

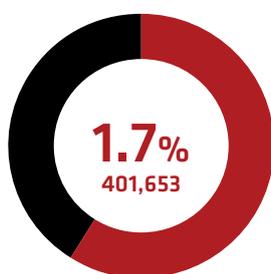


Diaspora engagement mapping NIGER

Facts & figures

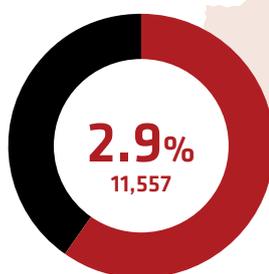
Emigration

% of emigrants in total population



♂ 59.1%
♀ 40.9%

% of which in the EU



♂ 59.8%
♀ 40.2%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **3.0%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **293**



Top countries of destination

Nigeria	118,119
Benin	77,300
Côte d'Ivoire	67,766
Togo	66,155
Burkina Faso	13,155



Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad²³



Voting from abroad⁴



Terminology: Niger refers to its diaspora as 'Nigériens abroad' ('Nigériens à l'extérieur').

Niger does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

Whilst Niger does not have a diaspora engagement policy, its soon-to-be-adopted migration policy will have a component on mobilising the diaspora.⁵ The diaspora component, formulated after the government conducted visits to key countries of destination to consult diaspora communities, is expected to focus on structuring the actions of diaspora associations, channelling diaspora investment, and facilitating remittances.⁶

1 *Loi no. 2014-60 portant modification de l'Ordonnance no. 84-33 (portant Code de la nationalité nigérienne)*. 2014. Niger. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4bbeee8e2.html>.

2 For citizens registered on the electoral roll. See: *Code électoral*. 2019. Niger.

3 Ambassade du Niger à Bruxelles. 2016. "Elections Présidentielle Et Législatives Dans La 9Ème Région : Forte Mobilisation De La Diaspora De La Belgique". <http://www.ambaniger-bruxelles.be/index.php/11-activites/70-elections-presidentielle-et-legislatives-dans-la-9eme-region-forte-mobilisation-de-la-diaspora-de-la-belgique>

4 Voting from abroad is at voting offices, 'bureaux de vote', currently housed in embassies/consulates. However the government has considered establishing some voting offices outside the embassy in France - Key informant interview, Directorate of Nigériens Abroad, 16 July 2020.

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2006** ● The **Rural Development Strategy and Action Plan**⁷ contains the following diaspora-related actions: inform Nigerien emigrants about investment opportunities in rural areas of Niger; increase remittances through signing conventions with financial stakeholders; and encourage interactions between migrants and local development actors. The strategy and action plan represents a relatively rare example of a government mainstreaming diaspora issues into a sectoral policy document.
- 2011** ● The **Strategy for Development and Security in Sahel-Saharan Areas of Niger**⁸ mentions the need to mobilise diaspora resources for local development, although it does not go into further detail about how these resources could be mobilised.
- 2017** ● The **Economic and Social Development Plan (PDES) 2017-2021**,⁹ Niger's current national development plan, focuses more of its diaspora-related content on issues relating to diplomacy and human and economic capital transfer. In particular, the PDES notes that the country's diplomatic network could be enlarged and that additional emphasis should be placed on organising and protecting Nigeriens abroad. It further states that diaspora knowhow could be leveraged to mobilise resources and structured investments to fight poverty in Niger.

» Trends & achievements

Diaspora engagement began to gain traction on Niger's national agenda at the beginning of the twenty-first century, with the High Council of Nigeriens Abroad (HCNE) being established in 2003 as a quasi-state authority to manage state-diaspora relations.¹⁰

The diaspora is now also represented by five diaspora deputies (one per continent) in the National Assembly.¹¹ This represents a significant commitment to diaspora political participation, although the diaspora vote has involved implementation challenges and may not be exercised in the 2020 general elections.

At the same time, migration and diaspora issues have been referenced in development and security policies over the years. This is unsurprising given that in the main regions of origin for Nigerien migration, remittances have been previously estimated at between 25% and 50% of household income.¹² In this regard, efforts have also been made by the Ministry of Finance to facilitate the use of formal remittance transfer channels.¹³ For instance, a project was developed to set-up "proximity counters" in major countries of destination in order to improve transfer services through cooperation with international banks.¹⁴

Niger has attracted increasing attention in recent years for its position as a major transit country for inter-regional migration flows, although a national migration policy – expected to include a section on diaspora engagement – has yet to be formally adopted.¹⁵

7 Ministère de l'hydraulique, de l'environnement et de la lutte contre la désertification. 2006. «Stratégie De Développement Rural». Niamey: République du Niger. <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/ner147214.pdf>.

