

Minister Frattini in Tunisia and Morocco: agreements on immigration and economic and cultural cooperation

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The Minister met in Tunis with his counterpart Abdelwab Abdallah and the President, El Abidine Ben Ali. He explained that Italy is ready to examine requests for asylum, but in countries of origin. Boats found in national waters will be received, but those navigating in international waters will be sent back to the countries they came from. Tunisia made a further commitment to cooperating with the Italian authorities in the identification of illegal immigrants.

Discussed also was the further development of political and economic cooperation, for example Italy's influence in the European Union and the reinforcement of sectors such as tourism and energy. Regarding tourism, the minister announced a visit to Tunisia in the near future with neo-Minister Michela Brambilla.

Italy-Morocco, Frattini: the guard is high against drugs and terrorism

Active collaboration and a common strategy between Italy and Morocco to stem the penetration of extremist terrorism: this was the theme Frattini dealt with when meeting with Moroccan interior minister Chakib Ben Moussa, and the two agreed to keep the guard high. The minister expressed his concern for the possible intersection of drug routes with the fundamentalist terrorism moving up the western coast toward the countries of North Africa.

There is particular alarm on the immigration front, both as regards border controls by the Rabat authorities as well as the integration of the Moroccan community in Italy, whose over 300,000 persons makes it the most numerous in our country.

Just as in Tunisia, in Morocco too Minister Frattini stressed that legal immigration must not be jeopardized by illegal boat landings, and recognized the importance of seasonal labour, citing as an example what has been happening between Spain and Morocco for some years now.

In Rabat Minister Frattini signed four bilateral economic and cultural cooperation agreements: a development cooperation agreement for the next three years, a debt conversion programme for 20 million euro in support of Moroccan human development initiatives, and technical and financial assistance for five microcredit associations. In the sphere of education, Italy offered Morocco collaboration on distance literacy training, thanks to an agreement with Nettuno UNI university.

http://www.esteri.it/MAE/EN/Sala_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2009/05/20090514_TunisiaMarocco.htm?LANG=EN