

European Migrant Crisis Symposium: Challenges of a fragmented corridor

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European Migrant Crisis
Symposium:
Challenges of a
fragmented corridor

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Kosovo*

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FYROM – FYR of Macedonia – Republic of Macedonia

We accept that some of the authors use “Republic of Macedonia” or “FYR of Macedonia” instead of the international provisional name “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” meaning the same state entity.

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Welcome notes

Mr. Nikos Zaharis, Director of the South-East European Research Centre

Dear distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen it is my honour and pleasure to welcome all of you on behalf of the South-East European Research Centre and our mother Institution the International Faculty of the University of Sheffield, CITY College to our Symposium that focuses on the current migration crisis and its implications for the countries of the so-called Balkan Corridor and for other countries beyond Europe. When we first discussed this idea with Susanna Vogt of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Professor Keridis of the Navarino Network, that is to hold a symposium to discuss the migration/refugee crisis a few months ago, we had hoped that the crisis would be over by the time this symposium would happen and that we would gather together to examine its aftermath, how to prevent it from happening in the future, and what we have learned from this experience. Unfortunately, as you all know, the crisis is still with us, we are living in the middle of it and it continues to pose tough questions to which individuals, societies, local and national governments and the European Union are still trying to provide the appropriate responses and solutions.

War, famine, oppressive regimes, national disaster, have always created migration flows for the past centuries and of course Europe has faced the biggest migration crisis during, and in the aftermath of World War II; yet, still today we have failed to create and understand thoroughly the mechanism that could help us prevent and respond effectively to the current and future crises. This Symposium gathers together scholars and colleagues from the majority of the Balkan corridor countries as well as colleagues from the United Kingdom and Germany, and it aspires to contribute to the much-needed discussion on the effects of the crisis on each one of the countries and their interrelations, its effects on the European project, and at the same time initiate a discussion on the policy implications of any plan to solve the problem including, of course, a discussion on the latest European Union decision of March 18th that addresses the issue of the refugee and migrant crisis. We are all looking forward to an interesting and intense debate this afternoon.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the speakers who have travelled to Thessaloniki in order to be with us today and share their thoughts and experience, as well as the Athens office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Navarino Network for their contribution to the organization of the Symposium and the Bodosakis Foundation for recording and making the Symposium available online for those who could not attend it and for those of you who would like to revisit it in the future.

Ms. Susanna Vogt, Director, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Greece

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Greece to this conference we are having today in Thessaloniki. Just a quick word on the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for those who do not know us: We are one of the big Political Foundations from Germany, with an office in Athens since 2012, and the goal of our work is to enhance political dialogue. This sounds like an easy task, but since 2012 we have seen that this is not a given, in particular between Greece and Germany. For us as a German institution there are some specific challenges implied. Through our projects we bring people together who have an interesting say in topics which are of European relevance, and of a particular challenge for Greece.

Political dialogue is of specific relevance – not only since last year's developments, but also the years before – for the topic we are dealing with today: This is the migration and refugee crisis. Most of you are aware that it has already been a challenge for Greece in people arriving before the crisis's first peak last year. And they keep arriving – in lower numbers – even after the EU-Turkey Agreement. In considering the peculiar position of Greece, many of the procedures and administrative open questions in dealing with the refugee and migrant crisis are still not answered. Definitely, there is a need for a more informed discussion here in Greece, which includes international expertise; a need for an academic as well as political dialogue on the topic. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is convinced of the necessity to find a European solution to the crisis: Not a solution which involves the closing of borders – what we are seeing at the moment. Today, we will be discussing the challenges of the “fragmented migration corridor”, with some parts of it being no more accessible, and Greece in particular finding itself cut off in the position of country of first arrival.

It is a great privilege to welcome today international speakers from all countries of the “migration corridor”, sharing their expertise with us. I look forward to an interesting discussion, shedding light on the challenges of the recently fragmenting migration developments. I would like to thank all speakers who came to Thessaloniki to join us for this, as well as our partners SEERC and Navarino Network for the fruitful cooperation. I wish us all a very insightful and interesting afternoon and lively conversations.

Introduction to the CTRL+Enter Europe-Migrant Crisis Network: Challenges of a fragmented corridor

Dr Alexandra Prodromidou, Lecturer, Business Administration and Economics Department, The University of Sheffield International Faculty, CITY College

The event organized today is based on a proposal I co-authored with Dr Pavlos Gkasis on the effects that the migrant crisis has on the countries of the Balkan corridor, the effect on the social, political, and economic stability of the corridor. As we all know, the migrant crisis has assumed massive proportions in the last years accumulating into a humanitarian crisis in our region. Especially since the attacks in November 2015 in Paris, the main tendency at the moment for all the countries both at the EU and individual level is to fortify their borders, both the internal borders of the countries and the external borders of the EU. The purpose of this is obviously to push the crowd of migrants into the EU periphery and, potentially, to actually stop the migrants from reaching EU soil altogether.

However, a solution of a closed Europe is problematic in at least two ways: The first one is that this kind of policy has no guarantees at all that it might work. The second one is that, even if the flow of migrants stopped today, we would still have to face all these migrants that are confined inside the countries of the Balkan corridor. I am using the term 'migrant' on purpose, because I am referring to both refugees and economic migrants and this is one of the major issues related to irregular migration. And, if we are to look at this issue realistically, we should include them as well and not just offer solutions to the refugees. The project we have proposed, seeks to investigate the extent to which further EU integration, including Turkey and the western Balkans, could offer some solution to the migrant crisis.

The fragmented nature of the corridor, as the title of this conference is, creates a multitude of issues related not only to border security, but also to the socio-political and economic stability of the countries involved. Every transit and destination country affected by the migrant crisis is also affected by the sum of the crises occurring worldwide at the moment. We are talking about the global financial crisis, the global migration crisis and about a lack of coordination at an international level. So, could these issues be resolved within a framework of more EU integration or not and to what extent?

To this end we have put together a trans-European network of experts from different disciplines and different countries in order to create a forum for dialogue and debate on these issues. Our partners come from disciplines as diverse as Politics, International Relations, EU Studies, Migration Studies, Political, Economics, and Legal Studies.

So, our partner institutions are the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, the Navarino Network, the University of Sheffield, Bilkent University, the University of Saint Cyril and Methodius, Belgrade University, Central European University and the University of Graz.

Dr Pavlos Gkasis, Lecturer, Business Administration and Economics Department, The University of Sheffield International Faculty, CITY College

It is really important for us that you are all here today, especially because we have been trying hard to increase public engagement and we have been trying to bring people closer to the work that we are doing. I am going to be very brief and discuss what the impact of the project will be.

We hope that we will keep this coalition, this network that we have created with so much work, alive, and we will be able to further work on all these very important issues that we have been facing in the region and not just in the region, but in the European Union as well. So, we hope that our proposed project and also our proposed network are going to have a very important impact both on academia and also on the society. It is very important to promote research, to conduct research, but at the same time for this research to be applied to the needs of the society to be channelled towards the formulation of policies.

The other kind of impact that we want to have is on how we can affect policy making inside the European Union. Judging from what we have experienced around us the problem is that, at the end of the day, the European Union as we know it in terms of how our region has been operating in the last few decades, as many people think, may be on the verge of collapsing, because of all the issues that have been arising in the last few years first with the threat of the Grexit, then with the discussion on the Brexit, and now with the migrant crisis, with all of this putting a very important stress on the project of EU integration.

And we believe that it is always better to bring people together; it is always better to bring countries together. Therefore, we are trying to identify the effects of all these issues and mostly of the migration problem on EU integration, in order to promote policy suggestions that will hopefully bring more countries closer. Then, of course we are trying to increase public engagement and we hope that after today's Symposium and tomorrow's workshop, we are all going to be meeting in this network. We hope that we are going to be promoting more synergies amongst us and more collaboration on all those challenging issues that are lying ahead for our countries and our institutions.

Plenary Session A: The migrant Crisis in Turkey, Greece, and Germany

Turkey and the Migrant Crisis

Dr Dimitris Tsarouhas, Associate Professor, Head of Department of International Relations, Bilkent University, Turkey

Thank you very much for offering us the opportunity to speak on such a very important subject. I am the Head of Department of International Relations but my area of academic expertise is not migration policy, so whatever you hear today please 'take it with a pinch of salt' in terms of scientific expertise. It is much more coming from a citizen that lives in Turkey for a long time, for ten years now, who is quite familiar with the environment and who wants to stress a few points that happen to be part of his own research expertise, part of which relates to EU-Turkey relations. So, many of the things that I will say will relate to the relationship between Turkey and the EU as a result of the current crisis, the migration and refugee crisis. Moreover, I will also try to provide you with an overview of migration and refugee policy in Turkey which is a subject that happens to be quite important this moment.

I would like to begin with a little bit of a context in terms of trying to familiarise ourselves with the subject. So the first thing that one needs to say is that, from Turkey's perspective, this crisis is not new. The Syrian civil war in particular has been very important and, of course, Turkey is one of the three countries in the Middle East, along with Jordan and Lebanon, which has been bearing the burden of trying to accommodate people fleeing the civil war since 2011.

What has changed over time is the numbers and the aggressiveness of the process. So, the crisis has only become 'European' since last summer with EU member states receiving approximately one million Syrian refugees, which has led to the huge debate which was already alluded to by previous speakers. In Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon more than four million people are actually being hosted there and of those the current number seems to suggest that about 2.9 million people are residing in Turkey. The exact figures are eluding us, but approximately 2.9 million have found some form of refugee accommodation in Turkey. In terms of the population, this is a 1 to 27 ratio, in other words, for every 27 locals, namely Turkish people, there is one refugee primarily from Syria, although there are people fleeing from Iraq as well; the comparative numbers in Europe are 588 to 1 and I think that provides you with the scale and the dimension of the issue in Turkey.

The vast majority of Syrian refugees live outside camps. So, Turkey created camps early on in 2011-2012. But those camps have been filled very quickly, and what has been happening over the last two years is that the majority of people that cross the border in coming to Syria do not live in organised accommodation any longer. In Istanbul, in particular, which has absorbed the highest number, for obvious reasons being the most developed city in the country, very often they have to live under very squalid conditions. The majority of the rest of the refugees, by the way, live close to the border, so there is still an expectation (or at least there has been an expectation) that they will be able to return home. So they live in cities such as Şanlıurfa, Mardin and so on. Fewer people have moved towards central Anatolia.

In terms of the relationship between the two sides, given the numbers, you can imagine that we are talking about almost three million people coming over, sometimes literally overnight. There are no major incidents of clash and conflict between locals and Syrian refugees, although there have been isolated incidents. Now, Turkey's welcoming policy towards Syrian refugees, and I think that is an important thing to keep in mind not least in the context of the EU deal, was predicated on the foreign policy assumption and that was the assumption that the Assad regime, following the onslaught of the Arab Spring would not be around for too long.

Thus, the very generous policy that was followed at the beginning of the crisis in terms of welcoming refugees was very much based on the assumption that the Assad regime would collapse within a few months or so. And, of course, the fact that the Civil War has followed a very different path and that Bashar-al Assad is still in power has meant that this policy logic has been undermined. Turkey has spent according to official estimates about \$5 billion on the refugees up until 2015; this does not include any expenditure incurred recently and it has received financial support from the international community that amounts to about 3% of this entire sum.

Now, Turkey has met with high rate of economic growth at least until recently, but still remains very much a developing nation. And this point, the issue of the perceived lack of financial as well as political solidarity on the part of the Western world continues to be one of the points of contention between the Turkish government and the western community. And, undoubtedly, the inflow of Syrian refugees has accelerated to such an extent since 2013 that quite clearly the state's capacity to deal with those in an organised manner has by now reached its limits and some would be entitled to say that the state has gone beyond its limits in being able to accommodate these vast numbers of people. And we do have some indications on this in terms of public opinion data.

As a result, there are now indications that often the issue of Syrian refugees in particular becomes a point of political contention, based on the argument that Syrian migrant

workers receive less than the minimum wage, which is legally enshrined in the Turkish legal system. This is leading to conflict, particularly where large numbers of Syrian refugees are concentrated in urban areas, especially in the southern part of Turkey. Moreover, poll after poll nowadays shows that people's ability to continue hosting refugees in one way or another formally or informally is reaching its limits. To put it differently, the problem for Turkey, in my opinion, is magnified exactly at the same time as for the EU and it is becoming more and more of an issue. Particularly when it comes to this financial aspect and the economic aspect, the idea that the people who exercise essentially menial jobs that receive the minimum wage are now being undercut by a competition which is fuelled by the Syrian refugees and within a context in which the unofficial, informal, unregistered economy in Turkey is still a very large chunk of the overall economy. So, the migration and refugee problem at the unregistered economies estimated to be somewhere between 20% and 30% of overall Turkish GDP until now.

What I wish to do is to let you know of some of the basic tenets of Turkey's migration policy with regard to foreign people. And what you see in the box below is a number of legislative initiatives that were taken by Turkey.

