iii) increasing insecurity, and iv) donor dependency. Especially until 2016, the facilitation of migration was a lucrative job. In the region of Agadez, where populations, especially in the

⁴ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/second-progress-report-1_en_act_part1_v11.pdf, consulted 15/06/2021.

1970s and 1980s, used to depend on the tourism sector for their livelihoods, facilitating migration became the most important and profitable economic activity. In the past, the local population not only found employment directly within the migration sector, but also in various additional ways, e.g. as taxi drivers, water vendors, small retailers, or restaurant workers as a response to the high number of international migrants in the region. The implementation of Law 36-2015 had a devastating effect on the local economy in the north as people who made a living from migration in the wide sense faced sudden unemployment. (Davitti & Ursu 2018). With the decrease of migrants transiting the area, economic opportunities in Agadez are now at a standstill. To tackle these economic challenges, the EU promised different forms of financial support. However, respondents mentioned important obstacles that hinder the distribution of these promised funds: In a country where educational levels are exceptionally low – the literacy rate among the population aged 15 years and older was 35% (UNESCO 2018)⁵–, many Nigeriens lack the required qualifications to write a project proposal, which in turn is a prerequisite to receive funds. They are therefore obliged to pay for the services of more qualified people.

Before 2015, many Nigerien and transit migrants organized their journey through travel agencies in Agadez, used official roads to travel to Libya or Algeria, and moved via well-organized convoys of several vehicles. After the implementation of Law 36-2015, routes have become more clandestine and prone to human rights violations (Davitti & Ursu 2018; Brachet 2012; Molenaar 2017; Molenaar et al. 2017; Bacchi et al. 2016; Issaka Maga 2019). Numerous strategies have been developed to circumvent the new restrictions: Now, drivers leave at night and take routes which the authorities do not control. As a result, people get lost, vehicles break down and migrants are left stranded in the desert. Additionally, the price to cross the desert has approximately tripled from around 200 to 600 EUR (expert interview 8, Agadez, March 2020).

Interviewees also mentioned that the implementation of Law 36-2015 has led to the increase of various corrupt practices by both migration facilitators and state authorities. While smugglers need to maintain a competitive price to ensure that migrants choose their services, security forces find ways to profit from the high number of migrants passing through checkpoints. As a result, restricting migration in the region has driven up the prices of bribes that smugglers need to pay to security officials (Molenaar 2017; Jegen 2019).

The strengthening of the Nigerien border control and the related implementation of migration policies have been carried out in return for development aid from European partners. The prevention of irregular migration has therefore been used as a bargaining chip to gain political and financial support from the European Union, leading to a situation where Nigerien policymakers find themselves in a state of limbo between the legal framework of ECOWAS, which in theory allows the freedom of movement of persons and goods, and the pressure of European partners, who push the Nigerien government to implement European externalization practices in return for development aid.

⁵ <http://uis.unesco.org/fr/country/ne>, consulted 15/06/2021.

3.2. Side effects on Nigerien migration: a decrease of the official number of Nigerien migrants and a hierarchisation of migrant groups

Several reports claim that Law 36-2015 does not impact Nigerien migration to Libya as it does not target Nigeriens (e.g. IOM 2020a). Similarly, interviewed experts, such as policymakers and governmental actors in Niger, mentioned that they did not reflect on potential effects for Nigerien migrants as the law only focusses on international migrants and therefore cannot impact Nigerien migration movements. Data on Nigerien migration to Libya is extremely fragmentary, and the time period (2016 until today) when data becomes more available mirrors the increasing interest of European actors in regional transit migration and is thus less robust. According to available data, the ratio of official Nigerien migrants reached almost 90% of all outgoing migrants in 2019, compared to 35% in 2016; however, these figures somewhat hide that the absolute number of outgoing Nigerien migrants declined by approximately 20% (132,000 in 2016 to 106,500 in 2019). The IOM claims that this decrease is only related to insecure conditions and decreasing economic opportunities in Libya, while arguing at the same time that the reduction of international migrants is due to the implementation of Law 36-2015 (IOM 2020a, 9-11). This underlines how different standards of analysis are applied to the two migrant groups, framing all international migrants in Libya as transit migrants on their way to Europe.

