



European Council

PRESS
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BACKGROUND¹
Brussels, 26 June 2016

European Council 28-29 June 2016 in Brussels

The European Council will begin at 16.00 on Tuesday 28 June with an exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz.

The first working session will be devoted to all the non-UK referendum related items on the agenda. The NATO Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg, will make a short presentation on EU/NATO cooperation, and the President of the European Investment Bank, Werner Hoyer, will present his initiative for the Southern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans. Leaders will then adopt all the conclusions on **migration, jobs, growth and competitiveness** as well as **external relations**.

Over dinner the heads of state or government will discuss the outcome of the **referendum in the United Kingdom** with Prime Minister Cameron.

On Wednesday the 27 heads of state or government will meet informally to discuss the political and practical implications of the UK vote to leave the EU and start a discussion on the **future of the European Union with 27 member states**.

Indicative programme:

Tuesday: 16.00 Exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament
 16.30 Family photo
 16.45 First working session
 19.45 Working dinner
 (ttbc) Press conference by Presidents Tusk and Juncker and Dutch Prime Minister Rutte of the rotating EU Presidency

Wednesday: 09.00 Informal meeting of the 27 heads of state or government
 (ttbc) Press conference

[European Council 28-29 June](#)

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Outcome of the United Kingdom referendum

The meeting will be the first opportunity for Prime Minister Cameron to explain the situation in the UK and the decision taken by the British people. This will be followed by a first exchange of views.

On Wednesday morning the 27 Heads of State or Government will meet informally over breakfast to discuss the political and practical implications of Brexit. Leaders will discuss the so called divorce process as described in Article 50 of the Treaty. At this occasion President Tusk will also launch a wider reflection on the future of the European Union with 27 member states.

[Press statement by President Donald Tusk on the outcome of the UK referendum](#)

[Joint statement by the EU leaders and the Netherlands Presidency on the outcome of the UK referendum](#)

Migration

The European Council will continue to build on its comprehensive strategy to tackle the migration crisis. Following the decision to fully apply the Schengen Borders Code and the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement, crossings from Turkey to the Greek islands have sharply decreased (see Annex 1). From almost 7000 daily arrivals in October 2015 to less than 50 per day in May 2016. Leaders are expected to call for continued support to the Western Balkans countries, including in their fight against smugglers, as well as continuing vigilance about alternative routes. It will also recall the need to accelerate the implementation of the existing relocation and resettlement schemes.

Considering that flows of predominantly economic migrants remain at the same level as last year in the Central Mediterranean (see Annex 2), discussions at the summit are expected to focus on the need to step up cooperation with countries of origin and transit. Leaders will underline the need for a speeding up of the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan and for the swift conclusion of Partnership Frameworks with a limited number of priority countries. The objectives of these frameworks would be to speed-up and increase returns of irregular migrants by using all relevant EU policies and tools in close collaboration with member states. The effective return rates of third country nationals that have received a return decision ranged from 6% for Guinea to 34 % for Nigeria in 2015 (for the top 10 countries on the Central Mediterranean route - see annex 3). Leaders are expected to task the EU High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini, to take the lead in implementing this new approach, with view to concluding the first partnerships before the end of the year.

Leaders are also expected to underline the need for all relevant instruments and sources of funding to be mobilised. In particular the European Council will ask the institutions to explore various possibilities for funding, including the European Investment Bank's initiative in the Southern Neighbourhood and Western Balkans countries and an ambitious External Investment Plan as proposed by the Commission.

Furthermore, leaders are likely to recall that the migration crisis is a global challenge that requires a strong response from the international community.

