

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002911/25
to the Commission
Tineke Strik (Verts/ALE)
(16 July 2025)**

Subject: Registration of applicants for international protection in Tunisia

In June 2024, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) was ordered to cease the registration of applicants for international protection in Tunisia, which it had been performing due to the absence of a formal asylum procedure. Instead, the authorities indicated that they would assume responsibility for registration. At the same time, the UNHCR's implementing partner, the Tunisian Council for Refugees, is being criminalised through arrests and legal action.

1. Does the Commission agree that the ceasing of registration for international protection by the UNHCR leaves individuals with no remaining way to state their need for international protection — a fundamental right under international law — in Tunisia, and if not, what options can the Commission identify for an individual to apply for asylum?
2. How does the Commission consider that the memorandum of understanding with Tunisia, which includes provisions on and funding for migration management, complies with its obligations under Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union ⁽¹⁾, given that the people who are intercepted by the Tunisian authorities cannot exercise their basic human rights if they are in need of international protection?
3. What efforts is the Commission making to ensure both the resumption of registration for international protection in Tunisia, and the protection of the UNHCR's implementing partners?

Submitted: 16.7.2025

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(24 September 2025)**

Tunisia continues to face significant migratory challenges with high mixed movement pressures. In this context, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) carries out essential protection work in Tunisia with EU political, operational and financial support. The EU supports both the Tunisian authorities and UNHCR to uphold international protection and improve migration management.

Developing a national asylum system is a priority. While the EU supports Tunisia's transition towards such a system, it remains essential to ensure continuity of registration of new asylum-seekers. The Commission has expressed concern at the Tunisian authorities' decision to suspend new UNHCR registrations since June 2024.

To facilitate a solution, the EU has offered support for a transition to a national asylum framework. The EU also funds the UNHCR in Tunisia, which continues key activities for individuals already registered — case and identity management, basic assistance, access to basic services and legal support, and maintain regular operational dialogue.

The 16 July 2023 EU-Tunisia memorandum of understanding ⁽¹⁾ on a strategic and global partnership is a key instrument to develop a human-rights-based migration management system and is compatible with Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union.

¹ "The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law."

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_23_3887/IP_23_3887_EN.pdf.