Many Nigerien migrants interviewed for this brief argued, however, that, while Law 36-2015 did not impact their migration decision as such, it affected their migration experience to Libya negatively when it comes to insecurities and clandestine routes. Respondents stressed that Law 36-2015 resulted in different forms of insecurities since *“people didn’t understand the law, they thought that Law-36 was for everyone. There are many Nigeriens who got discouraged [...], they are afraid”* (expert interview 8, Agadez, March 2020). Furthermore, border crossings and checkpoints also pose a risk to Nigerien migrants, especially north of Agadez. While some respondents reported preferential treatment when it comes to bribes and security checks, however, outside of the city of Agadez, Nigeriens are equally affected by violence and exploitation as other migrant groups. Similar to migrants in transit, Nigerien migrants *“are the victims of the treatment by police forces who use these laws as an excuse”* (expert interview 2, Niamey, March 2020). A representative of a local NGO argued in this regard: *“Even if these people, in a certain way, have an easier time moving around than others, it doesn’t mean that there aren’t problems at checkpoints. [...] But from Agadez, these Nigeriens, these same Nigeriens, as soon as they decide to go north, that’s where their problem starts because they too can’t escape violence”* (expert interview 10, Agadez, March 2020). As a result, migration to Libya has become more expensive and more dangerous. Migration routes seem have shifted towards the Algerian route via Arlit, which was described as particularly dangerous: *“In Djanet, in these rocks, bandits can strip you and search you and steal all your money. Women as well as men, all undressed. There it is life or death. You can get cramps while walking. You have to use a blade to draw the blood and they wait for you for 15 minutes, if you can’t, they leave you. If you are lucky, if others arrive and find you, you can go with them, otherwise it’s over for you. Over there, it’s not a game, Djanet, it’s not easy [...] Over there, it’s life or death. If you come down from the mountain, you will make a very long walk, the vehicles will come to pick you up and they will take you to the Guidan Bachi”* (migrant interview 2, Niamey, October 2020).

Furthermore, Law 36-2015 has affected access to humanitarian aid in Agadez and who benefits from it. Because Law 36-2015 targets transit migration in Niger, NGOs now focus much more on non-Nigerien migrants, which has fuelled dissatisfaction among the local population in Agadez as Nigerien migrants are not receiving aid in the same way as non-Nigeriens in transit: *“The local people have risen against the NGOs by saying that they only deal with foreigners, Sudanese, Eritrean, Ethiopians”* (expert interview 2, Niamey, March

2020). *“Migrants in transit, they arrive in Agadez, they will stay for two weeks or a month in the IOM transit centre, they take full care of their clothes, they will eat well, they will wash themselves until they find their shape to continue to their countries. And they are supported with money. [...] Nigerien migrants who leave their country, who are returned back or who have returned, they are in trouble, they are not fully taken care of, that’s not normal”* (expert interview 8, Agadez, March 2020). As a result, a protection gap becomes evident as Nigerien migrants experience the same difficulties as international migrants along the route but without receiving any form of assistance. *“There are NGOs and projects that support others, but they have not reached us”* (migrant interview 12, Agadez, December 2020).

Policy Implications and Recommendations

The lack of political and academic interest in Nigerien circular migration reflects that migration policies in Niger have been strongly dominated by the interests of European donors. This is also illustrated by the fact that it took the Nigerien government five years to adopt a national policy document on migration after Law 36-2015 was passed, a process which was supported at the technical and financial level by the ‘Support-Advice in Migration Policy’ project of the GIZ.

Even though international actors, such as IOM, claim that Law 36-2015 has no impact on Nigerien migrants, our research has shown that migration policies which criminalize transit migration do indeed influence Nigerien migrants and non-migrants in negative ways: Migration routes have become more dangerous and more irregular and transport costs to Libya have increased, which has led to a decline in official number of Nigerien migrants. Nigerien migrants also report a rise of corrupt practices by the border police. Law 36-2015 has also led to the hierarchisation of different migrant groups in the region regarding who is able to migrate, but also who has access to humanitarian aid, which may well lead to conflicts in the long run. At the same time, our research clearly shows that migration policies – including Law 36-2015 (and restrictive legislation in Libya) – are only one among many factors influencing migration decision-making. Drivers such as economic and climate-related factors, as well as insecurity in Libya and personal aspirations and family ties, were mentioned as being much more important by our respondents. The region of Agadez has furthermore witnessed an economic slowdown in Agadez instead of the promised “socio-economic transformation”.