[EU response to migratory pressures](#)

[Timeline - finding solutions to migratory pressures](#)

[Commission Communication on establishing a New Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration](#)

[EU Turkey statement 18 March 2016](#)

[Valletta Action Plan](#)

Jobs growth and competitiveness

With the aim of creating new jobs, promoting productivity and ensuring an attractive climate for investment and innovations, the European Council is expected to call for the completion of the different **Single Market** strategies by 2018. A particular emphasis will be put on the digital single market. Among other measures, leaders will call for swift progress on cross-border portability, the removal of barriers for e-commerce, the abolishment of roaming charges, spectrum assignment for the roll-out of 5G networks and ensuring high-capacity fixed and wire-less broadband connectivity across Europe.

The European Council is furthermore expected to generally **endorse the country-specific recommendations**, allowing for the conclusion of the 2016 European Semester.

The heads of state and government should also take stock of progress achieved in the areas of;

Taxation - leaders should reconfirm the importance of the fight against tax fraud, evasion and avoidance as well as money laundering.

Investment - leaders will take note of the concrete results delivered by the European Fund for Strategic Investments.

Trade - the Commission should update leaders on going trade negotiations.

Agriculture - leaders are expected to invite the Commission to urgently implement all necessary support measure in the agricultural sector and in particular in regard to dairy and pig-meat.

Economic and Monetary Union - leaders will call for work, including on the roadmap on the Banking Union, to be taken forward.

[Digital Single Market](#)

[Anti tax avoidance package](#)

[Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union](#)

[European Semester](#)

[Investment Plan](#)

External Relations

Leaders are expected to reiterate their readiness to support the Libyan Government of National Accord to restore stability, fight terrorism and tackle migration. They should also welcome the UNSCR Resolution 2292 and the expanded role for Operation Sophia in contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya and training the Libyan coast guard and navy.

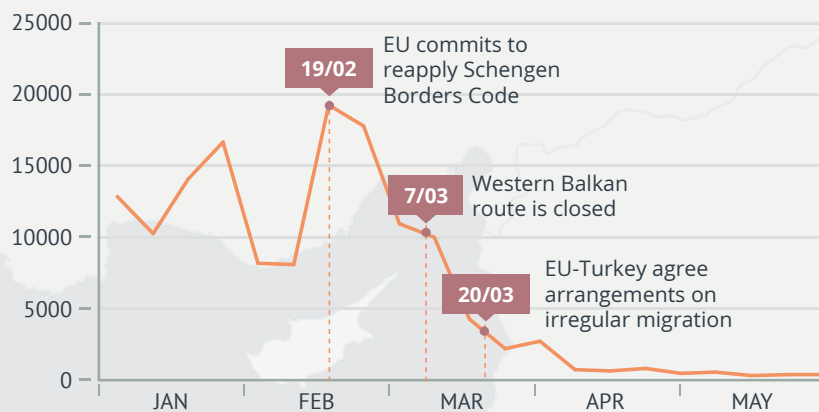
The European Council should also welcome a presentation of the European Global Strategy on Foreign And Security Policy by the High Representative and invite the institutions to take work forward.

The heads of state and government will discuss EU-NATO cooperation in the presence of the NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg. Leaders should call for further enhancement of the relationship, in light of common and unprecedented challenges from the South and East. The President of the European Council and the President of the Commission will issue a declaration to this end together with the NATO Secretary General in Warsaw in July.

