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The Current Dynamics of International Migration in Europe: Problems and Perspectives

*“Immigration policy should be generous;
it should be fair; it should be flexible. With such a policy we can turn to the world,
and to our own past, with clean hands and a clear conscience.”*

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, “A Nation of Immigrants”, 1958

Abstract. The long-brewing Civil War in Syria that catastrophically erupted to engender the mass movement of refugees in 2015, created a long trail of migrants from Turkey to Greece and then on to Germany, which afterward, involved new routes of flow through Northern Russia to Sweden as well. The EU faces a clashing situation in which its legal duties and the human rights values it incarnates call for openness and tolerance on the one hand, while European citizens insist on greater migration precincts and anti-migration feelings on the other. The lasting armed conflicts in the Middle East but particularly in Syria, which caused migrants and refugees to head North en masse, brought radical changes to the minds of Europeans regarding the meaning of “migration”. Nowadays, compared to previous years as in the 1990s, the term “migration” now translates to terrorism, chaos, cultural-counter revolution and Islamophobia, rather than economic development, remittances, exchange of ideas, and diversity in Europe.

Keywords: refugee crisis, EU migration policy, Europe, migration, Visegrad countries

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Europe's lingering migration crisis: the lack of focus on EU migration policy

What recently has the European Union been doing to manage migration policy, a policy riddled with political flaws and gaps due to the divided opinions of the EU's leaders? What kind of policy and initiatives should the EU embark upon in order to tackle the migration problem? What are the roots of the problems concerning migration stemming from the migration policy of the EU and the mass movement of migrants and refugees from the Middle East and other neighboring countries? There are many questions, but few answers, and even fewer proposals, and solutions regarding the challenges of migration. Hence, there is an urgent need to find direct answers to the questions aforementioned on migration issues that are considered the centerpiece of the EU's agenda. Ostensibly, after many long years of failed efforts, the Union's migration policies are desperately in need of new impetus and revitalization. However, politically perplexing situations regarding the strong anti-immigrant approaches in many European countries have served to discourage migration and caused the return of vulnerable migrants and refugees coming from the Middle East and Africa.

Since 2015, EU member states have come together on numerous occasions in an attempt to reach a common approach and a coherent policy on how to deal with Europe's refugee crisis. From the extremes of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, all EU leaders have argued their own agendas but without suggesting anything by way of a workable solution to the crisis that could claim a consensus; in fact the only consensus was to reduce the massive inflow of irregular migrants and refugees. However, all stopped short of explaining how this might be achieved or how the responsibility would be shared, which leads to the conclusion that the crisis is more a crisis for Europe and Europeans, than it is a crisis for refugees and migrants, whether they be in Europe already or queuing at the gates to enter.

Therefore, it is an undeniable fact that the significant wave of migrants from the Middle East, Africa, and other countries will continue in forthcoming years. According to the United Nations, the African population alone is predicted to more than double by the year 2050 (Muggah & Hill, 2018). Consequently, migration needs to be managed collectively and responsibly by the EU member states through close cooperation across the Mediterranean divide. Mutual perception and behaviour amongst the EU leaders means more in terms of having an appropriate deal on the migration issue.

What engenders a degree of optimism in this regard, is that the "Group of Four" (France, Germany, Italy and Spain), has reached an accord with their African counterparts by legalizing initiatives such as the "Partnership Framework". In particular, Italy and Spain in the earlier days of mass migration (between 2015

and 2016) were quick to enter into bilateral arrangements with African countries as a means to reduce its impact. Likewise, Spain's cooperation with West African countries can be considered as an effective action taken by the two sides in bringing down the inordinately high number of irregular migrations to a more controllable level.

Furthermore, successful cooperation on migration has long been on the agenda between Europe and Africa, at both a regional and a bilateral level. The last comprehensive migration initiative enacted against the background of the current crisis, which concluded at the Valletta Summit of EU and African leaders on 11-12 November 2015 (European Commission, 2018). After difficult negotiations, the delegations arrived at a declaration and action plan, which presented a balanced policy on the two sides' divergent interests regarding not only the development of legal migration and mobility but with reductions in irregular migration and trafficking as well as the return and readmission of irregular migrants.

the action plan referred to entailed strengthening external border security with core initiatives such as the enhanced European Border and Coast Guard Agency, European Border Guard Teams, and Operation Sophia in the Mediterranean. However, before implementing those initiatives, the EU should have taken into account some of the social, economic, political and environmental situations in the countries of origin and in the transit states and introduced measures sufficient to project stability. This was not done to any degree of significance the EU is now facing obstacles and disputes in its Partnership Framework and in the Dublin Convention between its member states (Garces-Mascareñas, 2015). Pursuant to these initiatives, some EU leaders, particularly those orientated toward right-wing populism, are reluctant to embrace the migration policies imposed by the EU, or simply avoid implementing them. As a result, even today, the leaders of those countries pay scant regard to the fact that the notion of partnership requires a balance of interests on both sides.