It is therefore recommended that policy makers, including from the EU and EU member states:

- Avoid implementing migration policies that undermine circular migration as a form of resilience. This means facilitating the mobility of Nigerien migrants, both within and outside the country, by making travel documents accessible instead of obstructing regular forms of migration in the region.
- Stop using humanitarian aid as a bargaining chip to implement European externalization policies. Instead, design international humanitarian aid by integrating opinions and knowledge of affected local populations – migrants and non-migrants, without discrimination.
- Truly incorporate perspectives of local actors and regional migrants when developing international migration policies. To properly address the issue of migration, the Nigerien government must involve elected local authorities in the process by creating a permanent framework for consultation.
- Stop marginalizing Nigerien migrants in terms of aid or humanitarian assistance, which is mostly given to international migrants, as this creates frustrations and grievances which can ultimately lead to violence. The Nigerien state should be

mindful of the work that projects and NGOs do on the ground in the context of international humanitarian aid and support for migrants by putting in place a monitoring and control system that takes all stakeholders into account.

Research Parameters

This policy brief is based on fieldwork conducted in the frame of the Horizon2020 project “Migration Governance and Asylum Crises” (MAGYC, grant agreement number 822806), which seeks to assess how crises narratives shape policy responses to migration on the domestic, regional and international level. The research presented here was part of the work package “Comparing Crises: Lessons from ‘Migration Crises’ in the Middle East, North Africa and the greater Horn of Africa”, led by the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in Hamburg, which is particularly interested in how state stability and state survival interact with migration movements and their governance in the Middle East, North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

The aim of this research was to evaluate the impact of European externalisation practices in a country which is highly dependent on international aid, faces widespread poverty, and has collaborated in implementing a law aiming to reduce transit migration even though migration represents an important resilience strategy for its own population. The theoretical framework of the research was based on literature that analyses the role of migration policies for migration processes and follows De Haas’ (2011) argument that – in addition to intended effects of migration policies – migration policies tend to have several unintended counter-effects. By expanding De Haas’ model, the policy brief looks at how migration governance in Niger not only affects its target group (transit migrants), but also Nigerien migrants.

Methodologically, the research draws on a literature review, policy analysis, 26 expert interviews with national and international stakeholders with insights into migratory phenomena in Niger and Libya (NGOs, IOs, policy-makers, governmental representatives) conducted between March and December 2020 in Niger (Niamey) and Libya (virtually), and 26 narrative interviews with Nigeriens with (circular) migration experience in Libya conducted in person in Niamey and Agadez between March and December 2020. The interviews with Nigerien migrants were chosen to aim for diversity with regard to: (i) year of first migration to Libya (before and after 2015); and (ii) currently migrating to Libya or having returned to Niger. The fieldwork was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as local and international travel restrictions delayed the research process significantly and changed the original research design: One of the authors of this brief had to cut her research stay in Niger short (Mattea Weihe), another author was never able to travel to Niger (Lea Müller-Funk), and the third author (Mounkaila Abdou) conducted more interviews than originally foreseen, but in a difficult context characterized by the mistrust of migrants to accept recorded interviews and the concern for compliance with COVID-19 measures.

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Project Identity

PROJECT NAME	MAGYC - Migration Governance and Asylum Crises
COORDINATOR	The Hugo Observatory (Université de Liège), Liège, Belgium. hugo.observatory@uliege.be
CONSORTIUM	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - Institut français du Proche-Orient (Beirut, Lebanon) GIGA Institute of Global and Area Studies (Hamburg, Germany) IDMC (Geneva, Switzerland) Lebanese American University (Beirut, Lebanon) Lund University (Lund, Sweden) Sabanci University (Istanbul, Turkey) Sciences Po (Paris, France) SOAS University of London (London, UK) University of Economics in Bratislava (Bratislava, Slovakia) University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece) University of Milan (Milan, Italy)
FUNDING SCHEME	This project has received funding from the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme (2014-2020), Societal Challenge 6 – Europe in a changing world: inclusive, innovative and reflective societies", call MIGRATION-02-2018 — Towards forward-looking migration governance: addressing the challenges, assessing capacities and designing future strategies.
DURATION	November 2018 – October 2022 (48 months).
BUDGET	EU contribution: 3,175,263.70€.
WEBSITE	https://www.magyc.uliege.be/
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FURTHER READING	Fine, S. (2020) 'La politique migratoire au prisme des récompenses symboliques. Le cas des bordercrats turcs', <i>Cultures & Conflits</i> 118, 109-128. Müller-Funk, L; Fröhlich, C. Bank, A. (2020) <i>State(s) of Negotiation: Drivers of Forced Migration Governance in Most of the World</i> . GIGA Working Paper Series. Hamburg: GIGA. Fakhoury, T. (2020) 'Refugee return and fragmented governance in the host state: displaced Syrians in the face of Lebanon's divided politics', <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 43(1), 162-180.

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