Annex 1 - migration flows: Irregular arrivals in Greece

Irregular arrivals in Greece per week

Border crossing by sea, from Jan to May 2016



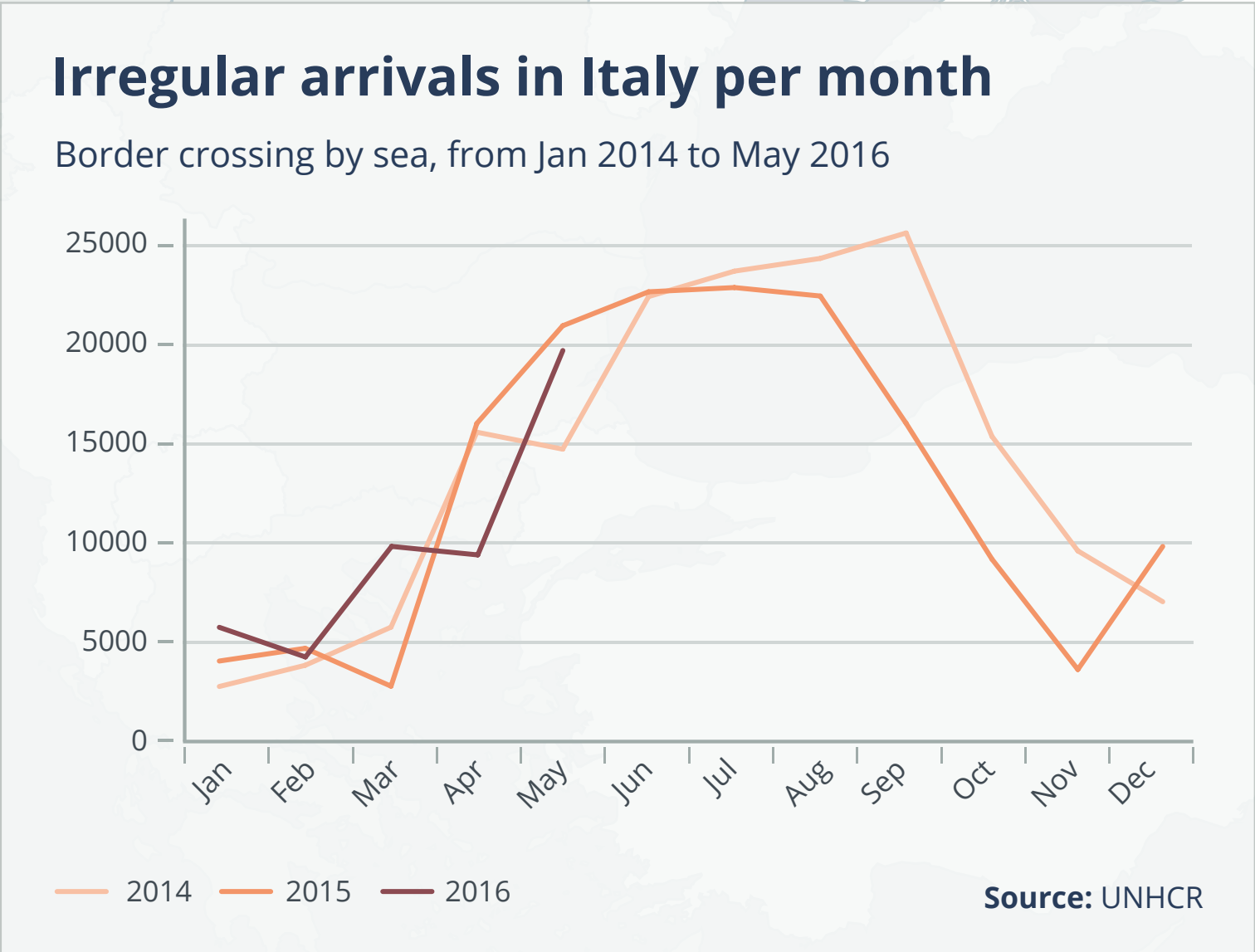
Source: UNHCR