Since the first period of migration inflow in the 1980-90s, the Dublin Convention (implemented in different stages via Dublin I, II, and III) has been the principal framework for the EU on migration policy. The European Union in 1990, implemented the Dublin Convention to confine and to "ease and share the mutual burden" of asylum seeking at the European level. The Convention embodied two core elements: "confinement" and "refoulement". The former mainly concentrated on distinguishing between "economic migrants" and "true political refugees" by applying visa limitations on those countries perceived as constituting the main source of asylum seekers. The latter, refoulement, has three dimensions; first, an asylum seeker's claim must be lodged and processed in the first "safe country" of arrival. Second, where an asylum application is rejected, the person concerned has to be returned to the first safe country (in the case of the asylum application being

rejected in a country other than the country of first arrival) or to a “safe country of transit” (where the asylum application is rejected in the country of first arrival).

Largely, for example, if the EU proclaims Ukraine as a safe country, then an asylum seeker from Ukraine cannot claim asylum in the EU. Another example, is if a migrant from Kazakhstan travels via Ukraine and then reaches the EU, the migrant may also be returned to Ukraine. This form of refoulement practice incorporated in the Dublin Convention was first applied in Europe in the 1990s. Even today, this practice remains relevant and has been applied to Syrian refugees and others in terms of being returned to their first safe country of transit; Turkey. It is an overt fact that hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees fled Europe namely to Greece, then Italy, Spain, Sweden, and Germany via Istanbul, still considered a part of the old silk road. However, due to the soured relations between the EU and Turkey on different political issues, the implementation of this practice has thus far not proceeded with any degree of haste.

While the European Union’s handling of the migrant/refugee crisis intensified problems amongst the member states, in September 2015 the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, launched a package of proposals aimed at mitigating its effect. Pursuant to his suggestions, the relocation of migrants and other refugees on a proportionate scale would have to be the first step taken by other member states (in the example of Italy, Spain, and Hungary). The more fundamental part of the Juncker’s plan was the proposed establishment of an External Investment Plan intended to address the root causes of the migration crisis.

According to the Juncker proposals, 4 billion euros (4.4 billion USD) from the EU budget and a similar amount from member states had to be invested in mobilizing private investment of roughly €62 billion (\$66 billion). Likewise, he offered that 15,600 refugees from Italy, 50,400 refugees from Greece, and 54,000 from Hungary, have to be relocated in the territory of the other member states at a proportional level (European Commission, 2015a). Juncker’s proposals seems to be both suitable and applicable in terms of the relocation of migrants in different European countries. However, due to rising political rifts between EU member states, and strongly opposed stance adopted by the Visegrad group of countries, the proposal have had no noticeable effect on the European migration issue (See Table 1).

Table 1. The Juncker Proposal

» An emergency relocation proposal for 120,000 refugees from Greece, Hungary, and Italy
» A Permanent Relocation Mechanism for all Member States
» A common European list of Safe Countries of Origin
» Making return policy more effective
» Communication on Public Procurement rules for Refugee Support Measures

» Addressing the external dimension of the refugee crisis

» A Trust Fund for Africa

Note. Composed by the author on the basis of information from the European Commission (2015a).

Since the onset of the migration crisis, the EU has consistently vacillated in issuing frameworks and policies at different times; many have succeeded, others have just failed. Even today, the EU well understands that it lacks a coherent policy on migration among its member states. Nevertheless, the EU was committed to ensuring human rights protection at a level in keeping with the framework for protecting migrants under the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950)² and the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)³. However, it is doubtful whether the EU is able to provide human rights protection in a proper way at this moment in time, particularly given the extent of internal-political confusion that exists in the wake of migration crisis.

According to the European Convention on Human Rights and its equivalent under the UN convention, “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person, the right to be free from arbitrary arrest or detention, and the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution”. Unfortunately, the absence of a comprehensive and flexible EU-level migration policy inhibited the EU’s ability to avert the migration crisis and to alleviate its worse consequences as well as to prevent human rights violations. Simultaneously, the EU’s system is somehow, considered unfit to defend the rights of asylum seekers under the Human Rights Convention (ECHR) after violations occurred in the Middle East and other bordering countries. Consequently, it can be concluded that EU migration policy has some political gaps and therefore cannot overlap with either the Human Rights Convention or the UN 1951 Refugee Convention in terms of ensuring human rights protection and avoiding human rights violations.

