



# The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mobility and legal migration schemes:

## Challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities



*16th December 2021*

*Virtual Meeting on legal migration,  
with a focus on labour migration*

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# Agenda

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1. **State of play: Obstacles to mobility**
2. **Implications for migration governance**
3. **Challenges and opportunities ahead**
4. **Useful links**

## 1 | State of play: Obstacles to mobility



### *Phases of restrictions*

**First months of the pandemic:** Border closing

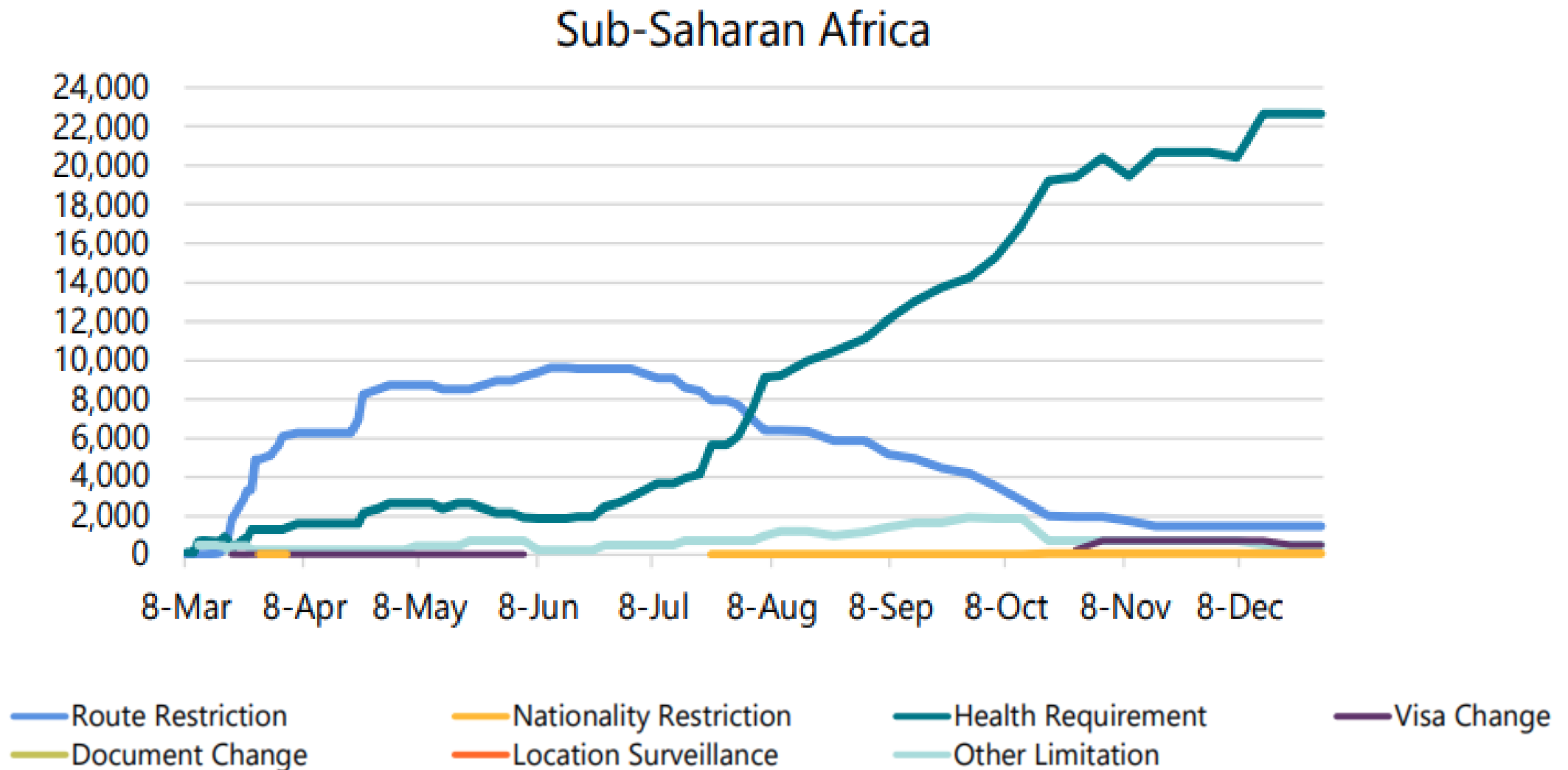
**Then:** More targeted measures, including testing and quarantine