8 Cabinet du Premier Ministre. 2011. «Stratégie pour la sécurité et le développement des zones Sahélo-Sahariennes». Niamey: République du Niger. https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/pdfs_sds_version_francaise.pdf.

9 Ministère du Plan, de l'Aménagement du Territoire et du Développement Communautaire. 2017. «Plan de Développement Economique et Social (PDES) 2017-2021». Niamey: République du Niger. <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/niger/docs/UNDP-NE-PDES%202017-2021.pdf>.

10 Key informant interview, Directorate of Nigeriens Abroad, 16 July 2020.

11 «IPU PARLINE Database: NIGER (Assemblée Nationale), Texte Intégral». 2020. *Archive.Ipu.Org*. Accessed July 22. <http://archive.ipu.org/parline-f/reports/1237.htm>.

12 International Centre for Migration Policy Development and International Organization for Migration. 2017. *A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation*. https://fmmwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/en-A_Survey_on_Migration_Policies_in_West_Africa_EN_SOFT2nd.pdf.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Key informant interview, Directorate of Nigeriens Abroad, 16 July 2020.

In practice, effectively implemented state-led activities that support diaspora engagement have been rare across the board.¹⁶ In recent years, diaspora communities, despite still being in the process of organising themselves given their relatively small size when compared with other West African diasporas (especially in the European context), have taken matters into their own hands. Nigeriens residing in France organised two forums in 2016 and 2019 in France,¹⁷ which attracted the state's ambassadorial support.

Currently, the government's diaspora objectives include establishing a framework to strengthen the protection of Nigeriens abroad and encourage their return to Niger.¹⁸ The government is also considering ways to strengthen the presence of the High Council of Nigeriens Abroad and to promote Nigerien culture and tourism internationally through its diaspora.¹⁹

Obstacles



- **Data collection:** The Nigerien government has a limited understanding of the size and characteristics of its diaspora.²⁰ This may be due to weak data collection capacities in Niger, irregular migrants' fears of negative consequences for sharing their information with authorities, and nascent structuring of diaspora representations in countries of destination. The government is planning to work with the National Institute of Statistics and the High Council of Nigeriens Abroad to strengthen diaspora data collection.²¹
- **Dissemination of information:** The development of a structure for Nigerien diaspora representations has been a relatively slow process – especially in Europe where migration is relatively recent and the Nigerien diaspora is smaller than those of other West African communities.²² This can constrain the government's outreach to the diaspora and the reach of its engagement initiatives.
- **Right to vote:** Niger's allowance of dual citizenship from 2014 effectively extended the right to vote in all national elections to Nigeriens abroad – a major step forwards for their full political participation. However, the 2016 elections revealed some teething problems with the exercise of this newly-won right. Some attributed these to a lack of consultation between the state and the diaspora regarding the implications of voting rights, as well as a lack of understanding about the locations of these new electoral constituents. In addition, there is speculation that the diaspora will not be able to vote in the next elections – ostensibly due to the COVID-19 pandemic preventing diaspora voter enrolment.²³
- **Scepticism of diaspora capital:** while Nigerien diaspora communities have been little impacted by the forms of internal ethnic strife that afflict many of its neighbouring countries, Niger's experiences implementing the TOKTEN programme highlighted opposition among domestic institutions to repatriating diaspora talent.²⁴

16 International Centre for Migration Policy Development and International Organization for Migration. 2017. *A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa*. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. https://fmmwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/en-A_Survey_on_Migration_Policies_in_West_Africa_EN_SOFT2nd.pdf.

17 Key informant interview, Council of Nigeriens in France, 16 July 2020.

18 Key informant interview, Directorate of Nigeriens Abroad, 16 July 2020.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Key informant interview, Council of Nigeriens in France, 16 July 2020.

23 WakatSéra. 2020. «Election Au Niger: Ce Sera Sans La Diaspora!», 2020. <https://www.wakatsera.com/election-au-niger-ce-sera-sans-la-diaspora/>.

24 Key informant interview, Directorate of Nigeriens Abroad, 16 July 2020.

SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



Diaspora-initiated forums

NETWORKING + PARTNERSHIPS

While diaspora forums have been initiated by a number of African governments, Niger's diaspora has demonstrated that such initiatives can be diaspora-led. For instance, although the state organised a diaspora forum in 2012, the Nigerien diaspora in France arranged diaspora meetings ("rencontres") in Europe in 2016 and 2019.²⁵ Both were strategically organised in the city of Lille to facilitate access to Nigeriens in France and the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands. The meetings serve as an interesting example of the diaspora initiating forums themselves before engaging state representatives (the Delegate-Minister for Nigeriens Abroad chaired the 2019 meeting, for instance).²⁶

