

Tunisian voices in France: work, dignity, and opportunity



EU Trust Fund for Africa - North of Africa

T05.1950 Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM)



EUTF PARTNER:

Office Français pour l'Immigration et l'Intégration (OFII)



COUNTRY:
TUNISIA



BUDGET:
EUR 6M



From 01/2022
to 12/2025

Objective of the project

Increase mutually beneficial legal migration and mobility between Tunisia on the one hand, and France and the European countries on the other.

Key successes

- 98 first-time migrants placed.
- 33 job placements carried out.
- 2252 teachers and learners from training institutions targeted by awareness-raising actions.

The story of transforming lives

Imen, Ameni and Belhassen are among the Tunisians who moved to France through the THAMM-OFII programme. Their voices illustrate the challenges and the hopes of those who choose regular mobility to build a stable future.

Imen, 26 years old from Tunis, works as a nurse assistant. She recalls the decisive moment when she discovered the programme: *“One day, while consulting the site of ANETI (National Agency for Employment and Self Employment), I came across a job offer for the recruitment of care agents in France. I decided to apply, and shortly afterwards I received an email inviting me to an interview. For me, it was like a waking dream. I really didn't expect to be able to go to France so easily”*. She describes the warm welcome that marked her arrival: *“Coop emploi teams immediately made me feel confident and introduced me to the staff at the centre. They took the time to explain my assignment and answer all my questions. Then they accompanied me to my accommodation, helped me carry my suitcases, and even showed me where I could buy halal groceries. This welcome, this kindness, made all the difference”*. Adjusting was not without effort, but she underlines that integration comes with perseverance: *“With will, patience and work, you end up finding your place”*. Living in a shared flat with another Tunisian helped her



©OFII (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnJMTndxgo0>)

feel less isolated: *“Thanks to her, I feel less alone, and the change was much easier to live with”*.

Ameni, 39, also works as a nurse assistant. For her, the programme was the realisation of a long-term wish: *“For a long time I was looking for a chance to go abroad, and I finally found it thanks to the THAMM-OFII programme”*. She insists on the benefits of the experience: *“This adventure represents real added value for my career, new skills, different techniques, another culture. I am very happy to live this experience”*. She highlights what convinced her to take the step: *“The fact that the procedure was legal, with free training and supportive interviews, really encouraged me”*. The contract is for a fixed term, renewable or not. *“A*



possible return to Tunisia is not a problem for me. I will find my family there and come back with a new and rewarding professional experience", she concludes.

Belhassen joined the company SERBE in Normandy. He retraces the recruitment process in detail: "*I applied on LinkedIn, then I went through the necessary interviews with the company SERBE. On the day the documents were ready, I made an appointment with the OFII in Tunisia to finalize the necessary procedures*". Belhassen recalls that from the moment he arrived in France, he found a good atmosphere within the company SERBE. "*The HR manager supported me from the very beginning: he came to pick me up at the airport and helped me find temporary accommodation to settle in. The atmosphere within the company was really pleasant, which is why I chose to stay with them and plan to continue working with them for two years, or even longer*". The employer also recognises the benefits. The director of SERBE explained: "*We had great difficulty finding workers in France, and this programme gave us motivated and well-prepared employees*".

Taken together, these testimonies show how regular mobility creates opportunities for Tunisian workers while supporting employers in France who struggle to fill positions. Beyond contracts and numbers, these are meaningful stories of motivation, welcome and integration achieved step by step.

How did the EUTF help?

Clear and fair recruitment. Through the THAMM programme, Tunisians were offered a transparent process to apply for legal jobs in France. Managed by OFII and ANETI, the recruitment matched people's skills with real labour market needs. For participants like Imen, this meant applying online and being guided step by step until she reached her new workplace.

Support at every stage. From preparing documents in Tunisia to arriving in France, participants were supported with visas, contracts, residence permits, and orientation. They were also helped to settle in, with housing support and advice on daily life. This made the transition smoother and reassured both workers and employers.

Training and skills recognition. The programme invested in complementary training and recognition of qualifications. Language courses, technical preparation, and health and safety orientations equipped migrants to perform in their jobs with confidence. Companies like SERBE underlined how this training ensured that the workers were ready from the first day to join the workplace.

Keys to Success

Personal motivation and welcoming environments.

Participants like Imen, Ameni, and Belhassen showed strong determination to succeed abroad. Their willingness to adapt, learn, and build new lives was central to their integration. Being supported by colleagues, living with fellow Tunisians, and receiving help from employers reduced feelings of isolation and gave participants confidence. For Imen, the warm welcome she received on arrival was decisive.

Strong partnerships. The cooperation between Tunisian institutions (ANETI, Ministry of Employment) and French actors (OFII, training centres, employers) ensured that contracts were fair, jobs matched real demand, and integration was supported throughout.

Tailored preparation. Language training, technical courses, and orientation provided the practical tools migrants needed to adjust to life and work in France. This reassured employers and helped migrants quickly find their place.

Building on Success

Opening more opportunities. The success of the programme shows that legal pathways can be scaled up. Expanding recruitment to other sectors and regions could benefit more young Tunisians and help meet labour shortages in Europe.

Circular benefits. Many participants see their experience as temporary, knowing they can return to Tunisia with savings, professional experience, and new skills. This circular migration strengthens both sides: workers benefit personally, while Tunisia gains from their skills and networks.

Lasting cooperation. The programme also reinforced ties between Tunisian and French institutions, creating mechanisms for fair recruitment, recognition of qualifications, and follow-up of workers. These structures can support sustainable mobility well beyond the current programme.



EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa

Disclaimer

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union through the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). Its contents are the sole responsibility of InProvE and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

The research for this success story was conducted between February 2025 and May 2025, based on document reviews, interviews, and email correspondence, and presents the situation at the moment.