**At the moment:** Growing focus on vaccination status as a prerequisite

### **Other obstacles to mobility:**

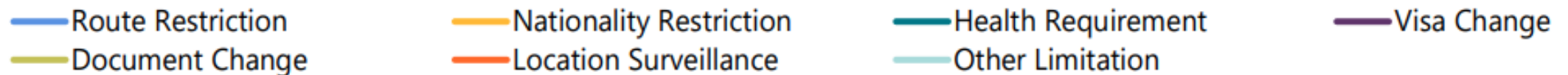
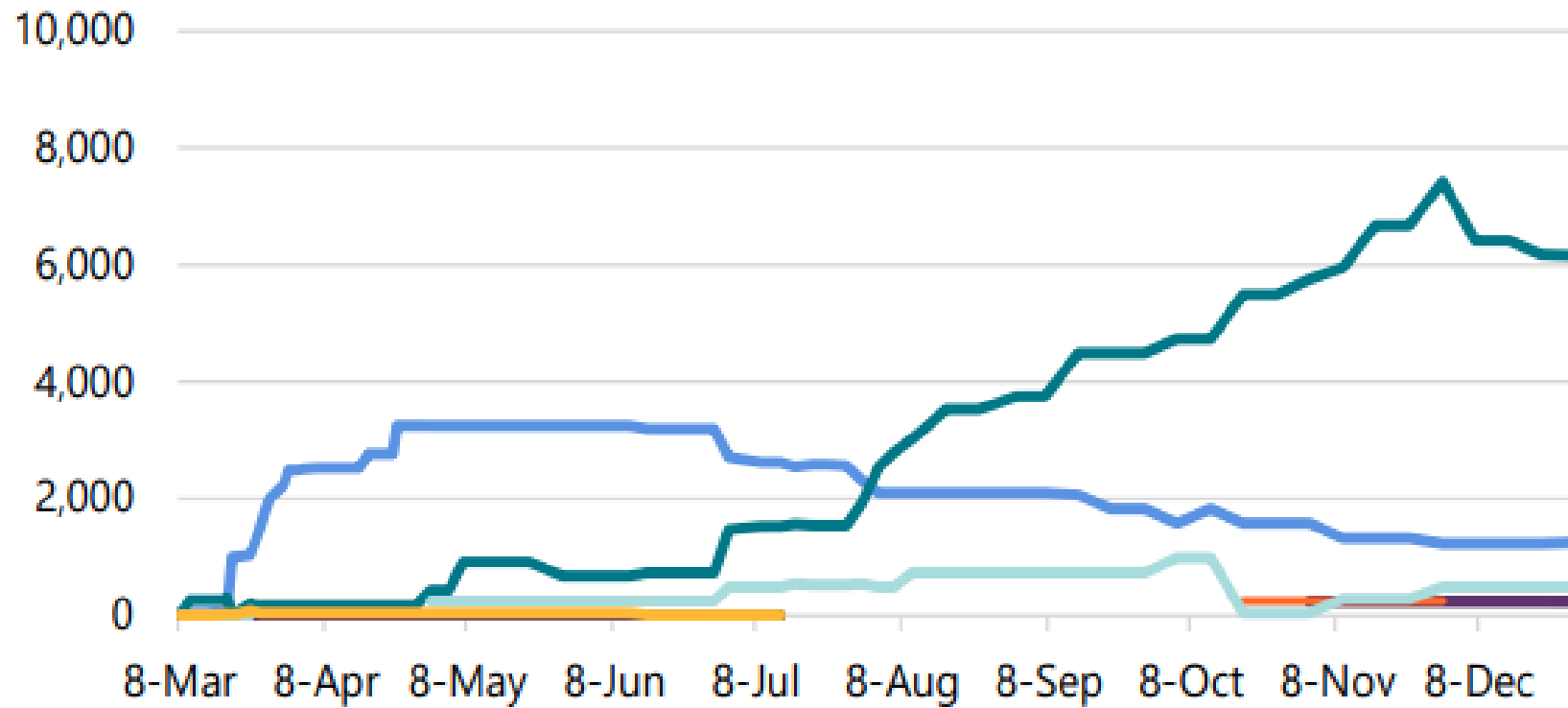
- Pause on visa processing as consulates and relevant services closed, sometimes for extended periods of time
- Fall in demand for labour in sectors affected by social distancing, lockdown, and travel restrictions
- Employers also reluctant to engage in recruiting foreign workers due to the uncertainty of the situation
- Issues faced by some workers (e.g., stranded) making workers themselves reluctant to migrate, or employers reluctant to run this risk