Migrants and Refugees to Turkey: Law and Politics

- **1934** Law : 'Turkish Culture and Descent'
- **1951+1967**: Geneva Convention and Add Protocol: TR signatory to both but with '*geographical limitation*' (= asylum right to Europeans only). Consequence: migrants are 'illegal' - not entitled to stay- even after granted refugee status
- **1994** Asylum regulation (post-Iraq War): temporary protection status. Those granted refugee status eligible for resettlement to third country. Some access to basic services.
- **2013** Law on International protection: migration no longer limited to people of 'Turkish descent'. GD of Migration Management set up.
- **2014** Temporary protection regulation: Syrians offered temporary protection until they can return, TP (biometric) IDs offered, access to labour market, psychological services + counselling, shift from statist approach to involve NGOs more
- Yet permanent settlement is not foreseen after these changes

What is important to keep in mind is that traditionally Turkish policy has been based and, therefore, it has been heavily criticized, on the idea that those who are entitled to receive the status of being a refugee in the country would have to be, as you see from the 1934 law, "of Turkish culture and descent"; and this has been a trend that largely has been followed in Turkey until now. The country has changed in a variety of different ways, but when it comes to

migration policy and especially granting the status of refugees, Turkey has been on the receiving end of criticism in a variety of ways. It is a country that has signed up to the Geneva Convention, as well as to the Additional Protocol, but with a so-called geographical limitation. And what is the geographical limitation? A right to asylum is given only to Europeans.

Given the context, in which we live today, I think it is generally acknowledged that this is largely an unsustainable policy and that Turkey cannot possibly continue with that particular policy anymore. So, the consequence of this is that migrants are illegal and not entitled to stay even after granted refugee status. Now, let's examine what has happened more recently after the end of the Cold War and as a result of the large number of refugees starting to come to Turkey. After the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the first Gulf War, as well as the earlier Iraq-Iran war of 1980-1988, Turkey started receiving people from the Middle East which was unprecedented because until that time many Turkish people would be emigrating to Western Europe in search of a better life. So, what happened then was that the other three pieces of legislation, namely the asylum regulation after the start of the Iraq war that offered some temporary protection status to Iraqi refugees fleeing the war and coming into Turkey, offered some basic access to basic services to them.

And then the 'big change' that happened in 2013, not least in the context of Turkey's attempt to approximate its legislative system with the European Union and in the process of accession negotiations, was to modernise its law and international protection. So, this is the major piece of legislation which finally stops the policy of offering the status of migrant people of Turkish descent and there are certain administered steps being taken, such as the creation of a General Directorate for migration management. Then, two years ago, we had the temporary protection regulation, in which Syrian people in particular (and that again is a point of contention today, this only applies to Syrians, not to other people from other nationalities that may come to Turkey as the result of the deal with Europe), they are offered temporary protection until they can return. For example, they are offered particular identity cards, biometric cards, so they can be registered with the authorities, and recently Turkey also agreed to offer them access to the labour market, which has been celebrated by the European Union as a sign through which people returning from Greece now and moving to Turkey, potentially at least, would be able to be integrated into Turkish society by having the right to access employment which they have lacked thus far.

And there is also a shift in terms of Turkish policy away from a more statist approach and towards a more inclusive and, in my opinion, participatory approach that also includes international NGOs and seeks to work with them in order to make this policy successful. However, at the end the notion of a permanent settlement for the Syrian refugees—let alone Afghans or Iraqis—is still not foreseen for Turkey after these changes and again that is a very important point of contention. So, the legal framework in Turkey has been improving; it has

been revised. Fundamentally, however, the idea that people who flee war will be able to stay in Turkey and settle there as part of an integration policy is actually still missing.

Last November, a so-called joint action plan was signed between the European Union and Turkey and that was confirmed in the recent agreement Mr Zaharis also mentioned earlier. So, there is a 'one-in, one-out' formula which stops in essence at a particular number which is 72,000 people. So, for any one refugee who will be sent over to Turkey, Turkey will be able to resettle one of the existing refugees to one of the EU member states, and of course the big question there is the extent to which European Union member states actually agreed to that. And another related issue, because they agreed on paper and in rhetoric but we are not quite sure whether they will agree practically. A second and very important issue is what happens with this number, because 72,000, given the figures I described above is desperately low and, therefore, I think the moment we reach that cap we are in uncharted territory.

The European Union itself now admits that the moment we are at 72,000 what will start is "voluntary contributions" and we know what voluntary contributions for many EU member states means. Probably, it would not work. What Turkey has received in return to in essence facilitating European Union policy? In my point of view, what Turkey has received in essence for actually agreeing to do what the EU did not agree to do by itself, that is, trying to deal with this issue in a coordinated fashion is the opening of accession negotiation chapter 33, and much more importantly, potentially lift the visa requirement for Turkish citizens to travel to the EU. This issue is for Turkey much more important than the accession negotiations. The accession negotiations with the European Union are stalled at the moment and they are technically alive but I think politically they are not. Therefore, for the Turkish policy makers and for the Turkish public, being able to travel to Europe visa free in the same way that some Balkan states are now able to do is much more important politically, socially and economically than actually maintaining the so-called status quo of accession negotiations.

One important thing that we should emphasise here is that Turkey became a key country in this conflict in the year 2015 and is at the moment at the heart of the EU attempt to deal with it, not least because of the European Union's inability to deal with the problem itself. I tried to show to you in the earlier part of my presentation that this situation is now becoming worse for Turkey in terms of the numbers of refugees. But it is not something new, and the country has had to deal with it for a number of years, in contrast to most EU countries.

I believe that the agreement will be very difficult to implement as we already have some indication that this may not work for a number of reasons. They have to do with logistics in terms of the trained personnel that will be able to implement the agreement. It will be politically very difficult. Dr Prodromidou referred to the terrorist attacks earlier which create an issue there. Of course, the Cyprus problem is also there in terms of the relations between

Turkey and the EU and the inability to move forward on that front. And also legally, the European Union has been criticised for this deal in terms of potentially violating international law and the law of protection of refugees. It is now trying to create certain safeguards and make sure that refugees who return to Turkey will be treated according to the standards the European Union wishes to have, I think it is clear that the Turkish policy on migration and refugee as well as asylum seekers and granting them rights is much more restrictive than the EU; and Turkey knowing that it is in a position of strength in this particular issue is quite unlikely to force through legislative changes simply to satisfy the European Union. Consequently, it is going to be, in my opinion, quite difficult to experience through this particular agreement an alternative; a revision of it may be 'in the cards' but this particular agreement will be quite difficult to implement.

Greece and the Migrant Crisis

Professor Dimitris Keridis, Panteion University of Athens and Director of Navarino Network, Greece

I would like to welcome all our Balkan corridor guests from Germany down South who made the trip and came here to Thessaloniki for this meeting. In continuation to previous discussions, I would like to point out the latest statistics, according to which 160,000 children were born by Syrian refugees in Turkey alone the last three years, when in Greece around 90,000 babies are born every year; and that gives you the magnitude of the problem. 800,000 children reside among those 2.9 million Syrian refugees in Turkey, 1 out of 3, out of 4, 320 of them. 320,000 go to school but the rest do not, and how to increase the places for Syrian children, school-age children, to go to school has become a major social problem in Turkey. As far as Greece is concerned, we do not have statistics yet at our disposal and we have not even begun to think about these medium-long-term policies vis-a-vis.

In today's presentation, I will restrict my comments to three main points: the first is related to the politics of the crisis, the second to the famous, now celebrated, deal at hand—the deal of March 18th—which remains to be implemented starting from April 4th, and my third point is: *Where do we go next?*

With regard to politics, the whole problem became a European problem the moment the few refugees started arriving into Europe. It was a neglected problem until the summer of 2015 that 1 out of 4 residents in Lebanon is a Syrian refugee. There have always been refugees. Most refugees, actually almost 100% of refugees, come from the third world. 95%, 96%, 97% of

them go to the third world. There are millions of refugees from Afghanistan in Iran or in Pakistan; nobody cares, nobody hears about them. Obviously, the moment they cross into the first world it becomes a problem. And so they became a problem starting in the summer and in a certain way it has acquired a size, an exaggerated size in the European imagination and consciousness beyond what the numbers justify. After all, this is a continent of 560million people. Without any intention to underestimate the problem, it is important to get the numbers right and to remember that there is a lot of exaggeration because this is a problem that is prone to political exploitation.

There is an on-going political battle in Europe starting with the refugee crisis, maybe continuing on the previous crisis we had with the Euro but taking new proportions and the battle has to do with either more or less Europe; would the solution come from deepening of European integration or trying to find solution at a European level, for example by establishing a Europe wide asylum service? This is an idea that is floating around, associated with the deal at hand because we know that national authorities, especially Greek national authorities, will have great difficulty in implementing the deal at hand on their own. So we need a Euro-plan solution or we are going to revert to national solutions where every country is for itself building fences and helping others build fences. So more or less Europe, this is one issue and whether this Europe is going to be open or closed, it is going to be a 'fortress Europe' or not.

I do not wish to sound like a liberal European who believes too much in open Europe and I would like to emphasise out loud that this open Europe has a lot of problems and we should not underestimate them because there are all sorts of questions related; for example, does a refugee have the right to choose the country within Europe to settle, or not? And, if they do have the right, that means that most of them will go to Germany and there will be no burden sharing and no European solidarity involved in facing the crisis. So, does everyone have the right to choose where, and not only which country, but even which region of the country? You know, for example, that in Germany there has already been a relevant case when the German government decided to resettle some refugees in Eastern Germany and in other parts of Germany.

So, is this famous convention for the protection of refugees signed in 1951 under totally different historical conditions immediately after the Second World War obsolete? Should it be revised? In this new globalized world, because it offers too much of an open-ended kind of protection to refugees, these are serious questions and we should not be politically correct and avoid them because others are exploiting them.

So there is a battle for the soul of Europe. It is not the first time we have such a battle but it is a fierce battle today. Most of it happens within the Centre Right, the Christian Democrats and let me remind you that the two antithetical poles in this battle, Mrs Merkel on

the one hand and Mr Orban, on the other, both belong to the same political party the Christian Democrats; because they are the biggest political force in Europe and they are the biggest party in the European Parliament, they rule over most of European countries alone or in coalition. The Centre Left is rapidly becoming irrelevant, one way or another, and when we discuss about the battle inside the mainstream it is mostly among the Centre Right.

Greece has contributed to this battle, of course, and it is ironic because this is a government that came to power with the promise of changing Europe, but not in the way they had envisioned; not because of the battle over the Eurozone, but when this battle on the Euro was being waged last spring with some very fancy figures something else was brewing on the backside and was getting ready to explode. Nobody had noticed Mrs Christodouloupoulou at the time and very few were paying attention, and in a way Mr Tsipras and his government enabled Mr Orban and the others to take over. What we are seeing today out of the crisis is a strengthening of the xenophobic anti-European Right Wing nationalist forces in Europe. We saw that in Croatia, in election after election in Poland, of course in Hungary, and you have even seen it in Germany where for the first time you have a party to the Right of the Christian Democrats entering State Parliaments in the three State elections with a percentage roughly 15% on average, in one state coming second. This "Alternativa" came to the fore in 2013 opposing the second Greek bailout, and it got strengthened out of the refugee crisis in which we are one way or another involved. So, we are destroying the German political system having destroyed our own first.

So, there is a big battle and we, paradoxically and ironically, found ourselves suddenly in, because Greece and the Greek national interest beyond the shenanigans of 'petty-party politics' is in favour of more Europe overall and of an integrated Europe. The Greek government, a government that came to power denouncing all its opponents as 'Merkelists,' a government that came into power under the slogan "Merkel go home", finds itself in cahoots with Mrs Merkel and on the same side; this is very interesting and, suddenly, Mrs Merkel and the German position is our biggest supporter and friend in this battle, which has implications not only for what kind of Europe we are going to have, but also for how we are going to resolve the Greek economic crisis and all other issues involved.

Point number two: As is usually the case in Europe, the solution proposed is a compromise. So, it is a compromised solution and we came up with this famous deal of March 18th. It is rather complicated; European solutions are always very complicated. I have tried to explain it to my students or to my television audience, nobody understands. That's fine. Most Greek politicians do not. They are going to be voting about it tonight; today it was introduced to the Parliament; tomorrow it is going to be voted under emergency procedures. This is a government that considers all issues an emergency. So, tomorrow is the emergency

procedure to vote that deal, which most Greek deputies do not understand, or they have not read it. It does not matter anyway; it is complicated.

It is an internal and an external compromise. External compromise is, of course, a compromise with Turkey; a give-and-take with its “Sultan” in Ankara. It has a certain ‘bad smell’, not only for the Turkophobes on the right, but also for the liberals on the left, in places like Sweden where these things matter— you know human-rights sensitive people. How to deal with Turkey? The agreement offers some ‘carrots’ for Turkey like visa. The visa regime of which Greece is going to benefit a lot; let us not forget that Greece, despite being a member of the Schengen, does not really benefit a lot from Schengen because Schengen-free-travel between Greece and the rest of Schengen is very little compared to what happens between Austria and Germany on a daily basis with millions of border crossovers a day, or between Poland and Germany, or between Poland and the Czech Republic, etc. There the integration really works and, if Schengen disappears, they will pay the highest price. Greece is a country that shares no Schengen border with any other nation. Schengen in Greece is basically limited to air travel alone and whereas we do not benefit much we pay a cost for it because we cannot have visa-free tourist travel from Russia, Turkey, etc. Now this visa liberalisation may help Greek tourism further. Istanbul is only a few hours away from Thessaloniki. Istanbul is a city of almost 20 million people, five of which are fairly wealthy and they do not have nice beaches around. Therefore, we are among those who want the visa liberalisation. The problem is that out of the 70 million Turkish passport holders less than 1% has a biometric passport which is a prerequisite for the visa liberalisation. It will take years for the Turks to issue the new passports, but this is a point that nobody mentions and you cannot find this information in the news.