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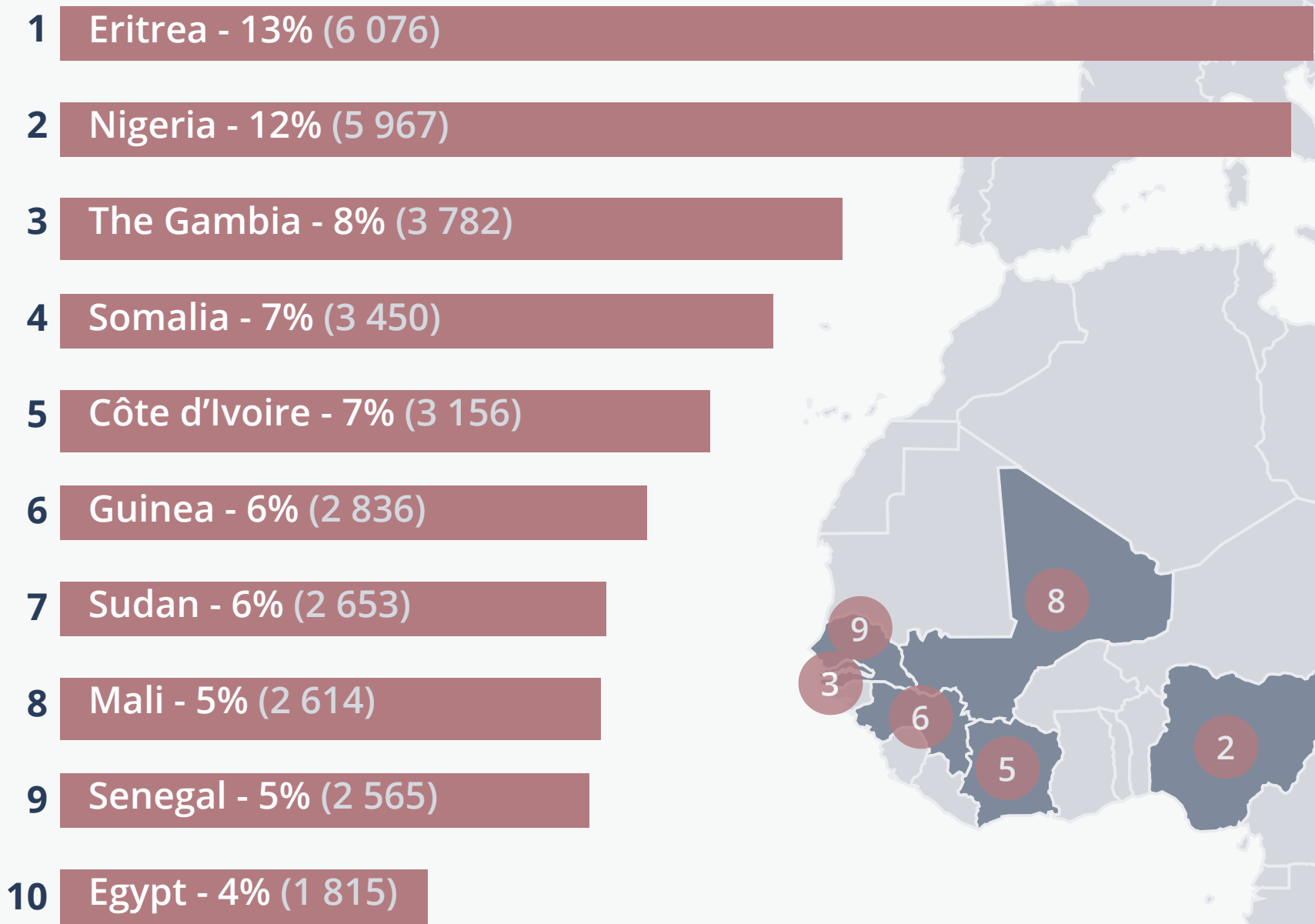
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Annex 2 - migration flows: Irregular arrivals in Italy

