



# Diaspora engagement mapping EGYPT

## Facts & figures

Terminology: Egypt refers to its diaspora as 'Egyptian citizens abroad'  
(المواطنون المصريون بالخارج al-mawāṭiṇūn al-maṣriyyūn bi-l-khārig)

### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections  
for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



### Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: 4.93%  
Remittances inflow (USD million): 19,532

### Voting from abroad:

At embassies/consulates



### Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from UNDESA (2024) and remittances from the World Bank (2023).

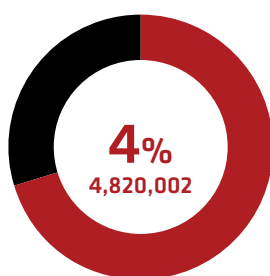
### Emigration



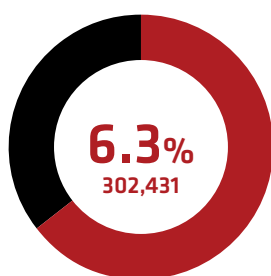
% of emigrants in  
total population



% of which  
in the EU



♂ 70.4%  
♀ 29.6%



♂ 65.2%  
♀ 34.8%

### Top countries of destination<sup>3</sup>

Saudi Arabia	1,498,313
United Arab Emirates	841,883
Jordan	767,948
Kuwait	449,863
United States of America	262,714

1 As of 2004, Egyptian mothers married to non-Egyptian fathers may pass their Egyptian nationality to their children. See Law no. 154 of 2004 amending some provisions of law no. 26 of 1975 concerning Egyptian nationality, Official Gazette, Vol. 28, 14 July 2004, English version available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/58bebc444.html>

2 Historically, voting rights for Egyptians abroad (whether or not they were dual citizens) was a politically sensitive subject. It was only after the Egyptian revolution in 2011 that attitudes started to shift and Egyptians abroad were permitted to vote in national elections.

3 Revised Constitution 2014, Article 208, English version available: [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt\\_2014.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf)

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 1983** ● **Law 111: Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law** outlines the Egyptian government's efforts to create legislation covering Egyptians abroad.<sup>4</sup> The law incentivises Egyptians to be engaged in the development of Egypt, although awareness of this law by most Egyptians is low.
- 2014** ● **Revision of the Constitution of Egypt** established the state's commitment to take care of the interests of Egyptians residing abroad: to protect them and ensure their rights and freedoms, and to enable them to perform their general duties towards the state and society and make a contribution to the development of the country.<sup>5</sup>
- 2015** ● **Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS): Egypt Vision 2030** includes diaspora engagement as something which contributes to and impacts Egypt's development agenda through encouraging diaspora remittances, investments, and skills transfer for the socio-economic development of the country.<sup>6</sup>

### » Trends & achievements

From the 1970s onwards, Egypt has implemented various initiatives to engage with its diaspora. The focus of government policy was formerly on labour migration and increasing contributions of migrant remittances to the country's economy, while placing controls on migration to prevent this leading to labour shortages at home. Egyptian policymakers have tended to view what it has traditionally referred to as 'permanent migrants' (i.e. Egyptians living specifically in the West) as educated and successful, and have developed schemes within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other agencies to promote return migration and diaspora investment, and to stem brain drain. This has included providing government-paid trips to Egypt to promote diaspora return and/or investments, as well as targeted outreach to diaspora members via embassies and consulates. As Tsourapas argues, this has "contributed to a multi-tier emigration policy that has favoured Egyptians in the West at the expense of those residing in Arab countries."<sup>7</sup>

In September 2015, the reestablishment of the Ministry of State for Emigration and Egyptian Expatriate Affairs demonstrated the government's will and strengthened its capacity to engage with Egyptians in the diaspora. This reflects the awareness and commitment of the Egyptian government to the importance of diaspora engagement.

Currently, Egypt's strategic objectives vis-à-vis emigration and Egyptian citizens abroad include:<sup>8</sup> encouraging and increasing the contribution of expatriate Egyptians to invest in the country; increasing the volume of remittances of Egyptians abroad; strengthening the links of Egyptians abroad and their children with the homeland (especially the second and third generation); and protecting the interests of Egyptians abroad, providing them with full support, and solving problems they face abroad.