There is an internal compromise, which has its negative sides as well. There are two main flaws: technical and political. With respect to the technical flaws, do we have the infrastructure to implement the deal? And for this to happen, the deal to be implemented, we need a new asylum service in Greece. We have 250 people in the Greek asylum service. The Greek asylum service needs to be built up to more than 3,000 almost 4,000 people in order to be able to process the thousands of applications that will come about on first degree and on second degree. This government has avoided introducing a second appeal procedure, because until now it wanted the process to drag on forever so that nobody returns. It is funny how things change and how life takes its revenge.

The same technical problems apply to Turkey; a country, which first of all has not signed the 1951 refugee protection convention with the exception of Europeans, meaning refugees from Eastern Europe under communism. The protection that Turkey was offering was basically for East Europeans escaping communism during the Cold War. We know that there are not that many European refugees leaving Europe to go to Turkey for protection

these days and I do not expect many today. Therefore, here we have a country we have to work with, which has refused to sign the basic treaty; a country that we have to declare as a safe country when bombs explode in Istanbul, in Ankara, let alone what is happening in the South East where there is almost a quasi-civil war in certain Kurdish areas that, as far as pictures are concerned, these are not that much different from pictures from Syria. Anyway we have all these problems; let us hope that we deal with them and that the Greek administration which has 'excelled' the last year will manage. The deal starts on April 4th, so all refugees who came to Greece after March 20th have to be detained in the Greek islands, they have to be processed there and then after the two degrees, first and second, comes the appeal in court.

Finally, my third point. What happens if the deal does not work? Let me remind you that the previous deal, the September deal, the famous relocation deal that provided for the relocation of 160,000 refugees from Greece, Italy and Hungary directly to the rest of Europe ended up relocating only 962 out of the 160,000. So you see this is less than 1%, much less than 1% of the original plan and this is a deal now that is very ambitious. It puts a lot on Greece's shoulders. It dictates to the other Europeans to bring technical support to Greece, but none has come yet except for some Frontex people.

So, what if not? Greece needs to start thinking about the medium-long term, not only the immediate humanitarian crisis at hand; Greece needs to set up policies of how to integrate these people, how to provide for their education, how to provide for social inclusion and labour opportunities as well. Many of them are capable, competent people. This is a discussion that is totally absent from the Greek public space, but somehow it has to be brought in. We have a certain successful example of what happened in this country in the 1990s when around a million people, almost mainly from Albania, but also from ex-Soviet Union Republic et cetera, got integrated quite nicely into the Greek social fabric, so we have a certain experience. This is not the same, certainly, but we can draw some lessons from our successful past.

Germany's EU Policy on the Migrant Issue

Dr Christina C. Krause, Coordinator for Migration and Refugee Issues at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Berlin, Germany

Thank you very much for the invitation; it is a great pleasure being here today. Let us now move on from Turkey and Greece to Germany, a country of destination for people seeking refuge and for migrants looking for a better perspective in life. Although Germany has a long

and manifold experience with migration – be it forced or voluntary – the events of 2015 have been unprecedented. Although there is a dispute over the question whether the situation could have been foreseen or not, politics, administration and society were overwhelmed by the events of 2015. However, the numbers of asylum seekers had already been growing gradually since 2012 – from roughly 78,000 persons in 2012 to 127,000 in 2013 to 202,000 in 2014 – 2015 was clearly a year of superlatives. In the course of the year about 480,000 persons applied for asylum but at least the double amount (roughly under one million) of persons came to Germany from outside the EU seeking protection and a better life. Although – due to limits of the administrative capacities – many could not effectively seek asylum in 2015, shelter, food, basic needs, schooling etc. were provided for all. Without the immense support of civil society – at times it is estimated that over a tenth of the population became active – this task could not have been fulfilled. Still the events of last year can only be described as unruly and the immediate solutions found can only be called makeshift.

But in order to understand the present, we have to understand the past. Therefore, let me start my presentation by going back in time. Let's return to the beginnings of the Federal Republic of Germany to understand the motivations, to understand the system that is in place, to understand the current discussions and also the governments' decisions. Even before the 1951 Refugee Convention was signed, the German Basic Law, our Constitution, was passed. In the 1949 Basic Law, Article 16 (today Article 16a) guarantees the right to asylum: "Persons persecuted on political grounds shall have the right of asylum." This article forms the core of our asylum system. Its importance and logic is closely linked to German history. After the devastating times of massive human rights abuses, of persecution, violation, war and mass murder under Nazi-dictatorship, the new German Federal Republic declared the principle of protection of human dignity the cornerstone of the new state. And the protection of the persecuted – as the Jewish population had been in Nazi-Germany – was proclaimed as an essential principle. So, before the international 1951 Refugee Convention came into force, the foundation for a strong protection of refugees was laid in the Constitution.

For many years Article 16 of the Constitution was the main legal provision in the German asylum law. Until 1980 the numbers of asylum seekers (who mainly came from communist countries) were below 100,000. The annual recognition rates amounted to roughly 30%. After the end of the cold war, in 1992, the numbers of asylum seekers first rose to 438,000 but the recognition rates fell down to 5% in some years. Apart from the asylum Article, of course, the International Refugee Convention was introduced, but for a long time they had a parallel existence and the constitutional article clearly dominated. However, this also led to the critical situation that mainly persecution for political reasons and by the state was recognized and other reasons covered by the 1951 Geneva Convention did not lead to a strong protection-status. Until 2005 this focus on the constitutional right to asylum prevailed.

In the 1990s, after the end of the cold war and the reunification not just of Germany but of Europe, article 16 was amended. Into the new Article 16a the notions of safe third country and safe country of origin were introduced. These reforms and amendments had been conducted for two main reasons: 1. To acknowledge the end of the cold war and 2. To take into account the enlargement and growing integration of the European Union – into a common space of freedom, security and justice.

Today the provisions of the 1951 Refugee Convention (incorporated under paragraph 3 of the Asylum Procedure Act and paragraph 60 of the Residence Act) are the main references when it comes to refugee protection. In the past years the overall protection rate of asylum-seekers (adding protection under Article 16a of the Constitution plus protection under the above mentioned paragraphs 3 and 60 and adding court rulings) lay at 48.5 % (in 2014) and 61% (in 2015). Persons from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan were the main groups to be given protection. To briefly summarize, the principle of asylum goes back to the beginning of the Federal Republic and forms an important cornerstone of our legal system.

However, apart from people who have the right to live in Germany for protection reasons, several other forms of legal migration avenues are in place. Be it for work, ethnical, ethical, family reunification or education reasons, be it from inside the EU or from outside.

The movement of people was always high in Germany. As Germany had been divided and had lost big parts of its territories in 1945, millions of people were on the move seeking a new home. After the End of World War II around 14 million displaced Germans came to the new German Federal Republic. These people had always belonged to the nation and naturally were integrated as citizens into the new state and society. But apart from this group, another group had to be taken care of: Starting in the 1950s and peaking after the end of the Cold War, many ethnic Germans whose ancestors had emigrated in previous centuries to the East – mainly to Russia – were offered to return and resettle in Germany. The reason: during the times of the Nazi-Terror and later on, the ethnic Germans had suffered, since they were perceived as enemies. These persons were called, “Aussiedler” and “Spätaussiedler”. Until 2012 4,5 million persons came to Germany from the former East-Block (1,3 million came between 1950 and 1987, 1,3 million came between 1987 and 1992, 1,6 million came from 1992 until 2006. Since 2006 only a few thousand have arrived per year). So apart from the wish to protect persons who were persecuted, it was also clear for the new Federal Republic, that persons, who belonged to the nation or who had an ethnic German background, should be cared for and offered to return to Germany.

Another very important – but much smaller – group is composed of persons with a Jewish background. In 1991, Germany decided to offer persons with a Jewish background a future in the country. These persons came from the former Soviet Union. They were accepted

to Germany as refugees. Between 1991 and 2011 220,000 people came. Leading to a small, however very important, renaissance of Jewish life in Germany.

At the same time, when ethnic return started, labour migration began to develop. This was completely in the interest of the German state that lacked a sufficient labour force and, in order to prosper economically, needed to recruit workers from outside the country. Being here in Thessaloniki, I can imagine that many of you probably have relatives, who came to Germany as labour migrants. For a long time these “guestworkers” were perceived as temporary migrants, who would stay for two to three years and then return to their homes. This indeed worked for many, but of course not for all. In 1955 the first recruitment-contract, “Anwerbeabkommen”, was signed with Italy. Further contracts followed with Spain and Greece (both in 1960), with Turkey (1961) Morocco and South Korea (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968). These workers were dearly sought in the flourishing industry in the time of the German “economic miracle”. Until 1973 14 million so called “guest workers” had come to Germany and 12 million had returned to their home countries. In 1971 more than 10% of the German labour force came from abroad. In 1973, when the government proclaimed a stop of the recruitment policy, due to economic decline and a surge of unemployment, over 4 million labour migrants and their families resided in Germany. After many years of successful work, they had become a vital part of the society. This situation led to many reforms and a debate on the question how Germany should deal with migrant workers. A famous German author, Max Frisch, described what soon became obvious for all, when he said “we called for workers, but we got humans.”

Today we acknowledge that if we want people to come to Germany for economic reasons, we need to offer them a place in society. While the labour migrants between 1950 and 1970 mainly took up posts in the low-skilled area, the labour migrants who are sought today are skilled workers or highly specialized personnel. Many, but not all come from EU-member states. The questions on how migrants should be integrated and whether Germany is an immigration country are hot topics to this day.

Migration from the other EU member states forms a less debated subject – quite in the contrary to the UK. In Germany freedom of movement of citizens from the EU-member states constitutes a fundamental principle. In the past decade Germany has developed into a main country of destination for citizens of other EU-countries. In 2015 all in all 18,5 million EU citizens lived in another EU country. Of these, 4,1 million persons – constituting the highest number in the EU – lived in Germany. In 2015 685,000 people from EU countries came to Germany, 303,000 other EU-citizens left Germany. These migrants usually are young and well educated and form a very important resource in the labour market. The biggest groups come from Romania and Poland (175,000 and 148,000), followed by Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and

Italy (with around 50,000 each). With its geographic position and the strong European economic networks these persons are a big asset to our economy and to our society.

Refugees, labour migrants (from the EU and from outside), and ethnic Germans form the main migration groups over the past decades. The numbers of net migration have been high over the past years, peaking in 1992 with around 800,000 and then in 2015 with an all-time record of about 1 million people. At the same year, according to statistics, every fifth person living in Germany had a first or second generation migration background. Half of them are German citizens. This highlights how migration has changed our society.

I hope this historical outline helped to give you an idea of how migration has shaped Germany. Although Germany cannot be recognized as an immigration country like the USA, Canada or Australia, I hope you understand that responsibility and interest have been the key criteria in managing migration. The dedication to human rights and the responsibility towards special groups, but also the wish to attract labour migrants, professionals, students from all parts of the world and, of course, EU-citizens, underlie our migration-policies.

In the past decades the challenges lay inside Europe (as the geopolitics shifted) and inside Germany (as the interests changed). A lot has been achieved since then, with the integration and enlargement of the European Union. Of course some important challenges remain in Europe: the integration of the Western Balkans as well as peace and stability in Ukraine – just to name two. However, with the growing numbers of refugees from Syria and the augmenting migration pressure from Africa and Asia, the challenges today are regional and international. And therefore also the policy responses need to be regional and international.

In 2015, like in the years and decades before, Germany welcomed persons in need of protection. While other European countries started closing their borders, our frontier stayed open. We took up the responsibility and hoped that other European states would do so as well. Chancellor Merkel said: “we can manage it” addressing the German population. But Germany cannot solve the international refugee crisis – with more than 65 million persons in need of protection, many in the poorest and most unstable countries of the world – on its own.

Germany, a country in the centre of the EU with nine neighbouring countries has gained greatly from the EU, the security it has brought, the freedoms it has ensured, the prosperity it has given. Closing our borders in 2015 would have meant to turn our back on the EU as well also on our own history and our values. This was and is no option. But again, the solution does not lie in Germany but in the EU as well as in the joint international efforts. Although I believe that the EU has already shown that it is able to react and act, the issue of migration is not an easy one, as it touches the very soul of every country: Who is allowed to come and join a society? What are the criteria? What are the rights and duties of migrants as

well as the obligations of the receiving countries⁹ These are only a few questions that are discussed. As the EU is not a federal state, but a federation of nation states, each country has to debate these questions on its own. The EU can suggest solutions but the member states need to embrace them. Migration is a difficult topic; one that combines chances and risks, a topic that can strengthen the EU, if the EU is successful, but one that can also lead to more discord. In the past years we have seen all these options but so far – albeit some populist voices – the debates at the EU level have been serious and solution-oriented. Let's hope, that this spirit will prevail.