# 1 | 1. Travel measures implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa, March-December 2020



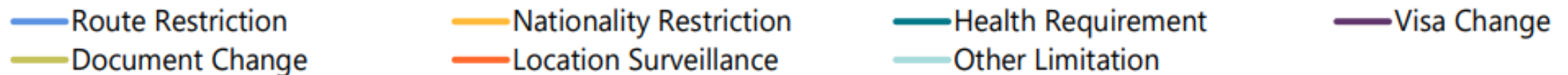
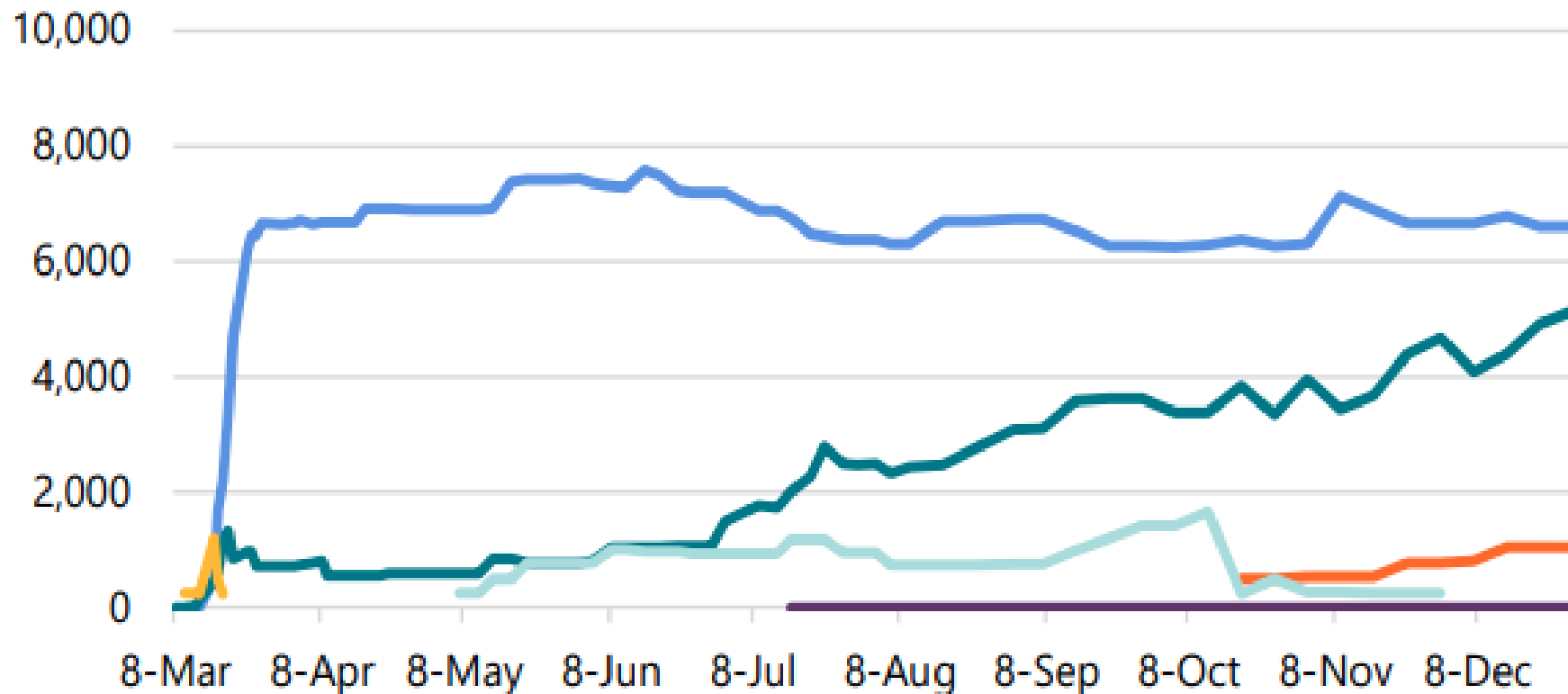
## 1|2. Travel measures implemented in the Middle East and North Africa, March-December 2020