In early 2020, the Ministry of State for Emigration and Egyptian Expatriate Affairs stated it had concluded international cooperation agreements between the Ministry of State for Immigration and a number of European countries (Germany, Italy, Austria, the European Union) in the areas of migration and development, with the aim of promoting circular migration, and productive diaspora return.

4 <http://www.emigration.gov.eg/DefaultEn/Pages/lawdetails.aspx?lawCode=12> (Arabic only)

5 <http://www.emigration.gov.eg/DefaultAr/Pages/default.aspx> (Arabic only)

6 English version available at: [http://www.arabdevelopmentportal.com/sites/default/files/publication/sds\\_egypt\\_vision\\_2030.pdf](http://www.arabdevelopmentportal.com/sites/default/files/publication/sds_egypt_vision_2030.pdf)

7 Gerasimos Tsourapas (2018, 'Egypt: Migration and Diaspora Politics in an Emerging Transit Country', available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/egypt-migration-and-diaspora-politics-emerging-transit-country>. See also Mai Abu Samra 2018 ; and Lea Muller Funk 2017, 'Managing Distance: Examining Egyptian Emigration and Diaspora Policies' in *Egypte Monde Arabe* 15:17 (available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/ema/3656?lang=en> )

8 <http://www.emigration.gov.eg/DefaultAr/Pages/achivementdetails.aspx?AchCode=7> (Arabic only)

## Obstacles



- **Political polarisation** in Egypt and in the diaspora has contributed to a lack of trust between the government of Egypt and its diaspora.
- **Government bureaucracy:** The bureaucratic nature of many Egyptian government departments presents a major barrier to diaspora engagement. Egyptians abroad actively try to minimise their interactions with the Egyptian state as they view this as a significant limitation on realising their initiatives in Egypt (and abroad).
- **Reluctance to Return:** Egyptians abroad show little interest in returning to live in Egypt, in large part due to a lack of economic opportunities and an increasingly tense domestic and security situation in the country.<sup>9</sup>

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### Egyptians abroad e-portal

Egypt's e-portal provides digital services to Egyptians abroad. These include a diaspora complaints portal, guides on investment opportunities in Egypt (especially in the housing and infrastructure sectors, but also IT), remittance service registration with the Central Bank of Egypt, guides on housing for Egyptians abroad, civil rights and obligations guide (including military service, nationality and migration documents, election guides), a Question and Answer portal, a 'Science Hub' for skills and knowledge collaboration and exchange; and an e-fatwa service providing religious guidance. "An hour with the minister" is a series of weekly meetings, often online, with groups of expatriates in different countries to consistently connect with them, listen to their needs and update them on the developments in Egypt.

DIGITAL

### Tax relief and mobile banking services

Only approximately 10% of remittances to Egypt are sent formally, entering the Egyptian banking system. In order to promote greater remittance inflows and to strengthen hard currency reserves, Egypt offers Egyptians abroad the opportunity of ten-year tax relief on remittance transfers if they register with the National Bank of Egypt. The National Bank of Egypt also provides e-banking and mobile banking services, and Egypt has launched debt certificates denominated in dollars and euros to ease hard currency shortages.

REMITTANCES

### Enhancing governmental capacity to attract expatriate investments into Egypt 2021-2023

In partnership with EUDiF, GAFI seeks to further strengthen its expertise in attracting expatriate investment. The Capacity Development Lab action's design and outputs can be of interest to other investment promotion agencies or government institutions working on expatriate investment.

INVESTMENT+  
CAPACITY BUILDING

<sup>9</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/284159/inside-egypt-diaspora-wants-home-again.aspx>

### Dialogue Center for Egyptian Youth Abroad (MEDCE) 2022

In its effort to promote dialogues and services to Egyptians living abroad, the Ministry of Emigration established a student centre in 2022. This first of a kind initiative in Egypt is considered the main platform connecting Egyptian students abroad to Egypt and to Egyptian representations abroad. The platform provides services such as internship opportunities. As of 2022, it had more than 1300 registered on the platform. In 2023, the ministry opened the “MEDCE Student Ambassador Application” to select ambassadors within the network.