Diaspora media

NETWORKING + PARTNERSHIPS

Nigerdiaspora.net is an online platform by the diaspora and for the diaspora, administered from Brussels. It aims to serve as a virtual space bringing together Nigerien communities across the world by providing information and facilitating dialogue. The platform is regularly updated and provides quality news reporting on a wide range of themes, while also running special features, such as the "Nigerien of the week" (Nigérien de la semaine), which recognises diaspora talent.²⁷ The platform has achieved a strong following, with its Facebook page attracting more than 40,000 followers.²⁸

Transfer of diaspora competencies

HUMANCAPITAL

In 2007,²⁹ the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) established a Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme³⁰ in Niger as part of a long-running global United Nations programme established in many countries since the 1970s. As in other countries, TOKTEN Niger identified diaspora talent and attempted to engage them in their country of origin.³¹ As part of the programme, Nigerien institutions selected diaspora experts whom they wished to work with. The programme then covered the experts' travel expenses and living costs for short missions.³² TOKTEN Niger began with a focus on the education sector.³³

25 Hamani, Moussa. 2019. «2Ème Rencontre De La Diaspora Nigérienne D'Europe À Lille En France :«L'Approche De L'Unité Par La Solidarité», Thème Retenu». *Lesahel.Org*, 2019. <https://www.lesahel.org/2eme-rencontre-de-la-diaspora-nigerienne-deurope-a-lille-en-france-lapproche-de-lunite-par-la-solidarite-theme-retenu/>.

26 Ibid.

27 «Nigérien De La Semaine». 2020. *Nigerdiaspora.Net*. Accessed July 22. <http://nigerdiaspora.net/index.php/le-nigerien-de-la-semaine-archives>.

28 "Nigerdiaspora". 2020. *Facebook.Com*. Accessed July 22. <https://www.facebook.com/Nigerdiaspora-139363696162040/>.

29 Nigerdiaspora.net. 2007. «Projet TOKTEN-NIGER», 2007. <http://www.nigerdiaspora.net/index.php/diaspora-archives/item/9464-projet-tokten-niger>.

30 Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. 2010. «La Migration Hautement Qualifiée Au Niger». Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/45677387.pdf>.

31 Ibid.

32 Nigerdiaspora.net. 2007. "Projet TOKTEN-NIGER", 2007. <http://www.nigerdiaspora.net/index.php/diaspora-archives/item/9464-projet-tokten-niger>.

33 Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. 2010. «La Migration Hautement Qualifiée Au Niger». Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/45677387.pdf>.

Annex:

List of actors

Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO)

Niger is a member of the African Union and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent Nigeriens as part of the AU CIDO Continental Meetings.

- **National institutions**

Inter-ministerial committee on migration policy development, 2007

The committee was established in 2007 and placed under the authority of the Ministry of Interior.³⁴ It is composed of officials from the main ministries involved in migration management. International organisations and representatives from civil society are also invited to participate. In 2014, it developed the first draft National Migration Policy, although the document is yet to be formally adopted by the government.³⁵ The committee comprises various sub-committees, including a sub-committee on migration and development which discusses diaspora-related matters and is chaired by the foreign ministry's Directorate of Nigeriens Abroad.³⁶

Directorate for Nigeriens Abroad (DNE)

The DNE of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad is the main directorate responsible for state-led diaspora engagement. The DNE is led at the political level by a Delegate-Minister for Nigeriens Abroad. The directorate also houses the Reception and Orientation Office for Nigeriens Abroad (Bureau d'Accueil et d'Orientation des Nigériens à l'Extérieur), which serves Nigeriens abroad seeking information, advice and orientation services on engagement opportunities, especially on investment and return.³⁷

High Council of Nigeriens Abroad (HCNE), 2003

The HCNE, under the tutelage Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad, was established to facilitate state-diaspora exchanges and better structure diaspora representation.³⁸ The HCNE has opened offices (or "sections") in countries of destination.³⁹ The HCNE has a Permanent Secretary attached to the foreign ministry who, along with other foreign ministry officials, can be dispatched abroad to help Nigeriens in need of assistance.⁴⁰

34 International Centre for Migration Policy Development and International Organization for Migration. 2017. *A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation*. https://fmmwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/en-A_Survey_on_Migration_Policies_in_West_Africa_EN_SOFT2nd.pdf.

35 Ibid.

36 Key informant interview, Directorate of Nigeriens Abroad, 16 July 2020.

37 Daouda, Hassane. 2013. «Remise Officielle De Fournitures De Bureau Et Équipements Informatiques Au Profit Des Nigériens À L'Extérieur : Renforcer Les Capacités De La Diaspora Nigérienne». *Nigerdiaspora.Net*, 2013. <https://nigerdiaspora.net/index.php/diaspora-archives/item/63899-remise-officielle-de-fournitures-de-bureau-et-%C3%A9quipements-informatiques-au-profit-des-nig%C3%A9riens-%C3%A0-l%E2%80%99ext%C3%A9rieur-renforcer-les-capacit%C3%A9s-de-la-diaspora-nig%C3%A9rienne>.