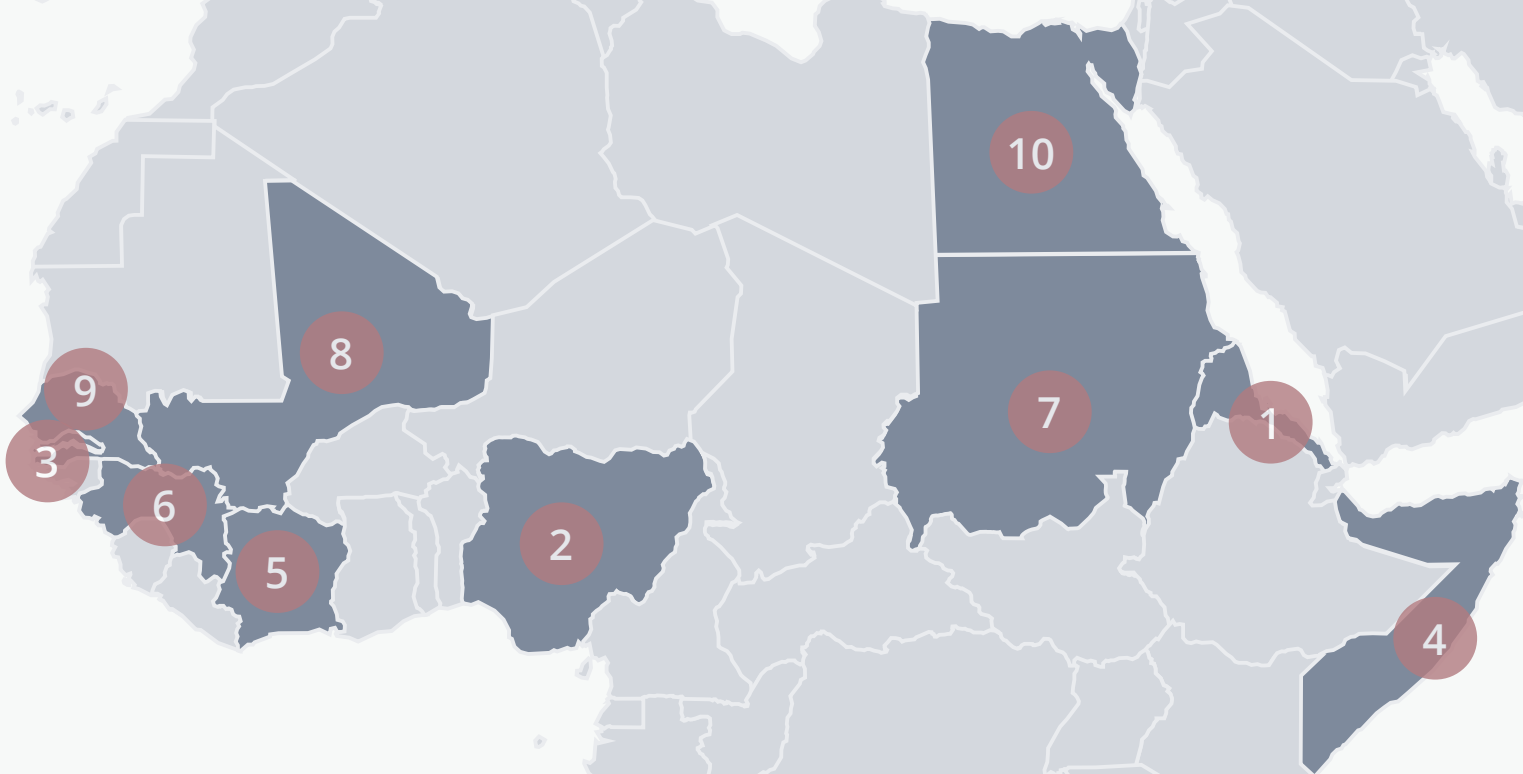


Irregular arrivals in Italy per country of origin

Top nationalities, Jan - May 2016
Number and % of total arrivals

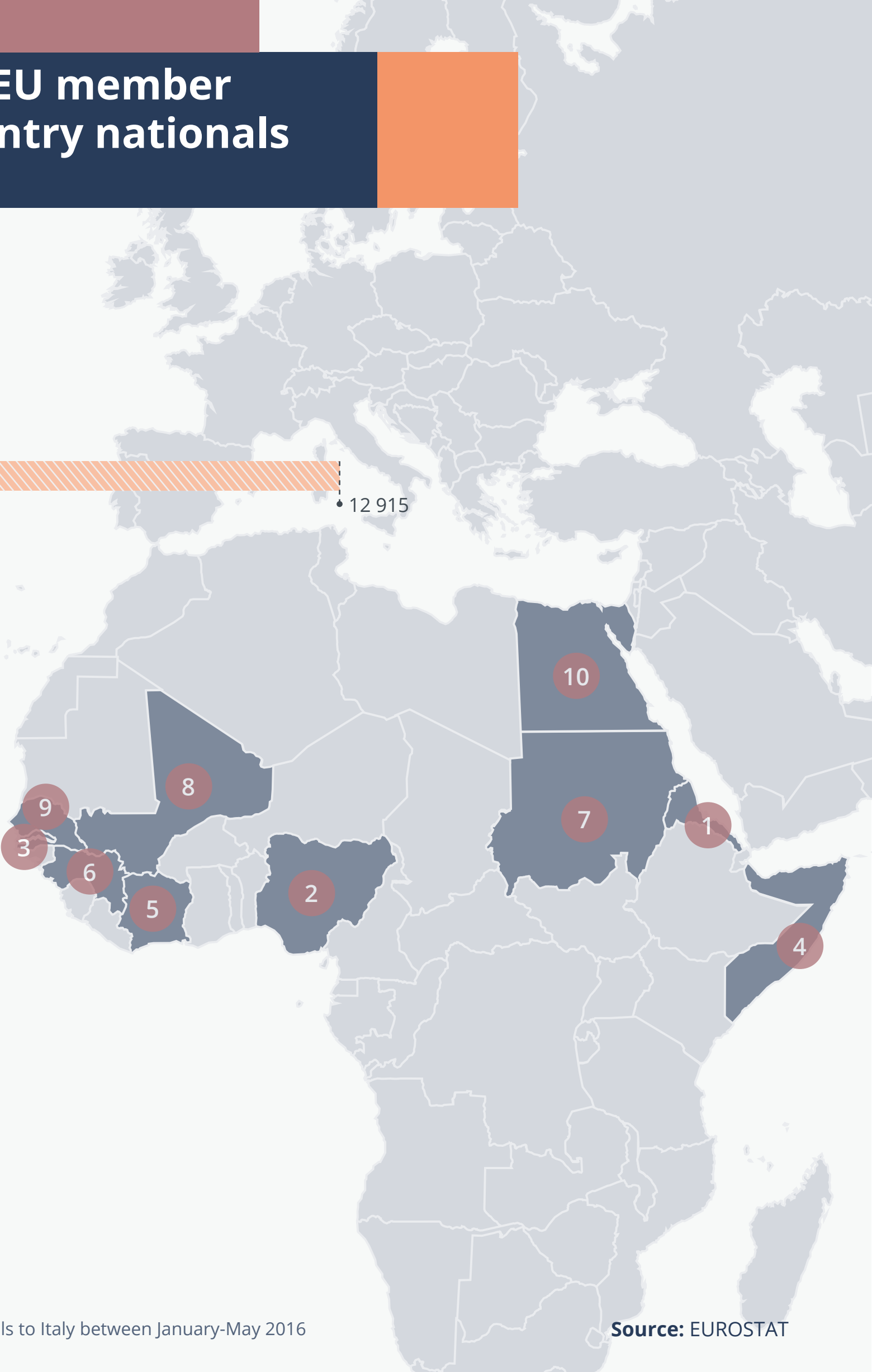
