

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION INTO EUROPE

Since 1988, more than 19,000 people have died trying to reach Europe's borders.

This latest accident occurred just off the Italian island of Lampedusa, when a boat crammed with migrants from Africa caught fire and sank in the Mediterranean Sea.

Just days before, thirteen migrants drowned while trying to reach Sicily.

So how big is the problem of illegal immigration into Europe?

More than 30,000 migrants have arrived by boat to Italy this year alone the UN says.

Most of them were from Syria, Eritrea and Somalia.

Migratory patterns in 2012 showed that almost 70,000 people entered Europe illegally through 6 main routes. (That's according to Frontex which monitors border movements into Europe.)

Of the thousands that arrive in Italy, many continue onto Germany, France, Sweden and the Netherlands.

The biggest wave of illegal immigrants came via the Eastern Mediterranean route.

Most migrants attempt these perilous journeys to escape hardship and war in their own countries. Last year the majority of people who came illegally into Europe were originally from ... in Afghanistan and Syria. The UN says the problem is unlikely to be stemmed soon.

Thursday's disaster of Lampedusa has renewed pressure on the EU to take more action to fight the crisis.