Plenary Session B: The Situation and Challenges in the Balkan Corridor

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Migrant Crisis

Associate Professor Zoran Ilievski, University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje

Starting my presentation with some more general observations, I would like to note that this refugee and migrant crisis has not begun now and it will not end for many years. According to data I have collected from different sources and presented in the European Parliament in an event organised by the group of Socialists, around 53 million people in the world are searching for a new home. Many of them are escaping war, but many of them are migrants, essentially economic migrants seeking a better life, and many more to come will be ecological migrants, as the years pass by, because water, resources and food will reduce significantly in the world. Based on the projections of very reliable institutions, including the World Bank, Africa by 2050 will have four times more population than today, that is 4.8 billion, and Asia will have 5.8 billion. So, there will be a huge increase in population in Africa, which will sooner or later, start moving and searching for a better life. Sergei Stanishev, Head of the Socialists in the European Parliament, mentioned a discussion he had with Kissinger on this issue, whom he asked “What to do you think of this refugee issue now that is so much bothering us?” and Kissinger replied “No, they are not refugees. They are people on the move.”

Within this context, one has to think about the context in which we are conducting the present discussion. In other words, are we considering strictly as refugees people who, for several years, have been in camps, refugee camps, and suddenly decide to move and choose the country of asylum they want to apply in? There were scientists from the Bulgarian Academy of Science, who calculated with their mathematical methods that with the current movements of people around a million people a year would flow into the European Union based on these criteria of asylum seekers and that this would steadily continue until 2050. Therefore, undoubtedly this situation will continue; it is not an issue that will simply be resolved.

If Western European societies are divided on the issue, namely in terms of how to treat these asylum seekers and people that move, people on the move, I believe that the Eastern European countries, as never before, are united in their approach, and that the whole society is united in their approach in the sense of distant and very reserved behaviour. And I'm citing Ivan Krastev who gave a really good interview on this. What was mentioned there about the division between Germany on one side and the Visegrád group, joined by the Balkan

countries on the route is very close to the way of thinking that Krastev presents. Yet, the numbers of people on the move which were to be received by the EU are very confusing. In November 2015, the Commission announced that Member states will receive 160,000 people, however less than 1%, i.e. 920 have been admitted. Now a new quota is being discussed, based on which a maximum of 72,000 Syrians from Turkey would be accepted in this scheme with possible reflections on human rights and the Geneva Convention. Therefore, it is really a deal which undermines the normative power of the EU, and this is very well reflected in current policy debates in Europe. And, if you 'are turning a blind eye' to certain deficiencies which are very crucial, then you are losing the normative power of conditionality towards others. So, we claimed that at the end of 2016 we will see a Europe very different to what we had last year or to how we wanted to see Europe at the end of 2016, because the situation is rapidly changing and deals are made, which are really political and really fast moving, bringing to the forefront the national principle much more than the supra-national principle.

Not being certain about what today's audience would like to learn or hear from a political scientist from your northern neighbour who is dealing with this issue, perhaps a discussion about the bi-lateral relations between both countries during the crisis would be of interest. I would like to commence with the statement of Mr Kotzias, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was the first politician to publicly acknowledge last year the link between the negotiations Greece was holding with the European Union around the agreement for the resolving of the financial crisis with the refugee issue, as well as the statement made by Mr. Kammenos, the Minister of National Defence, who stated that Europe will be overwhelmed by migrants, Jihadists, if a solution is not found and Greece collapses financially. And I would say that these statements, coming also later from Turkey at an official level sensing the weakness of the EU are in fact pushing the buttons with respect to the sensitivity of the EU on these issues in order to gain something back politically and financially. Actually these statements preceded the ones of Prime Minister Davutoglu. It was difficult for us living along the so called "Balkan Human Corridor" to understand the number of people who were passing freely throughout Greece in these months, which led more than a million of refugees and migrants entering our country. In a single day, on August 19th in 2015 12,000 people crossed the border.

Out of this million people, around 50% were registered before crossing the fence. So, our authorities had absolutely no idea, firstly, because when you register these people, you do not know whether they are telling the truth. Everyone says "I'm a Syrian" because Syrians have a better chance to receive asylum; everyone says "My passport is stolen." Smugglers teach them how to behave. Europol data demonstrates that 6 billion Euros have been gathered by smugglers last year, just as a dirty business of human trafficking in a way. Unaccompanied children passing through – a situation in which we had people who knew adequately the Greek language passing through, which was considered very strange by authorities: How would

migrants know Greek? How would refugees, actually, know Greek? For migrants it was much easier to understand.

And throughout that period, we were worried about the security aspects and issues. The liberal thinkers and politicians in Europe tended to dismiss these security aspects at the beginning of this huge wave; they suggested that we should focus on the humanitarian aspects, and not to pinpoint that much that terrorists can pass through. But, Paris happened; and afterwards, Brussels happened. Prosecution in Paris found solid evidence that people who did the horrible acts were travelling through the Balkan route towards Europe. So, the two Dublin Regulations immediately subsided at the beginning of the crisis. First, they could not be handled here, then Germany suspended them for a time, and then they tried to repose them in a way. But behind all this, there was this fundamental struggle between the two concepts of how Europe should handle this situation. Therefore, it is a completely different view of the entire refugee phenomenon, between the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, and Germany where, as mentioned, every seventh person is finding ways to help the refugees.

And, one is right to pinpoint these inconsistencies of the Syriza government regarding NATO, regarding the Turkish presence here, regarding especially the accusation of my country closing down the Balkan route, when the previous day the Prime Minister of Greece accepted the solution, in a unanimous vote of the entire EU, that the Balkan route is efficiently closed. And the following day, protests were made about why my country would follow a unified European decision. In terms of other inconsistencies, we see also a significant difference of approach between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's cabinet, in which the Prime Minister himself and his collaborators were much more ready to cooperate, much more responding to our demands to exchange at least basic security information on the people that are passing through and at least some warning how many people would come and try to enter the border. After the building of the fence, we had that terrible incident when three people drowned in a river in an attempt to cross to Macedonia, based on falsified flyers given out by NGOs that Macedonia is opening the border. And, it was more difficult because the Greek police did not try to stop them. The communication between the Police of both countries is rather restricted; there is some political will to improve it, but the situation is progressing slowly.

To conclude, now we have around a hundred attempts of people to cross the border every day, and we have around fifty attempts to tear down the wire, every day. I was just reading the news before the panel, that the Greek police had a clash today in Idomeni with those people waiting there. But in a way, I would like to pose this question: Was the closing down of the Balkan route, or will it be in the mid-term, good for Greece, because of the lesser incentive for people to come massively here instead of using the new way of and method of

distributing refugees directly from Turkey to Germany, Sweden or wherever the committee is to decide about their final destination?

Serbia and the Migrant Crisis: Solidarity within Policy Shifts

Professor Jovan Teokarevic, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade

1. Similarly to other countries on the “Balkan Route”, **Serbia** has in the current refugee and migrant crisis so far **been only a transit country for almost 600,000 refugees and migrants** that during 2015 and 2016 were going through it on the way to their preferred destinations within the EU. In this sense, it has been a completely different experience for Serbia, in contrast to the equally numerous influx of refugees and internally displaced persons of Serbian ethnic origin from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo during the 1990s wars, most of whom have in the meantime permanently settled in Serbia.

In 1996, following the end of wars in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia, Serbia had almost 538,000 of ethnic Serbian refugees and almost 80,000 people endangered by war. More than 300,000 of them got Serbian citizenship and remained to live in Serbia. In 1999, after the war in Kosovo, 210,000 Serbs moved from Kosovo to Serbia, accompanied by another 20,000 in 2004. Put together, we are talking of 838,000 people coming to Serbia during a single decade. At this moment 204,049 internally displaced persons from Kosovo still live in Serbia. Only 12,415 or 5% of the total number of them returned to Kosovo.

Serbia has at present 43,763 refugees, 32,371 from Croatia and 11,324 from Bosnia and Herzegovina. These data are important as they show an extremely high solidarity and the high price that Serbia has been paying for the support and settlement of its ethnic compatriots from other ex-Yugoslav republics. More than any other European state Serbia and its citizens in this way got used to the mass influx of people from other states, both emotionally and organizationally: citizens learned to help or at least not to protest (most incomers found accommodation and jobs themselves) and the state has increased its organizational capacities in dealing with refugees.

This time around, although figures are similar (and lower than before), the situation is quite different: refugees and migrants are not of the same ethnic and religious origin; on the contrary they are all Muslims, against which Serbs fought in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s. Although the current refugees and migrants have been offered help and support, this was done under the assumption that they would not stay permanently in Serbia. And they are

clearly not inclined to this: almost 600,000 people demanded a pro-forma asylum in Serbia in 2015 (they had to, according to regulations), out of which only 11,360 of them went to the asylum centres and stayed there only for a few days. At this moment, after the closing of the “Balkan migrant route” at the beginning of March 2016, a little less than 2,000 people are unwillingly in Serbia, and it is not likely that many of them will ask to stay in.

2. Serbia's official policy towards the current wave of refugees and migrants has been twofold – at the same time reactive and proactive. The former has insisted on the all-European solution, to which Serbian Government pledged unconditional support and contribution, including the willingness to accept several thousand migrants for a longer period of time. The latter included a series of useful practical measures of both the Governmental and non-governmental actors, intended to help and support migrants on their way through Serbia.

The main direction of active policies of support for refugees has remained stable, and has become not perfect, of course, but increasingly effective with time. Reactive policies have, on the other hand, changed in previous months, as the situation unfolded. Not only that the pan-European solution has not appeared, but the whole migrants' crisis in Europe was for too long marred with confusion, chaos and disunity. Once it became clear that the wave of migrants had to be stopped and reversed in most European countries, Serbia began to put emphasis on its own national interest, like everybody else.

The primary goal of joining and supporting an all-European solution (with often glorification of Angela Merkel's approach) – that Serbian Government kept repeating – changed radically in February of 2016. Faced with the lack of the long expected EU solution, and with the trend of closing borders to the west of Serbia, Prime Minister Vucic announced that Serbia would act in harmony with the behaviour of Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia (in other words – not in harmony with the still missing EU solution). Serbia thus followed others in the neighbourhood and in the EU violating the right to asylum through voluntary restrictions imposed in February 2016 – denial of access to some nationals, with Austria, Slovenia and Croatia, and complete denial of entry from Bulgaria. And it also welcomed the closing of the “Balkan route” at the beginning of March 2016.

3. Migrants have been so far receiving unexpectedly high level of support from both the state institutions and from the civil society in Serbia. Except for constant warnings that the country cannot allow itself to become a permanent “parking space” for a big number of migrants, there were neither attacks on migrants, nor many cases of hate speech in media

and in the public against them. On the contrary, and differently from many other European states, solidarity with them has been the dominant response. NGOs involved in helping refugees filed three complaints against media outlets for hate speech (the Press Council supported them, finding media guilty of violating journalistic standards), one against the head of a taxi association, and one against the mayor of a town in Vojvodina. Serbia's Commissioner for Equality and the Ombudsman contributed a lot, with pro-refugee oriented warnings and recommendations.

Serbian Government has done its best to insist permanently on its own and Serbian society's "humane and organized approach", for which it has been congratulated by both its citizens, by the EU and by many international organizations. This has largely contributed to the radical improvement of Serbia's image abroad. In contrast with the conflicts that Serbia had with the Muslim population in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo two decades ago, the new image of Serbia is of the country that is ready and willing to help Muslim migrants from the Middle East.

4. Even if the **improvement of its image abroad** would be the only consequence of such a decent Serbia's behaviour towards migrants, it would be an outstanding result, taking into account how bad has Serbia been viewed by most foreigners ever since the wars in the 1990s. But, there is an additional gain here: this new and more than welcome behaviour of Serbia has been intentionally, skilfully and legitimately oriented by its Government towards the **enhancement of its position in the current accession negotiations with the EU.**

The Government obviously expects to be rewarded by the EU in the coming months and years, through a faster and perhaps easier accession process towards the EU membership that was launched in January of 2014. Like many international organizations and individual states, the EU sent help in many forms, including financial donations of around EUR 30 million. This has covered part of Serbia's costs, as the daily cost of one migrant is EUR 8, or 12 during winter.

One should not miss to point out the contradiction between expectations that the Union has had from its member states, on the one side, and from the EU aspirants like Serbia, on the other, even in this context. Serbia was, namely, at one point asked by the EU to devise a strategy for the migrants' and refugee crisis as a necessary step towards the opening of the negotiating chapter on the rule of law, at the same time when the Union itself and its member states lacked such a strategy.

5. Serbia's cooperation with neighbours during the migrant crisis has had its ups and downs and will in the future ultimately depend on the all-European solution, as well as on the readiness of others to cooperate within the region.

The worst case occurred in relations with Croatia, at the end of September 2015, when Croatia closed its borders with Serbia for a few days, faced with a radically increased number of refugees and migrants who were not able to proceed to Hungary any more. This kind of a drastic move did not even happen during the first half of the 1990s, when two countries were in an undeclared war. Serbian and Croatian Prime Ministers, together with some media outlets from both countries, exchanged bitter accusations and insults and both sides introduced trade sanctions for several days. The cooperation resumed soon afterwards, but the general feeling has been that the necessary level of cooperation within the region has been missing most of the time.

Although all countries on the “Balkan route” were asked to “facilitate the exchange of information and coordination” (as expressed in point 1 of the 17-point plan of the EU and Western Balkan countries, from mid-October 2015), it was obviously difficult for all on the Balkan route – including Serbia – to achieve a much needed level of mutual information and coordination.