### Government diaspora conferences (2024)

In August 2024, Egypt held the fifth edition of the Conference for Egyptians Abroad, building on previous editions focused on investment, real estate, and services. This edition launched a mobile app for expatriates, introduced a new emergency insurance fund, and hosted a roundtable with diaspora investors.

## Annex:

# List of Actors

### Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

#### African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO)

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

#### **Arab League & Community of Sahel-Saharan States**

Egypt is also a member of the Arab League (based in Cairo) and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States. <http://www.leagueofarabstates.net/ar/Pages/default.aspx> (Arabic; English version under construction) [https://web.archive.org/web/20060731190126/http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/RECs/cen\\_sad.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20060731190126/http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/RECs/cen_sad.htm)

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

#### **Department for Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates' Affairs**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs absorbed the former Ministry of State for Emigration and Expatriate Affairs in 2024 and established the Department for Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates' Affairs (DEEA), and is now leading efforts to better engage expatriates.

#### Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The MFA shares responsibility for Egyptians abroad with MoSEEA, especially in terms of providing consular services and assistance through Egyptian missions worldwide.

- At sub-ministerial level

#### **Higher Committee for Migration**

Established in 1977, the High Committee's mandate includes policy development, coherence, and coordination of all bodies involved in mobility management.<sup>10</sup>

#### 2020 General Authority for Investments and Free Zones Expatriates Unit

The General Authority for Investment and Free Zones (GAFI), in cooperation with the Ministry of Immigration and Egyptian Expatriates Affairs, created an Expatriates Unit whose focus is to encourage Egyptian expatriate investment.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mei.edu/publications/regulation-migration-egypt> ; see also <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Newvtr/son/html/laws02.htm> (Arabic only)

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 430+ institutions](#)



## Diaspora organisations in Europe

Egyptian diaspora organisations in Europe are generally limited to professional and business associations, examples of which include:

Read more about diaspora organisations in "[Starting guide: What is a diaspora organisation](#)"



### **British Egyptian Society** UK 1990

#### Development activities

BES was set up to further British-Egyptian relations outside politics. Its mission is to exchange ideas and knowledge, and to improve understanding, of the history, culture, arts, music, literature, religions, beliefs and practices of Egypt. BES holds regular public meetings, lectures, debates and events in the UK in support of this aim, and often contributes grants in support of Egyptian scholars, Egyptian museum specialists and conservators on attachment to the British Museum. It also supports some development projects in Egypt.

### **Conseil franco-égyptien des affaires** France

#### Development activities

The council's mission is to promote and strengthen bilateral business, trade and investment relations between Egypt and France and to act as a problem-solving link. It is composed of 20 businesspersons from both countries: heads of major corporations in France who have an active interest in Egypt and a diverse group of Egyptian business actors with close ties to France. It promotes French investments in Egypt, conducts media advocacy about Egypt in Europe and has been involved in many projects to train the Egyptian workforce in various fields.

### **France Alumni Egypt Network (FAEN)** France

#### Development activities

An initiative of CAMPUS France Egypt, FAEN connects professionals in Egypt and across the Egyptian diaspora for education, training, and employment opportunities.

### **Egyptian Doctors Association in Ireland**

### **Egyptian Doctors in Germany**

#### Development activities

### **Egyptian-German Association for Helping Disabled Children** Germany 2007

#### Development activities

An NGO founded to raise awareness of mental disabilities, it provides guidelines for parents on how to support their children, as well as speech therapy and special training for children, parents and therapists in Egypt. Specialised doctors from Egypt diagnose the cases and provide therapeutic programmes.

## **Egyptian Medical Society** UK

### **Development activities**

The Egyptian Medical Society-UK is a non political, non religious, non profitable charity established to serve Egyptian doctors in the UK. It aims to help promote Egyptian doctors working in the UK within both the local community and also to support those in Egypt. As well as local UK events, it provides support and charitable contributions to medical establishments in Egypt.

- **Faith groups :**

## **Al-Azhar University**

### **Development activities**

Al-Azhar University is a faith group that maintains links with Egyptian communities abroad, both via MoS-SEA's e-fatwa service, and via Mosques in countries of residence.

## **Egyptian Coptic Church**

### **Development activities**

The Egyptian Coptic Church has branches in several European countries.

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