### Middle East and North Africa



# 1 | 3. Travel measures implemented in the European Economic Area, March-December 2020

## European Economic Area



## 2| Implications for migration governance

**Progress made on migration governance**, with many countries adopting or updating their migration policies or strategies

**But new priorities related to the management of the pandemic**, which may overshadow these recent efforts at national and regional levels, but also among donors and development partners

At the same time, renewed attention to managing border and mobility:

- 1 **Investments in consular services**, and awareness of migrants of the services available
- 2 **Cooperation with destination countries**, especially to coordinate on return and reintegration
- 3 **Healthcare access**, as a public health priority
- 4 **More regulations** and more incentives to comply with regulations for **recruiters**
- 5 **Improving data collection**, to inform contingency planning in countries of destination and origin

### 3 | Challenges and opportunities ahead

- 1 New public health measures risk **leaving out low- and middle-income countries**  
Prospect of an unequal reopening, with knock-on effects for development
- 2 **Labour shortages** across a range of sectors in Europe
- 3 **Close dialogues** are critical to restart mobility, and avoid uncoordinated health measures (again)  
  
Both **at bilateral and regional levels**
- 4 European and African partners still need to address **broader barriers to mobility**



## 4 | 1. Useful links

**Upcoming:** COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2021 (2022)

[\*How Can Europe Deliver on the Potential of Talent Partnerships?\*](#), Kate Hooper,  
December 2021

[\*Can Omicron Finally Get the World to Cooperate on Pandemic Mobility Management?\*](#), Meghan Benton, December 2021

[\*Labor Shortages during the Pandemic and Beyond: What Role Can Immigration Policy Play?\*](#), Kate Hooper, October 2021

[\*Future Scenarios for Global Mobility in the Shadow of Pandemic\*](#), Meghan Benton,  
July 2021

## 4|2. Useful links

[From Unilateral Response to Coordinated Action: How Can Mobility Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa Adapt to the Public-Health Challenges of COVID-19?](#), Ling San Lau, Kate Hooper, and Monette Zard, June 2021

[Deepening Labor Migration Governance at a Time of Immobility: Lessons from Ghana and Senegal](#), Camille Le Coz and Kate Hooper, July 2021

[COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2020](#), Meghan Benton & co., April 2021

[A Race Against the Clock: Meeting Seasonal Labor Needs in the Age of COVID-19](#), Kate Hooper and Camille Le Coz, March 2020