One more important part of the planned actions was not implemented. Point 3 of the 17-point plan demanded the following: “Under the current circumstances, we will discourage the movement of refugees or migrants to the border of another country of the region. A policy of waving through refugees without informing a neighbouring country is not acceptable.” Serbia, like all other countries, has been doing exactly that – often acting as a travel agency that transfers people from one border (Macedonian) to another (first to the Hungarian, until mid-September when this country closed its border with Serbia, and later to the Croatian border), and making travellers pay for the journey.

6. Future behaviour of Serbia in the migrant crisis is hard to predict, particularly because of many unknowns concerning the high economic price it will have to pay amidst the economic crisis and insufficient funds coming for this purpose from the EU and other international organizations. The volume of the political price might be even bigger, as current solidarity with migrants is likely to turn into hostility if many of them will remain in the country for a longer period of time. This is exactly what was happening throughout 2014, while the number of refugees and migrants slowly went up: citizens of several Serbian cities with old or new collective centres protested then against the settlement of refugees.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

a) Faced with an unprecedented transit of several hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants through the country during 2015 and 2016, Serbia's government agencies, numerous NGOs and a good part of the Serbian society **mobilized quickly and did their best to help and support them**. Despite many initial shortcomings, the level of the organization of support has gradually increased. Throughout the crisis and in contrast to a number of EU member states, the Serbian Government promised to take part in the pan-European solution to the crisis and showed readiness to accept several thousand refugees on a permanent basis.

b) The lack of necessary mutual information and coordination among the countries on the "Balkan route" during the crisis showed clearly **the shallowness of regional and bilateral cooperation as well as a still high conflict potential within the region**.

c) **With its more than welcome behaviour towards refugees and migrants, Serbia used the crisis in a skilful and legitimate way to "reinvent itself"**, i.e. to improve its extremely bad international image it has had ever since the post-Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. Serbia's Government and citizens hope that this will also **improve its chances for faster EU accession**.

d) With its chaotic approach to the refugee crisis, coupled with the absence of the solution and the lack of solidarity, **the EU became a genuine exporter of instability to the Balkans**, in contrast to its promises and expectations in the region. The EU seems to have failed to fully understand that in crises of such proportions there is no and there should be no difference between its member states and Western Balkan aspirants. The refugee crisis has clearly shown that **much more will and efforts are necessary in the inclusion of EU candidate countries in the increasing number of EU policies and funds**. The road leads through the **re-invigoration of the EU enlargement process** that would allow Western Balkan countries an earlier rather than later accession to the EU.

e) The refugee crisis has shown that **Serbia needs to improve the legislative, policy and practical parts of the asylum- and refugee- related areas**. Harmonization with other countries in the region is certainly equally important, and this should be done through the alignment with the announced common EU asylum legislation, during the EU accession process.

Hungary and the Migrant Crisis

Dr Andras Szalai, Central European University, Hungary

I would like to commence my presentation with a caveat: I am a theorist and I am mostly interested in how different issues are turned into security problems through discourse. This is a process we refer to as 'securitisation' and this presentation will reflect the preliminary results of such a study. More precisely, for the purposes of this Symposium, I have decided to offer you a brief overview of Hungary's position on migration, on how domestic issues translate into foreign policy decisions and what we can expect in light of recent developments.

Summing up Hungary's position is relatively easy; it is total rejection. 'NO' to relocation quotas or to any mass resettlement of migrants within the EU. 'NO' to a pro-immigration discourse and 'NO' to further EU integration as a solution to the crisis and also 'NO' to Hungarian financial contributions to common policies. On the other hand, Hungary supports stricter border control mechanisms, some type of a reversal of EU integration to a world of nation states, the strict criminalisation of illegal migration and financial assistance to Hungary as a compensation for what Hungary had to endure last year when the summer wave of refugees hit the country.

Whenever I talk about 'frames', I mean how the Hungarian government sees the crisis and frames it. The government regards migration as a threat both to identity and to the life of its citizens. It sees Europe as weak, and in danger both in terms of its identity and the life of its citizens. It sees Western European leaders, like Angela Merkel, as weak and as being misguided. These politicians, according to the Hungarian government, do not listen to public opinion; they support erroneous policies that will lead to further disaster. So, instead of following Merkel in this matter, other European states should follow Hungary.

Evidently, the argument I am making here is turning the original question of this panel about foreign policy upside down, as I am mostly going to discuss domestic issues instead of foreign policy, because I believe that Hungary's position on migration is primarily driven by domestic considerations. In January 2015 Hungary launched a well-organised anti-migration campaign to turn public opinion against migrant and following this, it has been employing this shift in public sentiments to support those foreign policies that reject a common European solution. It also follows from this that, as long as this rhetoric works within Hungary and provides support for the government's position, Hungary's foreign policy most likely will not change. Of course I cannot make a causal argument, or claim that this campaign is the reason why public opinion is now decidedly anti-migrant; but I would like to mention that there are studies which are being conducted right now that look into this matter. Therefore, what I am

now presenting here is merely a certain narrative of how the Hungarian government launched an anti-migrant campaign and how that has had an impact on public opinion.

The current state of affairs can be traced back to January 2015, right after the Charlie Hebdo shootings when Prime Minister Orban first called migration a security threat both to Hungary and to Europe in general. Following his statements, an anti-migration media campaign was launched in March that still continues. Why is this timeline important? It is important because the campaign started *before* the summer of 2015, i.e. when Hungary became a transit country and Hungarians could experience migration first-hand. So, apparently an effective campaign could be launched without any first-hand experience of the population with migration. Last May, measures of xenophobia showed record heights: 46% of Hungarians reject migrants; only 9% were pro-migrant and 94% of them were anti-Arab. And these numbers have since then deteriorated (by the beginning of 2016, the share of xenophiles shrunk to 1%).

So, how and why could this campaign work? How could the government turn Hungarians against migrants? In order to find the answer to these questions, one needs to look at the domestic context and take into consideration the politics of the Fidesz government since 2010. By the end of 2014, political support for the government had fallen exponentially due to a series of scandals, and contentious policies. Meanwhile, the extreme right was gaining in strength and it was becoming the government's main competitor. In addition, most of the population was largely apathetic and apolitical. However, there has been a steady increase in pro-government support since the launch of the anti-migration campaign.

Therefore, the obvious argument here would be that the government is using xenophobia within Hungary to divert attention from a series of scandals and, as for its own supporters, it is using these sentiments to mobilise the core electorate once again. In parallel, by adopting a xenophobic, 'law and order' discourse, the government is trying to get 'the wind out of the sails' of the extreme right. But there is also a structural element to this context as well. Hungary is not a migrant-friendly country. Or at least it has not been since the 1990s, ever since xenophobia is measured. So this campaign reached fertile ground within Hungary, as most Hungarians are outright rejecting migration. Studies suggest that this xenophobia is mostly tied to the fear of the unknown, so it is not really racially based, but it is tied to a lack of first-hand experience with migration.

As a result, the public has a distorted view of migrants and its opinions are mostly influenced by negative coverage coming from the West, focusing on problems of integration, migration-related crime and other similar factors. Therefore, when it comes to migration, one could argue that the Hungarian population is susceptible to fear-mongering. To further simplify the argument, one may think of Hungary as one of the last white societies in the

world. Anything non-white, anything non-Christian is unknown to the average Hungarian, and is therefore threatening.

One additional structural factor that we should not dismiss is that within this campaign, migration and the crisis itself are being framed as a war with clearly identified sides, where Hungary is fighting a war against an influx of migrants that has not been seen since the fall of the Roman Empire. When it comes to Fidesz, this kind of rhetoric is not at all new. At the very least it dates back to 2002 when Fidesz lost the elections, but it has been prevalent ever since they got back into power in 2010. Now every policy suggestion that the government introduces is being framed through as a war. We have had a war on national debt; a war on utility costs; a war on banks, and a war with Brussels. The anti-migration campaign fits into this framework. It is just the next war that the government is fighting, and through this rhetoric, seeks to mobilise the population behind its policy position.

The way migrants are being securitised in the government discourse itself is also nothing new: you could see similar discursive structures applied to migrants in Western Europe from the 1990s on. These include clear Islamophobic overtones, a distinction between 'real' and 'fake' migrants, and the conflation of refugees, terrorism and migration. So these elements of the campaign are directly borrowed from pre-existing discourses in Western Europe, but the way they are being employed in Hungary is what makes the Hungarian case special.

The campaign itself is mostly conducted through billboards and media outlets close to the government, including state television. And it presents migrants as a threat along three axes, which is also familiar territory from Western European discourses. First, migrants are a threat to our economy. Second, they are a threat to our population as terrorists. Third, they represent a threat to Hungarian, but also to European culture. The first set of anti-migration billboards clearly evoked these three interrelated arguments. Currently, we have a poster campaign against the 'mandatory quota system', as the government calls the European solution for the relocation of migrants.

In addition to these communication channels, there are strong non-discursive elements to this campaign. The border fence itself for instance was used to show government resolve last year, to show that Hungary has a really strict view on migration and now, as other states are erecting fences all along the Balkan route, the government is presenting these developments as a clear victory for the Hungarian position on migration. Another non-discursive element was the establishment of 'transit zones' at Budapest train stations. Several thousand migrants were crammed into these railway stations, and thus the average Hungarian could have a first-hand experience with migrants.

One might ask why there was no opposition to this campaign. This is also a problem specific to the Hungarian case due to the strong power position of the government. The traditional veto powers, like media outlets crucial of the government, an independent judiciary, and a strong civil society are missing from Hungary. So, the only actors that are fighting this campaign are civil society organisations. These essentially had to take over the state's role in managing migration when refugees were crammed into Budapest transit zones, and civil society organizations are still active along the borders with Croatia, Slovenia, but also Serbia. Of course, civil society is not as strong in Hungary as in Western Europe, so these actors do not have the necessary power to counteract the government rhetoric and offer a counter narrative.

So where are we now? Currently, the government campaign targets the quota system that was accepted at the EU level. The structure of the campaign is the same. The slogans are the same: the quota system is a threat to Hungarian culture, it brings in terrorists and it costs a lot of money. The interesting point is that due to the Paris and Brussels attacks, the security frame has changed from a threat to a Hungarian identity to an actual threat to Hungarian citizens. Therefore, the government seeks to introduce new legislation and it also proposed a constitutional amendment that would give far-reaching powers to the government in introducing a sort of a state of emergency in Hungary, which is probably the most Orwellian outcome of such a campaign that one may imagine. This constitutional amendment was however rejected in parliament. But it was rejected by a narrow margin. If the government were to reintroduce it and manage to secure the support of the extreme right, then it could pass, so I think it is worth noting that this idea was even on the table. This amendment would introduce a new category of 'state of emergency' called the 'terror emergency situation' and would give under-defined and vague, but far-reaching, powers to the government in limiting the media, limiting the movement of citizens, etc. In other words, it would allow the government to limit civil rights within Hungary.

In addition to proposing changes in legislation, the government is organising a referendum on the quota system. Activists of the government party have been collecting signatures since last November, and the idea of a referendum was introduced last month. To promote this referendum, they also launched a media campaign employing the same slogans: a threat to culture, and a threat to the lives of Hungarian citizens. (The referendum was held in October 2016 and was not successful due to low participation. However, those who voted were largely in favour of the government's position).

What is the migrant situation now? Hungary has closed its borders since September 2015. Since then, the in-flow of migration has been changing. First, the migration route was diverted away from the Serbian borders to Croatia and Slovenia. What the government then did was basically, to gather refugees, put them on trains and then shuttle them to the Austrian

border and release them. The result was that, once again, migration became invisible to the average Hungarian. However, anti-migrant sentiments have not changed for the better, and this is another interesting aspect of the situation. Also, since then, additional fences were constructed along the Slovenian and Croatian border, minimizing the inflow of migrants into Hungary. Unfortunately, there is no official data on the number of migrants presently in the country, which is a huge problem for a researcher. What we have to do is to use our network of NGO contacts because they can give us an estimate of how many migrants come in and how many migrants are currently in Hungary. For the time being, they place this number at around 700, which is not a huge number.

So, a very limited number of migrants are staying now in Hungary. Anti-migration sentiments are high, and this is due to the government's effective campaign. What can we expect at the international level? The government is really happy about the erection of fences along the Balkan route, and it considers this to be an opportunity to gather support for the Hungarian position. Most probably the Hungarian Prime Minister will oppose the German position and will attack Angela Merkel personally, since Merkel is seen as the figurehead of 'bad' European policies. A common solution is not seen through integration, but as in a Europe of strong nation states which automatically propels Hungary towards the states that have a similar view on EU integration. Recently, our Prime Minister hosted David Cameron, and they discussed such issues. And, again, we have a two-level 'game' being played here; domestic rhetoric still vilifies the EU. And the EU is seen as a weak and incapable power that is causing more problems currently than it is solving.

To conclude, I would argue that Hungary will continue to oppose, or resist to EU policies that involve any form of relocation of migrants to Hungary. The official mantra is that migration is a German problem. The whole problem was caused by Germans, when Angela Merkel announced that Germany is accepting all Syrian migrants last year. Our Prime Minister will continue to look for allies in the region. There are already successes with Slovakia, to a lesser degree with Poland, and we are waiting to see how the situation will develop with Slovenia, Croatia and Austria. And, this is my main argument; since the securitisation campaign is for domestic consumption, this opposition will remain at least until the next elections in 2018, as this seems to be becoming the main election topic in Hungary.