The EU member states obligations on the refugee issue are also embodied in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, which states that the core principle is non-refoulement. It asserts that “a refugee or an asylum-seeker should not be returned to a country where he or she underwent persecution and violations to his or her life or freedom”. It then continues “everyone has the right for any individual to be protected from personal persecution or simply from the dangers of war”. The UN Refugee Convention, as with other countries signatory to it, applies to all EU member states and invokes a legal obligation to: welcome, host, and protect refugees as well as migrants who fulfill the standards for such international protection. A problem which arises here, mainly relates to a lack of reference between the conventions mentioned

2 Also known as the Human Rights Convention (ECHR).

3 Also known as the 1951 Refugee Convention.

(UN, ECHR) and the EU's current migration policy, which results in ambiguity and mismatched consequences. Taking policy faults into account, European interlocutors and policymakers urgently offer that the EU needs to address migration crisis by launching new migration policy reforms and initiatives, which would be regulated under the European Human Rights Convention, the United Nations Refugee Convention and with the further input of and commitments taken for the implementation of the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

In short, what European countries need to do now is to come together by addressing the migration issues faced by the countries in the Mediterranean region and to set up a fair and equitable distribution system⁴ of refugees and asylum seekers so that the responsibility for their wellbeing is shared equally. Currently, the EU's migration policy is still unfinished business and at risk. In order to implement migration policy effectively the EU has to resolve some contradicting situations. The most important in this regard, is that it has to convince member states to act collectively and to think multilaterally not unilaterally, particularly on issues such as migration. The crisis *per se* is not just about migrants, rather it is a political crisis, which needs Europe to act more cohesively and which in turn means that the EU first requires to foster solidarity amongst all its member states. Before all else, such solidarity has to be based on flexible diplomacy that offers a way forward in order to settle more integrated policies while overcoming member states' trepidations, open concerns, and specific technical problems. It also needs to be supported clear policies and clear-cut decisions. This applies in the general sense and to migration issues in particular.

Still a Divided Europe? – Political fissures among the EU member states on migration issues

Political meetings, negotiations, debates and discourses around migration abound but still there is no political will, no mutual perception, and no cohesive decisions and plans by the EU's member states to meaningfully address the migration phenomenon in unity. What has happened, is that at the beginning of the 2015-2016 crisis, the EU's member states rapidly divided into opposing camps. Some Northern and Western European countries namely Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden, joined Germany in arranging humanitarian concerns and allowing hundreds of thousands of refugees to cross their borders. Other Western European countries, such as France and the UK, responded more circumspectly and accepted far fewer refugees. By contrast, Central European states immediately opted for preventive

4 Proportionate distribution system.

policies, uncovering their nationalistic approaches and refusing to accept any. How long will this situation go on for?

There are at least three emerging reasons why Europe has encountered this political impasse on the migration issue. First, there are clashes of interests among member states as well as between member states and the EU that engender difficulties which prevent the migration crisis from being properly addressed let alone settled. Countries in Southern Europe are faced with a huge number of unauthorized arrivals and inflows of migrants and have much to gain from a joint European approach to the issue. Meanwhile, countries in Northern Europe benefit from a national approach because they are sheltered by intra-European borders, which have recuperated some of their past significance as barriers to migration.

The second reason mainly focuses on the emerging political fissure between Western and Eastern Europe, not just over migration but also in relation to other political issues. In contrast to Western Europe, Eastern Europe has a more hostile attitude toward migration and strong anti-migration feelings have come to the fore. These differences hinder the future development and the implementation of policies and framework directives regarding migration in Europe. As an example we can look at current relations between the “Visegrad Group” (or “V4” countries) and the EU over a range of issues including European migration. The “V4” countries, namely the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, have increasingly demonstrated an appalling lack of solidarity with the rest of the European Union.

With a deeply seated post-Communist mentality, the V4 countries persistently challenge the EU by violating some of the basic principles of the rule of law and liberal democracy on which the EU is founded. In fact, the Visegrad group has developed into an unconsecrated alliance whose incessant violation of the EU’s rules and utilitarian attitude toward European solidarity constitutes a grave menace to the EU. Explicitly, this approach by these countries can only lead to euro-schism and fragmentation within the EU. In essence, the V4 countries are not prepared to sacrifice their national interests and national security on behalf of the unilateral interests of the EU on migration, strongly uttering that if the EU push us more to accept migrants, we will urgently need to rethink the future of our membership in the Union. Those countries, mainly the leaders from the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland have revealed their strong disagreement to hosting refugees, in particular migrants of Muslim origin, and repeatedly air their criticisms of past EU action in this regard.