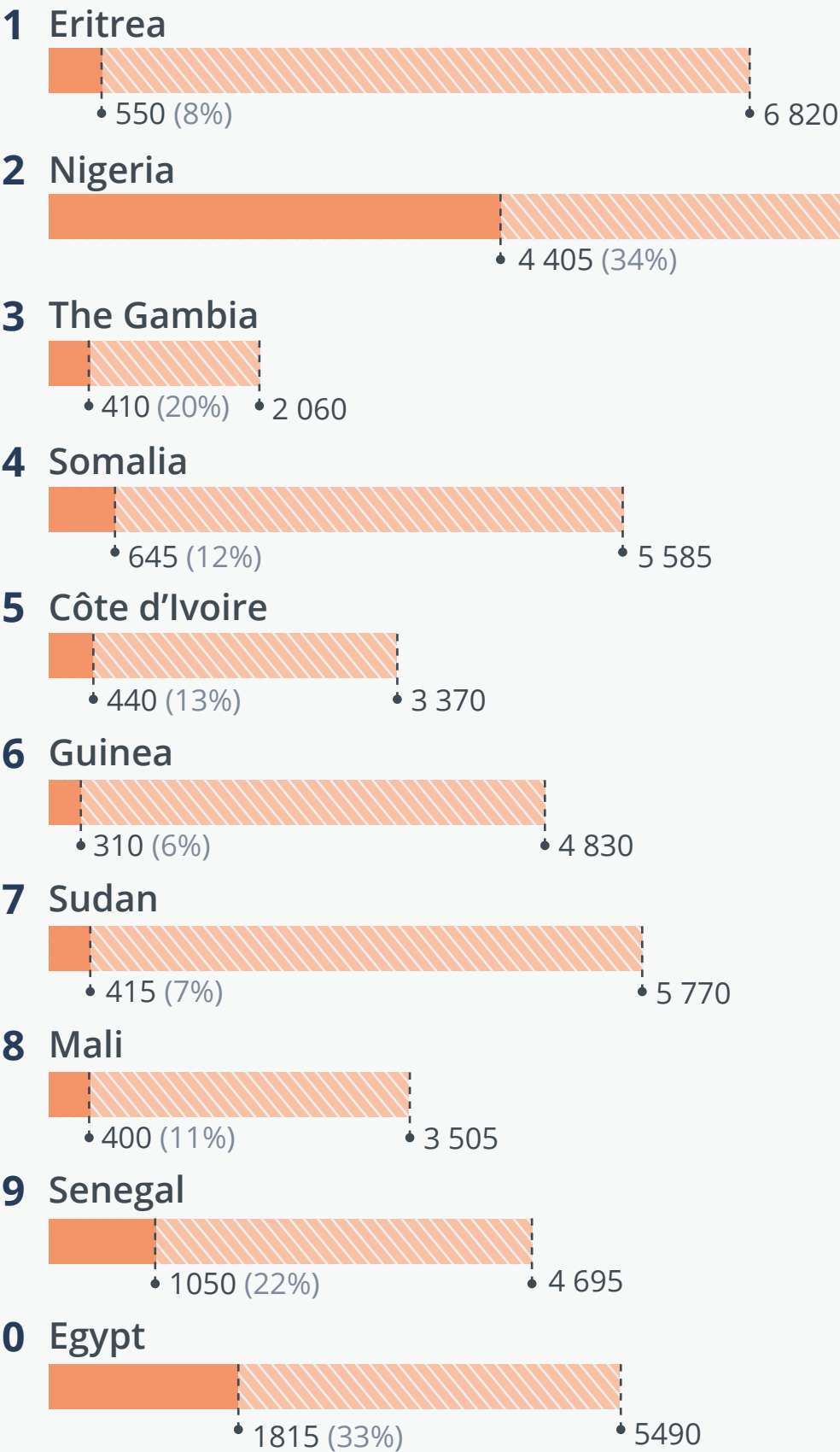


47 851
total arrivals



Annex 3 - migration flows: EU member states' returns of third country nationals in 2015

Third country nationals receiving return decisions (2015)
Third country nationals returned (2015)



The nationalities included represent the top 10 nationalities of arrivals to Italy between January-May 2016

Source: EUROSTAT



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