Austria and the Migrant Crisis

Dr Marko Kmezcic, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz, Austria

Being all of us academics, it is also our duty to be provocative; so I am going to be provocative, too in the capacity of a social-constructivist. Therefore, I am going to present the situation as it is, in order to find the missing links, in an attempt to come up possibly with a conclusion to overcome not the whole crisis, but to see where we, as a scientific community, can contribute. Towards that direction, I will talk about a country which has about 8.5 million citizens and one of the highest per capita influxes of refugees in Europe, although this is not going to be my starting point. I am going to discuss about a country which made a complete U-turn in its refugee crisis policy. Basically, if you recall, when the refugee crisis was already present in Greece, it was still just resurfacing in Austria. And then, there was a moment where a coal truck full of bodies, decomposing bodies of refugees, was found, at the outskirts of Vienna. And, since that day, that has been a topic, not only a political topic, but also a social topic in Austrian daily politics.

Also, let me remind you that there was a time when Hungary was contemplating raising its own walls and fences towards Serbia and that has caused complete outrage throughout Europe. Then, soon after, Slovenia also raised its fence against Croatia and some people protested. And then soon afterwards, Austria also raised its own walls and pretty much no one noticed. And this exactly epitomises the debate in Austria over the past six months or so, from full-engagement promises that refugees are welcome, to the present day where I will lead the discussion to.

So, the immediate answer to the problem was quite surprising, and it included a coalition of two socialist-democrat governments, basically the Austrian and the German, and the collaboration of two chancellors, namely Angela Merkel and Chancellor Faymann of Austria, to open its borders to migrants piling up in Hungary at that time. So that was the beginning of the whole process, when refugees were actually welcome in Austria.

Half a year later, this remains only a distant memory! And, what has happened in the meantime is that Austria has introduced numerical caps, where it set a threshold to the number of asylum seekers per day, and also migrants per day, based on which only 80 asylum seekers can be accepted per day in Austria, with the aim of not increasing overall population of Austria more than 1.5% in the next four years.

Secondly, too much of the surprise within the EU itself, Austria has initiated this coalition of unwilling (meaning Western Balkan countries and also Visegrád four countries: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and, Hungary), in order to set up new border restrictions. And, finally Austria has invested, in the past couple of months, significant efforts to make it less attractive for refugees to seek asylum and refuge in Austria. Through these actions I observe

efforts to cut the welfare payments to asylum seekers. But also, we talked about poster campaign. Austria had quite an interesting poster campaign, not in Austria itself, but in Turkey. And, the posters basically conveyed the message, between the lines, that refugees are not welcome anymore.

Ironically, one of the key factors behind Austria's tighter border control restrictions has been the fear that Germany would also impose tighter border control restrictions causing a build-up of refugees in Austria itself. And the reason I call it ironic is because this is exactly what we have now in Greece. Greece is now a waiting room for the rest of the EU in terms of incoming migrants. And basically, does it come as a surprise? Not really, and briefly I will explain the juxtaposition of Austrian politics. Currently, there is a coalition government, a grand coalition government composed of central right and central left which is in power. And already, at the beginning of the crisis we heard Austrian Interior Minister who argued for Fortress Europe while it was not so commonly accepted as it is today. Also, Sebastian Kurz, Foreign Minister belonging to the central right part of the government, claimed that "I want Europe, but first of all Germany to clearly say we must stop inviting refugees." So, that was the position of one part of the government, while the other part of the government remained loyal to the policies of Chancellor Merkel.

However, the twist came at a TV interview by Chancellor Faymann who stated that he basically decided to change his policies as he learned that the number of refugees would not be less in the year 2016, but even more. So what is behind this 'House of Cards' politics in Austria? Basically, what can be observed in the past, through lower-level elections, is that the strengthening of the Freedom Party, which is the far right political option of Austria led by Heinz – Christian Strache and their growing popularity suggests just how much support parties in national government have lost, and how the mood of Austrian citizens has changed since the offset of the crisis. In the upcoming elections, which are taking place in 2017, Freedom party is projected to have close to 30% of the vote, thus rendering it the strongest political option in Austria.

Now, Austria still remains one of the wealthiest countries in the EU per capita, but unemployment is steadily rising in the country. And, obviously, voters start expressing their own economic concerns. So, although there are no waves of protests, as it can probably be observed in some cities of Germany at least, still the pressure coming from the public is quite palpable and I believe it is exactly this 'House of Cards' politics, which is shaping new Austrian policies towards the refugee crisis.

At this point, I would also like to present some numbers. Refugee crisis costs Austria one billion Euros in 2016; arguably, this is a lot of money and out of this one billion, 565 million come to cater for basic-care measures, such as housing, food, health insurance, work, integration programs, etc. 345 million Euros are earmarked for individual Austrian states as they face unprecedented costs of handling the refugee crisis. But still, this is 0,3% of Austrian

GDP per year. Also put that in comparison to 19 billion Euros which are completely unaccounted for as a consequence of corrupt party politics attested in the case of Hypo Bank in Austria.

So basically, this leads me to my conclusions. Whether we are on the wrong track when we discuss if we need more or less Europe, when we talk about 'Fortress Europe' or not, or when we talk about the cleavage, which is East versus West, basically, we need to talk again about what kind of Europe we want and whether we should take again into account the traditional divide between national conservative and more liberal progressive ideology, which is dividing the continent, rather than the East-West division of the continent as such. Because, the way I perceive these national conservative and liberal progressive ideologies, specifically in countries such as Austria, they serve as a flawed system of checks and balances to guide the politics of the country in the right direction.

But in the times of external shocks and crisis we have seen crisis of institutions, EU institutions in the past. Then we have witnessed the economic crisis. Now we see refugee crisis and Jovan Teokarevic has announced the next crisis: the crisis of the energy sector. So, do we talk about crisis if it is on-going, or is the world that we are living in? This is then no longer the crisis, but this is our reality. And, in our reality, how much this national conservative and liberal progressive ideology could be shaken by either far right or far left options which then undertake a more prominent role, and basically shape the politics in state and also in the wider context?

And secondly, we have heard that in Hungary one of the problems is that the civil society sector is underdeveloped. And I wonder whether the civil society actually can be a counter-force towards these tendencies, these far right and far left tendencies. And basically, wouldn't it be a challenge if we could talk about challenges coming, stemming from the crisis? Wouldn't it be a challenge then to really strengthen the civil society, not only in Austria and Hungary, but throughout the continent, in order to be able to deter and to be more successful in guiding the crisis in societies in times like this one? So, basically, the solution could be to strengthen civil society, independent media, the civil society organizations, NGOs, but also independent state institutions.

Plenary Session C: An outlook in the Balkan Region

The Mixed-Migration Crisis and the Balkan Region: Some Preliminary Observations

Assistant Professor Ioannis Armakolas, University of Macedonia & Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Greece

Introduction

In this talk, I will attempt a few preliminary observations about the mixed migration crisis from the perspective of an observer of the politics and societies of the Balkans. Without wishing to disregard the significant issues, humanitarian and otherwise, involved in the massive movement of people through Greece, the so-called 'Balkan corridor' and into Central Europe, my main focus will be the implications for the politics and security of the Balkans. The mixed migration problem was after all one of those rare occasions when the weak Balkan polities had to deal with a serious crisis that was not of their own making, but rather imported as a security problem and political challenge from the EU. In that context, my observations will focus on the manifold potential implications for the region.

The first task will be to provide some context about the state of affairs in the region. More specifically, and with regards to the strategy and policies of the European Union in the region, one can briefly summarise the state of affairs in the years after the Yugoslav wars by mentioning four concepts: first and foremost *stability*, as the cardinal consideration since the end of the turbulent 1990s, often superseding issues of democracy and economic development; secondly, material and technical *assistance* from the EU and European countries as well as *political support* in view of, thirdly, *reforms* that have to be undertaken by the Western Balkan states, typically as part of an expanded EU conditionality agenda; and, fourthly, what remains as the distant but still feasible 'prize' at the end of the prolonged process of reforms, the *accession to EU* as the apex of the process of inclusion of the Balkans to Western institutions.

While this had been the state of play for several years, more recently one can observe worrying signs of radically changing situation. While some progress in the accession process is slowly and cautiously being achieved in most Western Balkan countries, the domestic situation in the countries themselves is frustrating. What we do in fact see is significant backsliding in many respects: rising authoritarianism, serious democratic deficits, mounting challenges to rule of law, weak capacity of states administrations, failed economic transitions and socio-

economic deprivation, ethnic divisions, and more recently increasing intra-ethnic political polarisation.

The political environment and the mood in the EU have also changed. Major problems preoccupying the EU have relegated the Balkan accessions to a very low priority for member states. The whole process is not the least popular among Western European publics and policy makers - at best - struggle to maintain some continuity by putting the issue to the autopilot of EU bureaucratic politics; still, increasingly calls for putting enlargement on the back burner can be heard. The rise of populism, nationalism and anti-establishment forces in member states has had an impact on the way that these countries view the Balkans and on the way they view enlargement. Ethno-populism and Euroscepticism questions all things European, including of course enlargement policy, which is additionally seen as a potentially folly that could bring in the EU fold yet more weak and economically dependent states. As a result, we can observe in recent years a steady drop in popular support for enlargement, not only in key Western European states, but also in countries that were previously pro-enlargement. Still, and this is the relatively positive note, despite the fairly negative or hostile publics in many EU member states, mainstream political elites remain committed to the cause of enlargement, as long as it remains slow and cautious.

Observations

The first observation relates to the potential implications of the mixed migration crisis, starting from the issue of regional security. The crisis was introduced to a region that still suffers from the effects of persistent elements that have the potential to once more seriously threaten regional security. The Balkans are still preoccupied with enduring disputes and unresolved status issues, whether international, such as the Kosovo statehood question, domestic with potential to become international, such as internal make up in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, a number of disturbing trends aggravate existing disputes or function as enabling factors for the emergence of new crises. Cardinal among these are the widespread lack of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic trust, the failure of the transitional justice model favoured by the international community to offer credible and conciliatory solutions to the problem of dealing with the traumatic past, and the still vivid memories of the recent conflicts. To all these, one ought to add two precipitating factors: on the one hand the socio-economic predicament in the region, where by any measurable indicator large parts of the population feel marginalized and without any realistic prospect of improving their standards of living in the foreseeable future; and on the other hand the clearly observable regress of democracy that produces a crisis of political representation and promotes a new model of 'enlightened' authoritarian leadership.

This is the potentially explosive regional mix of problems, which troubled the region when the mixed migration crisis emerged as a potential new serious political-security problem. The real danger that appeared initially was that an unplanned and disorderly managing of the crisis would reactivate broader disputes and other bilateral confrontations. The mixed migration crisis put to test border regimes and security arrangements that had been painstakingly put in place in previous years, but never actually tested. The fast escalation of the tensions between Croatia and Serbia are a case in point as was the inability of Greece and FYROM to coordinate in the management of the migration flows. The danger was gradually addressed, but not through the optimal solution, which would have been a regional and EU-led coordination effort leading to a comprehensive solution to the mixed migration crisis. The gradual return to partial stability was through the Visegrad 4-inspired and Vienna-led process of Western Balkan coordination, which led to the effective 'closure' of the 'Balkan corridor'. Still, this partial settlement of the problem, this so to say 'normalisation', was enabled only through the remilitarisation of international borders for the first time since the end of the Yugoslav wars. The 'sealing off' of Central Europe materialized through a process that militarized borders between countries that are EU members or aim to join the EU, which we should not forget is largest multi-country border-free area in the world. The very remilitarization took place in areas that up until a few years ago suffered as a result of the militaristic nationalism of the late Communist and early post-Communist era. It can thus be argued that the partial settlement of the mixed migration problem was accomplished partially at the expense of policies and practices of regional cooperation and reconciliation that the EU has been successfully promoting since the end of the Yugoslav wars.

One may plausibly argue at this point that this factor is overblown since the securitisation of the refugee and migration problems has been an increasingly salient feature of European and NATO strategic thinking for many years, and reflected in their relevant strategic concepts. This is certainly a fair assessment. What is however important to stress here is that the recent mixed migration crisis did not meet an adequate multilateral response and that the securitized response that led to the closure of the 'Balkan corridor' was conceived and implemented outside the multilateral European framework, even if eventually it was welcomed by European leaders. The stopping of mixed migration flows constituted an ad hoc coordination of several countries or a 'chain' of bilateral solutions to a regional and European problem. The failure of reaching a multilateral solution to the problem led to an emergency solution based on unilateral or partly coordinated actions, exclusions and certainly a reinforcement of border controls and military solutions. These are solutions nonetheless, possibly better than the lack thereof. But, one should lose sight of the fact that multilateral and European approaches to such sensitive problems are typically much more comprehensive and long-term, and thus preferable.