The third reason, relates to a bothersome conflict between ideals and pragmatism in EU migration policy. To a great extent, Europe supports the Refugee Convention. However, there are some challenges regarding refugees and migrants, due to the rise of populism and political divisions between member states. This paradox has decreased the credibility of the EU’s migration policy and exposed the fragility of its plans concerning migration. Today, the EU is at pains to grasp the reality of

migration and with it, the need to combine short-term measures to regulate current inflows with long-term action to tackle the roots of the phenomenon. However, deep-rooted political splits in the union on the migration issue remain. In particular, not all member states are ready to accept a fair share of the migrant burden, undermining the principle of unity and risking Union fragmentation. The absence of common action and lack of consensus among the member states on migration can only decrease the trustworthiness of the EU's actions. In the absence of a cohesive policy and consensus in Europe, populist movements will strive to take over the political agenda with a hotchpotch of fears, exaggerations, and simplistic solutions. Likewise, political antagonism around migration is not likely to disappear anytime soon.

As previously mentioned, arguments over migration have divided the Union, both within and between governments, over who should bear responsibility for migrants crossing the Mediterranean. Between 28 and 29 June 2018, the EU leaders met in Brussels, for two days to determine the best course of action to cope with the flow of Europe-bound refugees and migrants, in spite of a significant drop in the number of arrivals in that year. This ad-hoc informal meeting of 16 EU leaders, was likely to be a critical moment for the development of the EU's migration policy. The meeting showed that the bloc itself is deeply divided over the migration crisis. Amid the meeting, the leaders talked about tangible reforms to the EU's Dublin regulation which requires refugees to apply for asylum in the country where they first arrive. At the meeting, Angela Merkel counseled against states acting unilaterally over migration, insisting that Europe instantly needs to remain true to its multi-dimensional values. "Not unilateral, not without consent, but with the consent of partner states", said Merkel. She accentuated that Germany's so-called open-door migration policy in 2015, when more than one million migrants entered Germany, was an exceptional case and a choice that Germany did not make on its own. "The talks were frank and open," but "we did not have any clear-cut consequences or conclusions", said Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. It has to be noted that according to the UN Refugee Agency, the number of people displaced by armed conflicts and persecutions amounted to a record 68.5 million in 2017, including 25.4 million refugees who crossed international borders in search of protection (Edwards, 2018). Sad to say, but the overarching panic and wretchedness shown by the European states in response the migration phenomenon, is steering the EU toward very hazardous waters.

V4 vs EU interests over the migration phenomenon

It is an indisputable fact that Central European countries until the last five and six years restrained themselves to making the EU a far more resourceful and effective union in the region. However, the political positions and roles of

the Visegrad group of countries including Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, have undergone radical changes in attitude towards the EU in recent times, particularly in relation to its policies including those connected with migration. Nowadays, in its relations with these countries the European Union, in terms of the implementation of its rules and regulations, face challenges and discontent upon many important issues. The Visegrad Group was founded in the early 1990s as a non-institutional organization perceived as an effective instrument by its member states for defining main goals and priorities vitally significant to them. It is an undisputable fact that after the fall of the communist regime, the Central European countries including the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia determined an alternative way of development by supporting the European Integration process. At that time, the EU has introduced itself to those countries as a so-called political and economic liberator in order to provide them with assistance aimed at boosting their development in the socio-economic and political spheres. Therefore, the year 2004 is evaluated as a fundamental breakthrough and a turning point not only in terms of the development of V4 cooperation but also the enlargement of individual member states. After accession to the EU, the V4 countries set about redefining their own priorities and strategies while at the same time striking a balance that would enable them to strengthen collaboration with the rest of the European countries.

Since the 2004 enlargement and up to five years ago, the V4 countries were acclaimed as the frontrunners of the European integration process due to their strong economic growth and prosperity, largely a product of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) from Western member states. However, that has changed and unlike in the earlier years of their membership, the liberal projects and the EU's rules and regulations now seem in jeopardy in these countries.

The reason for this is mainly due to the to the political changes that have occurred in the V4 countries in the last five years which has moved from a centrist position which favoured liberalism to the far right which favours nationalism with strong populist tendencies. This has led to their relationship with the EU being redefined. Now, in all four countries national solidarity takes precedence over Union solidarity and the principles and rules of law on which the latter is founded are at risk.

Although the Central European countries demonstrated huge enthusiasm to become a part of European integration following the collapse of the Soviet Union, today, they are more reluctant to cede their privileges and sovereignty to the EU on several significant issues, such as migration, cultural counter-revolution, food-double standards, Russian dilemma and other related concerns (see Table 2 & Table 3).