38 *Acte no 33/CN du 31 octobre 1991 portant création d'un Haut Conseil des Nigériens à l'extérieur*. 1991. *Niger*. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=38474&p_country=NER&p_count=227.

39 International Centre for Migration Policy Development and International Organization for Migration. 2017. *A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation*. https://fmmwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/en-A_Survey_on_Migration_Policies_in_West_Africa_EN_SOFT2nd.pdf.

40 Key informant interview, Directorate of Nigeriens Abroad, 16 July 2020.

National Agency for the Promotion of Employment (ANPE)

The ANPE, which comes under the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security, serves as an intermediary between employers and Nigerien jobseekers for employment on the international labour market.⁴¹ It delivers work authorisations to foreign workers and implements measures to facilitate the transfer of remittances.⁴² Although the ANPE is responsible for the placement of Nigerien workers abroad, its capacities in this regard are considered limited.⁴³

Diaspora organisations in Europe



Although the High Council of Nigeriens Abroad has established “sections” in several European countries, including France and Belgium,⁴⁴ overall there are relatively few Nigerien diaspora organisations across Europe. Organisations appear to be concentrated in France – unsurprising given the country’s position as Nigeriens’ preferred European country of destination.

Association des Nigériens de Nancy (ANIN) France

☑ Integration activities

ANIN brings together Nigeriens residing in the city of Nancy.

Association des Nigériens de Rennes (ANIRE) France 2013

☑ Integration activities

ANIRE brings together Nigeriens living in Rennes. It aims to create a “solidarity space” for its members and to raise awareness of Niger.⁴⁵

Association des Nigériens et Amis du Grand Nord France (ANAGNGF) France

☑ Integration activities

Association bringing together Nigeriens residing in northern France. ANAGNGF has previously supported the organisation of the diaspora meetings in Lille.⁴⁶

41 International Centre for Migration Policy Development and International Organization for Migration. 2017. *A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa*. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. https://fmmwestafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/en-A_Survey_on_Migration_Policies_in_West_Africa_EN_SOFT2nd.pdf.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Nigerdiaspora.net. 2018. «Communiqué N°009/04/2018 Du Comité De Mise En Place Du Haut Conseil Des Nigériens De L'Extérieur (HCNE)-Section De Belgique», 2018. <http://nigerdiaspora.net/index.php/niger-diaspora/3507-communique-n-009-04-2018-du-comite-de-mise-en-place-du-haut-conseil-des-nigeriens-de-l-exterieur-hcne-section-de-belgique>.

45 «Association Des Nigériens De Rennes (ANIRE) - Tarbiyya Tatali». 2020. *Tarbiyya-Tatali.Org*. Accessed July 22. <http://www.tarbiyya-tatali.org/?-Association-des-Nigeriens-de->

46 Aniamy.com. 2016. «Rencontre Des Nigériens De La Diaspora Dans La Salle De Conférences Du Stadium De Lille, En France : Rencontre Historique De La Diaspora Nigérienne D'Europe», 2016. <http://news.aniamy.com/h/76441.html>.

Conseil des Nigériens en Europe (CNE) France 2016

☑ Integration activities

Nascent umbrella organisation established with the goal of bringing together organisations representing Nigeriens across Europe.⁴⁷

Conseil des Nigériens en France (CoNiF) France

☑ Development activities

☑ Integration activities

CONIF serves as the French section of the High Council of Nigeriens Abroad and principal association for Nigeriens in France. Its mission statement is to bring together Nigeriens in France to promote brotherhood, solidarity and culture, and to support innovative projects that contribute to development in Niger.

Diaspora Association of Republic of Niger Nationals in the UK (DARN-UK) UK

☑ Integration activities

Association bringing together Nigeriens in the UK.

Nigériens de Belgique Belgium

☑ Integration activities

Association aiming to providing information and facilitate discussion amongst Nigeriens in Belgium.

Réseau des Femmes Nigériennes de France France

☑ Development activities

☑ Integration activities

The network aims to represent Nigerien women residing in France, including in dialogue with national institutions. It also seeks to support projects that enable the integration of Nigerien women in France, as well as international development projects.⁴⁸

47 Ibid.

48 «réseau des femmes nigériennes de france | Helloasso». 2020. *Helloasso*. Accessed July 22. <https://www.helloasso.com/associations/reseau-des-femmes-nigeriennes-de-france>.

Written by: **Loksan Harley**
Edited by: **EUDiF**
August 2020

Implemented by



ICMPD

International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

Funded by
the European Union