The second observation relates to domestic security and rule of law issues. The outbreak of the crisis raised fears about the potential bilateral and regional consequences. Predictably, unilateral actions for the management of the crisis without broader cross-country coordination and understanding as well as assistance by the EU raised the spectre of negative repercussions for the sensitive bilateral relations in the region. This fear was exacerbated when tensions between Croatia and Serbia appeared to escalate, especially in their previously heavily militarized border. But the coordination the Western Balkan states put forward by the Austrian diplomacy, together with the transfer of border policing expertise from several EU member states to the Western Balkan states quickly diminished those fears. There are, however, dangers to domestic security and rule of law issues that accompany the long-term presence of stranded migrants and refugees that should not be easily discounted. One such danger pertains to possibility of regress to past practices of police brutality and violation of human rights by security apparatuses in the region. These security forces were only until a few years ago involved in serious violations of the human rights of 'alien' ethnic communities and occasionally in ethnically motivated crimes. This problem was especially pronounced during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, but examples of such crimes could be found also in the periods before and after these wars.

The legacy or memory of undemocratic practices survives to this date, as is evidenced by the widespread distrust that ethnic minorities display towards security institutions in their respective countries. The danger of regress to police brutality became more than obvious, for example, when FYROM's police and border guards mistreated and used violence against refugees and migrants near the unregulated camp of Idomeni in Northern Greece. The fact that such brutality was exhibited despite the local presence of police reinforcements by EU member states further increased concerns. Similarly, several cases of vigilantism and violence against migrants and refugees in Southern Bulgaria alarmed observers, although it should be stressed that the government in Sofia took active measures against such vigilantes. The widespread stereotypical view that 'old habits die hard' in the Balkans made many worry about the overall negative repercussion of the migrant crisis for rule of law in the region.

Moreover, there is always the danger that the endurance of the mixed migration problem (a 'demand' of sorts) would strengthen existing or reactivate past criminal networks (the 'supply' side), especially those involved in trafficking or smuggling of people. There are legitimate fears that the slow and weak European response to the mixed migration crisis could generate new 'business' to mafia networks in the region, new 'resources' which could also be subsequently used to consolidate the presence of criminal activity and allow it to 'buy' political influence, as it happened repeatedly in the 1990s. The bigger danger in this sense may be a tendency towards re-criminalisation of the Western Balkans, something that would go

against the, anyway weak and lukewarm, reforms that were undertaken in the region since the end of the Yugoslav wars.

The third observation relates to EU enlargement process per se and the question of whether the mixed migration crisis has had or may have an impact on the accession prospects of the Western Balkans. The impact cannot be direct, since the crisis is not of the Western Balkan states' making; rather the latter 'imported' a humanitarian and security problem from EU states. There are two ways in which the impact may prove negative for the accession process of the Western Balkans. Firstly, one can identify negative impact on the emotional and intellectual panoply required for the long-term process of the Western Balkan accessions. The merits of the accession of relatively poor and weak Western Balkan states to the EU should be obvious to Balkan policy makers. But this is only the end product of a long-term and difficult process. The prolonged accession process entails largely painful reforms with few tangible benefits that can be offered to impoverished and tired-from-waiting Balkan societies. It is often for these societies a 'leap of faith', since they continue to see little practical value to their commitment to EU accession, especially when populists increasingly argue for the necessity of international re-alignments and geopolitical reorientation of their countries.

The prolonged process also requires a good measure of confidence and trust between Western Balkan polities and societies and their EU partners as well as predictability in the process, given that elites and publics have to commit to their European aspirations over many years. The management of the mixed migration crisis has worked against all these emotional and mental fundamentals. EU member states turned against one another during this crisis in so many different ways that it would be impossible to summarise in this brief analysis. The crisis demonstrated that most EU states have deep distrust in the intentions of other EU states; as it also demonstrated a lack of trust between some EU states and their Western Balkan partners. One can say that trust is not in abundance when it comes to the effects of the refugee crisis. The crisis multiplied unilateral moves or initiatives by states (or groups of states) that were intended against other states (or groups of states). Numerous examples can be mentioned here, from what many states saw as Greece's 'waive through' policy, to Hungary's fierce attacks on the stances of Germany and Greece, to Visegrad states' anti-solidarity stance, and to the Vienna-led initiative for the closure of the 'Balkan corridor' to name but a few. Overall, the lack of a unified and strong European stance on the management of the mixed migration crisis showed serious deficiencies in European trust and solidarity, increased political volatility and generally spread unpredictability. And all these are anything but good news for sensitive and potentially unpopular policies such as future enlargements.

Secondly, the mixed migration crisis may have indirect negative impact on the enlargement process due to the overall ethno-populist wave that seems to be on the rise in much of EU, as we have already mentioned above. Populism, the widespread anti-

establishment sentiment and the spread of use of alternative media and social networking platforms produce various national configurations of post-factual politics. These are country-specific but most tend to effectively produce explosive amalgams of previously marginal and extremist narratives that tend to blend all sorts of related and unrelated issues: concerns over rule of law, terrorism, refugees, the fear of Islam, the vilification of the national or cultural 'other', hostility to 'lazy' Southerners, exaggerated concerns about societies' integration capacity, or a growing questioning of liberal and European values. The disturbing 'blending product' sits comfortably on pre-existing problems and challenges to enlargement, such as absorption capacity concerns, Euroscepticism or the enlargement fatigue. And the outcome of this explosive mix may have negative long term effects on the foundations of liberalism, tolerance and openness of Western European societies. Needless to say, the likelihood of such far reaching and negative development is difficult to measure and European societies may still manage to recover from this vortex of negativity and regress. But certainly, the more introvert, intolerant and nationalist Western European societies may turn the more adverse the effects for Western Balkans' EU accessions are likely to be.

Conclusions

Overall, what EU member states should keep in mind is that on the occasion of the migration and refugee crisis the Western Balkans imported instability from the EU, possibly for the first time to such an extent since the end of the Yugoslav wars. These weak, 'problematic' countries with weak administrative capacity, economic problems and their own internal divisions have to deal with high-risk problems imported from the EU. At the same time, the crisis has demonstrated like never before that the Western Balkans area missing piece in the jigsaw of European integration. Europe cannot actually develop a comprehensive security strategy, especially for non-traditional security threats, without full inclusion of Western Balkan States in a multilateral framework. And the same applies to radicalisation and de-radicalisation strategies that will preoccupy us a lot in the future as a result of terrorism and extremism. There cannot be a comprehensive strategy on radicalisation and de-radicalisation without inclusion of the Western Balkan states in a European framework sooner rather than later. So, in my opinion, there is no alternative. The recent crises and all sorts of repercussions demonstrate the need for a united Europe that will also include weaker Balkan countries, which are problematic but the EU 'cannot do without them and they 'cannot do without the EU. However, because of the unpredictability and the difficult domestic context in the EU countries, the 'auto-pilot model will not suffice anymore. We are in need of more active politics and policies, and more creative solutions. Real political leadership, cooperation and coordination of pro-European forces are crucial. Pro-European forces will have to come closer and to revisit and adjust their tools and presuppositions when it comes to the Balkan region and enlargement.

Migration and Labour Exploitation

**Professor Nicola Phillips, Head of the Department of Politics, University of Sheffield,
UK**

I am really thrilled to be visiting and also to take part in this Symposium, particularly because I am not an expert on this region and I have learned such a tremendous amount this afternoon about the specifics of the individual countries of the region and also how the refugee crisis has affected the region; so, I am really grateful to Mr Zaharis and all of the team at SEERC for the invitation to be here.

My presentation concerns the question of labour exploitation in the context of the refugee crisis. Most of what we talk about in this respect relates to the question of numbers, of how many people are moving, and to the consequences of such significant flows of migrants and refugees. I want to suggest that we urgently need to focus as well on what happens to refugees and migrants in relation to the labour market, both in transit countries and also in destination countries. Specifically, I want to focus on the worst forms of exploitation that are associated with the problems of forced labour and human trafficking for purposes of labour exploitation. Yet, a lot of what I will mention is also relevant to sexual exploitation and child labour and I wish to examine specifically at how these problems become relevant and pressing in a context of a crisis like the one we are living through at the moment. So, what I am trying to do is insert a political economy perspective on the refugee crisis, as well as to look at the economic dimensions of this crisis and how this affects the people who are moving through the region in the ways that have been already so richly described and analysed in this symposium.

A caveat I would like to make right at the outset, however, which is important in political terms and is certainly important in policy terms, is that the connections between migration and forced labour are very often noted. It is quite common, especially in Europe, to think about strong connections between labour exploitation and the migrant labour force, but I would like to suggest right at the outset that the assumptions which are often made about that relationship are problematic. Very often, and particularly in countries like the UK, France and Germany as well as other countries, it is assumed that the problems of forced labour and associated forms of severe labour exploitation are, in a causal sense, problems of migration. It is very interesting that in the United Kingdom and in many other countries problems of forced labour and labour exploitation are normally devolved to the immigration authorities to deal with as a policy issue, rather than Departments associated with the management of the economy. Colleagues may be aware that just recently the United Kingdom passed the Modern

Slavery Act, which attempted to address some of these problems. It started off being handled by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, quite appropriately, and it ended up being handled by the immigration authorities within the Home Office, which is problematic because it leads above all to a policy focusing on border control, as the lens through which problems of labour exploitation are viewed.

This is futile, particularly in the European context, as this is a problem of the economy, not a problem of movements of people. A large part of the flows of migration and indeed refugee flows that we are seeing at the moment are not a problem of undocumented migration. People very often are crossing borders legally and without a need for additional immigration papers. Thus, a focus on border control and picking up trafficking as a problem of undocumented migration at the border is particularly counter-productive as a way of dealing with these problems of labour exploitation. It also feeds into an assumption that, if you stop migration, you stop forced labour, and I hope that some of what I will discuss today will offer a sense of exactly how futile that assumption is, and exactly how much of a misunderstanding of the problem it represents. The problems of labour exploitation have to be understood as precisely that: as problems of the economy driven by the characteristics of the economies, national economies, regional economies and indeed the global economy. Economic processes associated with labour markets lie at the root of these forms of labour exploitation. Forced labour in many contexts is not about migration at all; it does not necessarily involve movement across borders, and it does not necessarily involve movement from one place to another. But, there are clearly very strong connections particularly in Europe between the patterns of labour exploitation and migration. It is very clear that there are particular vulnerabilities which are associated with migration and refugee flows, and they feed very strongly into the patterns of forced labour that we see across the world, but also in this situation.

The difficulty that I face in raising these topics is that it is far too early to have any concrete data on these problems, and indeed concrete data do not exist in general. We know that this is globally a very significant problem, but it is far too early in the context of the current crisis for there to be any hard evidence that will provide us with numbers. So my argument is suggestive, but it is based on what we know about situations that share some of the characteristics of this migrant and refugee crisis, particularly in relation to conflict-driven migration and patterns of displacement across the world: that this current crisis is likely to be strongly associated with a surge in forced labour and trafficking for labour exploitation, as well as for sexual exploitation.

As already mentioned, it is fair to draw this conclusion based on what we know about the vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees to trafficking and forced labour in general. But, we do have early evidence of this. The NGO Business and Human Rights Resource Centre has just released a report identifying problems of discrimination and abuse, including forced labour

against Syrian refugees working in Turkish garment factories; and this has been quite amply documented now and this NGO has been doing some excellent work approaching the major transnational garment brands to raise to them very specific questions about what they are doing to address these problems and to try to act on them. The first thing to mention, of course, is that getting the response of most of these brands has been extremely difficult and they list the brands that have not responded to this questionnaire, or were slow to respond, which include household names like *River Island*, *Marks & Spencer*, *Hugo Boss*, *Debenhams*, *Burberry*, *Superdry* etc. But those that have responded have done so reasonably constructively in some cases. *Primark* has announced that it is increasing the inspections of its factories in Turkey, precisely to check for patterns of exploitation of Syrian refugee workers in those factories. *H&M*, *Next*, *C&A* and *Primark* have reported identifying Syrian refugees working in their supply chains in Turkey and they have all given some detail about some efforts to try to identify and address those problems. In other words, we have early evidence that this is being identified as a problem, that we are seeing patterns of exploitation and abuse against refugees who are working in Turkish factories in this case, which suggests that we need a much closer focus on this, assisting the work that NGOs like Business and Human Rights Resource Centre are doing.

Let me preface some of my most specific arguments about the current crisis with the sketch of forced labour across the world. Firstly, forced labour is global in scope and it is characterised by very wide breadth across the world, and across sectors of national and global economies; the most recent estimates of the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicate a likely total of about 21million people across the world working in conditions of forced labour, but the ILO stresses that this is a very conservative estimate. This is a hidden problem, essentially, this is what we can guess, what we can estimate based on what we know. The significant thing here is that 90% of those 21million people are exploited in the private economy by individuals or enterprises. So, we are not talking about state-imposed forced labour here, but these figures are significant, because most of us tend to think human trafficking as trafficking for sexual exploitation. The ILO documents compellingly what we have known for some time, which is the global problem of trafficking for labour exploitation is many times greater than the problem of trafficking for sexual exploitation. They estimate about 21% of victims of forced labour are thought to be victims of sexual exploitation and 68% victims of forced labour exploitation. In other words, these problems are overwhelmingly phenomena of economic exploitation in the private economy and overwhelmingly associated with labour exploitation. That is not to say, of course, that sexual exploitation is irrelevant and it certainly is not irrelevant in this context that we are dealing with. The distinction is rather arbitrary in a way, as many people experience both kinds of exploitation; they move between them or they experience both kinds of exploitation at once. But, nevertheless, it is important to point out that we are talking here predominantly about trafficking for labour exploitation.

