

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004310/25
to the Commission**

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(4 November 2025)

Subject: How many students from the Middle East and North Africa will stay in the EU after their Erasmus exchange is over?

Building on the Barcelona Process, the Commission has proposed a connected ‘Common Mediterranean Space’ as part of its Pact for the Mediterranean. European taxpayers will fund projects benefiting the region while migrants from Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia will be welcomed to Europe under the guise of student exchanges. ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾

‘Legal pathways for labour migration’ from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) will increase and so-called talent partnerships will be scaled up. The pact will also act as a stepping stone to increase EU cooperation with partners beyond the southern Mediterranean, including the Gulf, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Western Balkans as well as Türkiye. The Commission describes stepping up cooperation between the EU, MENA and the Gulf region as ‘a key objective of the Pact.’ ⁽³⁾ ⁽⁴⁾

The Commission is asked to clarify the long-term migratory effect of this EU-MENA pact.

1. How many non-EU nationals from MENA countries does it expect to enter the EU annually on student or trainee visas under programmes linked to or supported by the EU-MENA pact from 2026 onward?
2. What share of these non-EU nationals is expected to remain in the EU after their studies (i.e. after 12, 24 and 60 months and please provide separate data by country of origin)?
3. What safeguards will ensure that study schemes do not become de facto long-term migration channels?

Supporter ⁽⁵⁾

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Answer given by Ms Šuica on behalf of the European Commission
(21 January 2026)

The Pact for the Mediterranean ⁽¹⁾ (Pact) sets out an ambitious strategy to strengthen EU relations with its southern Mediterranean partners.

It is built on the principles of co-ownership, co-creation, joint responsibility and flexibility. The latter principle allows for variable participation of Member States and Mediterranean partners in its initiatives and will ultimately determine the reach and the scope of the various initiatives under the Pact.

By investing people’s choices for learning, growth and mobility, the Pact aims to reinforce the cultural, academic, social and economic ties that will make Europe stronger and more resilient.

It is not possible at this stage to determine the exact number of mobilities expected by country. The possibility for short term learning exchanges from any region in the world, including the Southern Mediterranean, towards the EU already exists under the international strand of the Erasmus+ programme.

Notably, Erasmus+ provides short term mobility opportunities for higher education students (up to one year) as part of their studies in their home country, and for academic staff (5-60 days). Participants return to their home countries after their mobility period, bringing back new skills, perspectives, and networks.

Studies show concrete benefits of such mobilities for the EU, including by promoting the EU values. Overall, Erasmus+ promotes brain circulation, exchange and knowledge mobility, share of skills, and circulation of talent across borders, not migration.

¹ The pact consists of three parts: exchanges of people, trade and investment, and security/migration management. This point is nothing other than the opening of more doors to Europe, for potentially millions of people from Africa and the Middle East. The clue is in what the Commission promises to promote: ‘a whole-of-route approach to migration management’.

² <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-expand-erasmus-program-southern-mediterranean-africa-middle-east/>.

³ Press release Oct 16, 2025 | Pact for the Mediterranean — One Sea, One Pact, One Future — a shared ambition for the region https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2384

⁴ The Pact is proposed for political endorsement by the EU and southern Mediterranean partners in November 2025 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona process.

⁵ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Sebastian Tynkkynen (ECR).

⁽¹⁾ https://north-africa-middle-east-gulf.ec.europa.eu/joint-communication-pact-mediterranean_en.

In line with the EU external migration policy, the Commission wants to support efforts in preventing illegal departures and ensure effective return and readmission within the framework of the Pact, contributing to broader cooperation on migration management.

Cooperation to prevent illegal departures paves the way for legal and orderly pathways according to EU and national competences for international labour mobility and skills development.