The other thing to highlight about forced labour is that it takes many forms. We are not simply discussing the more traditional forms of slavery that are associated with slavery or subsistence agriculture, for instance; instead, forced labour is integrated into the main stream of global production activity and covers a wide range of other sectors. The global service economy is important here. It is not only about people producing garments in Turkish factories, but people working in domestic service, which can often be the hardest to reach, or the global care economy, just to mention a couple of examples. In this context we also see patterns that are associated with organised crime; for instance, organized begging, or marijuana cultivation and, of course, forced sexual labour.

So, what are the drivers of forced labour across the world and in this context? I have already provided a clue. We do need to focus on criminal networks; we do need to focus on the relationship between smuggling and trafficking, but forced labour is at its root a problem of the economy and is driven by the economy, and as a result we need to understand it in that way. This goes to the heart of the economic models that we have in place in the contemporary period. We see the privileging of the generation of profit through the use and exploitation of an extremely cheap, extremely flexible labour, whose core characteristic is 'disposability'. And the characteristic of the global economy that is of most importance to us is the demand for that kind of labour, not just hidden out of the mainstream in subsistence agriculture, but, for instance, in the factories in Turkey that major transnational brands are using for their production across the world as well as in this region. It is not simply a characteristic of sweatshops in places like India, which again is the common assumption, but it is related to the explosion of the informal economy everywhere, driven in part by migration, the explosion of low-wage work and zero-hours contracts, which across Europe have attracted a great deal of attention. Thus, the contention essentially is that these forms of labour exploitation are not aberrations. This is not somehow a deviation from the norm, nor a problem of rogue employers who are not in compliance with supply chain standards, but rather a problem that is right at the heart of the global economy.

Forced labour itself takes a huge variety forms. Often they are associated with indebtedness to employers or to recruiters. Wages are often withheld; that is, someone is contracted to work but the wages are withheld until the end of a period of time or the end of a particular job and then, of course, they are not paid or paid at a pittance level. Workers are prevented from freely leaving a job by coercive restrictions on physical movement. They are also threatened with violence against them and their families or co-workers, as well as the confiscation of documents and possessions, which becomes an important part of the coercion that is associated with forced labour, particularly when somebody is an undocumented migrant. So, essentially what we are discussing are severely exploitative conditions with degrading and dangerous conditions of work, violations of work as labour rights and human

rights, and diverse forms of coercion, manipulation and force, designed to make people work harder, for longer and for less money in the kind of environment that we encounter in factories.

Coming to the final set of points that I would like to make, migration plays an important part in this picture and I want to highlight four dimensions of vulnerability to forced labour that become particularly pronounced in the kinds of migration situations that characterize the present crisis. The first and most obvious is poverty. But I would like to emphasise that this is not necessarily about pre-existing poverty. It is not always the case that people were poor when they started to move, but they are for obvious reasons existing in conditions of very often dire economic need, either in transit or in a destination country. Migration researchers have shown us for years and years that the poorest of the poor are not those who migrate. The poorest of the poor lack the means to do so, and, particularly when we look at the costs that some of the migrants and refugees have incurred in order to make the kinds of migrations that we have been discussing, we can understand that the pre-existing poverty is very rarely a part of this picture. But, essentially we are describing a situation in which many people are living in 'no-man's land' along this corridor and in Europe in general, without the means to earn a living and without basic economic resources for subsistence.

That leads to my second point: namely, the problem of indebtedness. In this context, debt bondage is essentially the most common form of forced labour that we encounter and these debts can be held to smugglers and to recruiters, or alternatively to employers. But mostly, in this case, it is debt associated with the cost of securing passage across borders. The types of coercion that are involved here essentially preclude people from leaving a situation in which they are coerced to work in order to pay off the debt and, obviously, debts are usually manipulated so that they become un-payable and the person is trapped, confined in that situation of forced labour indefinitely. The role of physical coercion and violence is also significant. I think it is important to recognise that this is not always about deception; often it is, but not always. Some people in situations of desperation make a calculation that a situation of indebtedness, or in our language 'debt bondage' for a couple of years, is warranted in order to achieve passage to a destination or conditions which they believe are going to lend themselves to a better life in the long run, and that is documented very extensively. People are not necessarily deceived into a situation where they exist in conditions of debt bondage, even though, of course, the kind of conditions that people encounter are beyond their worst expectations.

The third point I would like to make has been amply discussed in other papers. It is associated with particular kinds of immigration policy relating both to refugees and to migrants, particularly labour migrants, which prevent migrants and refugees from accessing either welfare protection or the labour market in a transit or destination country. Given the

conditions of economic need that we have outlined, many people are going to be seeking opportunities for work and, of course, what we see is a flourishing of the recruitment industry around those vulnerable migrants and refugees, who are seeking access to the labour market and end up in situations of severe labour exploitation and forced labour.

The final comment that I would like to make, essentially, brings it all together: that all of these dimensions of vulnerability are sharpened where a situation of security crisis, such as the one that we have at the moment, intersects with economic crisis. This is very well documented both in terms of a hardening of the kinds of policies which deprive people of access to welfare protection and to labour market access, but also hardening of public attitudes towards migrants and a severe complication of the politics surrounding refugee and migrant presence in a particular country. It is also worth noting that the economic crisis is very often felt in most sectors in which migrant workers and refugee workers are overrepresented, such as construction. The vulnerability of people to finding themselves in situations of severe labour exploitation and forced labour are therefore heightened.

What has been stated indicates that, beyond the smuggling industry and the trafficking industry, beyond government policy makers, beyond the role of NGOs, we need to look at the role of firms as well. Transnational Corporations and labour markets enter the picture of the refugee crisis in a way that is not normally captured in the way that we talk about it, and become an important part of our understanding of the consequences of the crisis and the kinds of policy responses that are needed.

Europe's Migrant Crisis

Dr Demetrios G. Papademetriou, Distinguished Senior Fellow and President Emeritus of the Migration Policy Institute, Washington DC, USA; President, Migration Policy Institute Europe.

To begin with, I would like to talk about the migration and asylum crisis in Europe in the past six or nine months, where we are, what the responses to the crisis have been, what mistakes have been made, and of course, the topic of the day, which is what exactly the EU-Turkey deal is and what reasonable expectations we might have from the implementation of that deal.

We all know that Europe has been singularly ineffective in dealing with the crisis following the fateful decisions of Chancellor Merkel to open up Germany to all migrants who reached Germany in July and September of 2015. These decisions were intended to apply to Syrians but the message was understood as a welcome for anyone who makes it to Germany. The result was a dramatic increase in the numbers of Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans and others attempting to make it to Europe via Greece and the Western Balkans, in order to make it to the two countries that appeared to be this decade's 'promised lands', namely Germany and Sweden.

And indeed, we saw well over a million people make it to Germany and registering there in the hope (expectation?) that they would be able to stay there in some sort of protected status. And, we saw about 160,000 or so people who made it to Sweden hoping that they would be offered what Sweden used to offer to virtually all of them until late last year, which is a permanent status up front, the equivalent of the 'green card' of the United States.

The chaotic way in which people came to these countries and their sheer numbers overwhelmed Germany's and Sweden's administrative capacities and led them to walk back from this 'open-ended invitation' for people to come in. And, in the past two or three months, Europe has invested as much political capital as anyone can possibly invest on a single issue to try and find 'a solution' to the two things that I consider to be at the heart of Europe's migration crisis. First to reduce the numbers of people who actually make it into Europe and seek protection or simply an opportunity to stay there and advance their economic prospects *outside of legal channels*. Second, to change the manner in which these people have been coming. In other words, to try to replace the chaos with an orderly way in which people could apply for and receive protection in Europe. It is these twin objectives that underpin the EU-Turkey deal and it remains to be seen whether and how the deal will be implemented and how long it will be honoured.

In the meanwhile, the European institutions have been trying to figure out how to manage the crisis. Germany has been the leader in trying to persuade (some will say “force”) other member states essentially to follow its lead in how to respond to the crisis. And we also know already that parts of that response have not worked out the way Chancellor Merkel and her government had wanted. Specifically, the European Council voted via a majority vote to relocate 160,000 people from those who qualify as ‘bona fide’ refugees from Greece and Italy to the rest of the Union. But very few of these people have actually been relocated. At this time, the relocations amount to about 800 or so. However, Brussels continues to insist that this relocation (or redistribution) mechanism is something that can actually work. The facts on the ground, however, are making it clear that this will not be the case.

Member states that felt forced to accommodate the relocation decision have ‘stuck to their guns’ by refusing to take those be allocated to them. Moreover, they continue to make it clear even now, in the middle of March, 2016, that they are not going to accept people from anywhere, particularly Muslims. Initially they followed a passive-aggressive way of saying ‘no’ to Brussels and to Germany. By now, it is clear, that some EU countries will simply not cooperate, that is, that there is no European solution to this issue, and that Europe as Europe was not going to act with a single voice and a single plan in this regard. So, it is now clear that the same way that the crisis has not really affected the whole of Europe, the solution to the crisis will not be equally shouldered by all European member states.

We all understand that the vast majority of those who sought protection in Europe last year, sought protection in just a handful of countries, all of which are in Central Europe and the Nordic countries. And the result has been very predictable. Starting with Hungary, sometime in the last quarter of 2015, and then extending to Austria, Slovenia, etc., what you see is a gradual tightening of borders to the point where only a few people will be able to travel through the Western Balkan nations on to the rest of the EU, which is the topic of this Conference.

So what have we witnessed in the last month? We have seen the hardening of the border between the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and as a result, the amassing of a lot of migrants on the Greek border town of Idomeni. But one thing is clear to me that by the time migrants have reached Northern Greece, they are not going to simply go back. Their commitment is absolute. So, what we are likely to see is not just attempts to penetrate the barriers that have been put in front of them but also the search for alternatives to going through FYROM—by traveling to the rest Europe via Albania or Bulgaria. And we all know that there are disadvantages to those routes. If you take FYROM out of the mix, and you go to Albania, the terrain is much more difficult. And, in any event, the Western Balkan countries have made a commitment to try to close down even these routes to the rest of Europe. And, if they try to go through Bulgaria, they find that Bulgarian guards are particularly tough but also

that since Bulgaria, and above it, Romania, are not part of the Schengen system they will have to cross borders three times: once to get into Bulgaria, then cross into Romania, and finally from Romania onto the rest of Europe.

Clearly, we are witnessing the closing down of the opportunities for people to get to their desired destinations in Europe. And this is how the EU-Turkey deal has to be understood: as an attempt on the part of, once more, Chancellor Merkel, who negotiated this deal, to try to reduce the numbers of people who are coming in, and to basically stop the chaotic manner in which they come in. It is too early for anyone to speculate as to whether the deal will lead to a dramatic reduction in the numbers of people who are crossing the Aegean to come to the Greek islands, whether Greece will be returning the vast majority of these people in accordance with the terms of the deal, or whether Turkey will be willing to take back not only the people who do not qualify for protection in Europe, but also people who might qualify but will not be allowed to move on to the rest of Europe and need to be returned back to Turkey. This is also going to be a constant test of both the political will of Turkey to 'play ball' with the rest of Europe, and how patient Europe will be, making sure that over time, that is over the next six to eight weeks, the numbers can be reduced to a trickle relative to the numbers that had been coming in during the last nine months. The message that the Europeans hope to send to would-be migrants and asylum seekers, is thus very simple: I am paraphrasing here the words of the President of the European Council, Mr Tusk, who basically said, very clearly: "Do not try it. You are not going to make it to the rest of Europe, to your ultimate destination. You will be stopped and you will be sent back."

As it always happens with the European Union, however, it is not enough to try to find out what the policy is. What we all have to pay attention to is whether the implementation comes anywhere close to the declared intentions of the policy. As a result, all of us will actually have to watch together whether and how the numbers of people who are coming into European space get reduced. We will have to watch how long the Central European countries will resist resettling people directly from Greece, Italy or Turkey. And, most importantly, whether the arguments as to the legality or morality of the EU-Turkey deal might take important parts of the deal off the table—particularly the one—for one part of the deal that refers to returns and resettlement. But we should also keep in mind that the most important part of the deal is to create opportunities for Syrians and others who are in Turkey to resume their lives, and to do so by allowing adults to work legally, in the formal labour market, and by educating their children. If we don't do so, we are in danger of losing an entire generation of Syrian children who if they receive no education, and regardless of whether they stay in Turkey or move on to Europe, or go back to Syria, they will have serious problems in becoming effectively incorporated into any of these countries—that, in fact, they will become a "lost generation." This is also where the biggest expense is going to be. This is where most of

the 6 billion Euros are going to be invested in. This is ultimately the test of whether this will be a good deal for the EU, but also a good deal for Syrians, Afghans and others.

I will conclude by saying that in order for us to get back to an orderly way of protecting people, we need to have governments that are minding the interests of their people first and foremost while also committing to observe at least the letter of their international obligations, and that see this deal an opportunity to bring Turkey even more squarely into the family of nations by enticing to become a full-member of the United Nations Convention for Refugees. And I think that the 'give and take' which will have to take place in the remainder of this year will pretty much shape not only how the EU will relate to Turkey, but also how Turkey will relate to the EU, and, hopefully, how this relationship will create virtuous cycles that will protect people, make the EU proud of what it is doing, make it possible for Greece and the Balkan states to play a constructive role on this issue and, hopefully by the end of this year, the migration situation will be much better than last year.



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