Table 2. Public opinion on the importance of the EU during the period of 2015-2016

Public opinion on the importance of the EU (%)		
	Agree	Disagree
Czech Republic	21%	↓ 73%
Poland	↑ 47%	43%
Slovakia	37%	57%
Hungary	31%	64%

Note. Composed by the author on the basis of information from the European Union (2016).

Table 3. Public opinion about the future of the EU between 2015 and 2016

Public opinion on the importance of the EU (%)				
	Optimistic	Pessimistic		
	2015	2016	2015	2016
Czech Republic	57%	48%	↓ 41%	50%
Poland	↑ 67%	↑ 63%	25%	29%
Slovakia	62%	54%	34%	42%
Hungary	61%	44%	34%	↓ 52%

Note. Composed by the author on the basis of information from the European Union (2015b).

Nowadays, the issue of solidarity is a vague political concept between the V4 and the Union. There are problems with solidarity in the EU across the board, but Central European member states are certainly guilty of permanently undermining the legitimacy of EU institutions. Currently, the EU-related challenges can lead not only to the dissatisfaction of the V4 group concerning the European Community but also to compel them to rethink their membership in it. This discontent on internal and external policy decisions of the EU has led to the increase of a Eurosceptic mood among politicians as well as among the masses.

Moreover, in June 2016 after the “Brexit” referendum, thoughts of leaving the EU have risen to the fore. Today, the possibility of a “Czexit” and “euro-fragmentation” is quite popular in the Czech Republic. If the V4 countries continue to willfully ignore EU rules, principles and decisions, the fabric that underpins the Union will be under threat.

As previously mentioned, the Visegrad Group have demonstrated a contradictory stance to the Juncker proposals throughout, underlining the importance of their national interests and domestic security. The Czech Republic for its part, rejected mandatory migration quotas imposed by the EU. The standpoint of the Czech Republic, was that it could only decide about accepting the numbers of the refugees based on their own economic, financial, social and security circumstances.

“Relocation cannot resolve the cause of this recent tragedy, which is not located on the shores of Europe, but beyond them. The EU should, therefore, have the courage to deal with it effectively, but primarily at its source” noted the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Bohuslav Sobotka.

Currently, Islamophobia and cultural-counter revolution are at the very top of the list in the Czech Republic. The current president, Milos Zeman, noted that the population of the country is 10.5 million whereas only around 3.5 thousand among them are Muslims and according to his statement, this part of society could be the source of a jihadist attack. Moreover, during his interview in 2016, Zeman noted *“I am for deportation of all economic migrants,”* because Muslim migrants’ culture is *“fundamentally unharmonious”* with European society and they are not able to get along with European values and moralities... (Buckley, 2016).

From the other side, Poland its racist feelings toward migrants and refugees, arguing that it could only accept 50 families from Syria and only then based on religious criteria (Wasik & Foy, 2015). The *“Orbanist”* policy of the Republic of Hungary (so-named after its president Viktor Orban) does not allow the country to take on multilateral approaches and decisions along with the European Union’s policy on migration. The country is taking a similar step together with its *“V4”* colleagues on anti-immigration. Another opposing member state is Slovakia, which fell in line with its V4 counterparts and showed a similarly discriminative position toward the Juncker proposals, only elucidating it in a novel way - that Muslims would not be accepted by the Government of Slovakia due to the fact that Muslim refugees would not feel at home. *“We want to really help Europe with this migration wave but... we could take only 800 Muslims; besides, we do not have any mosques in Slovakia so how can Muslims be integrated if they are not going to like it here?”* pointed out The Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ivan Netik (TOI staff & AFP, 2015; see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The relocation of refugees in the Visegrad countries according to the EU’s combined quota of 11,069 in total between the period of 2016 and 2017. Composed by the author on the basis of information from the European Union (2016)



These days, the “Czech-Slovak-Pole-Magyar” foursome neither complies with European rules and regulations over migration quotas nor contributes their own proposals to the EU for dealing with the migration crisis and human rights violations. In recent years, the complex political processes within the EU have brought new challenges to the Visegrad Group, and divisions have appeared within it. There is in fact a multiplicity of problems springing from the political divergence between them. Thus, their mutual relations have repeatedly become strained in recent times on issues ranging from migration to the rule of law. Nowadays, it seems that the V4’s unity is cracking, which perhaps shows a weaknesses in their “alternative” vision for Europe.

Indeed, the rise of conservative nationalism and Eurosceptic populism with the aim of creating “national communities” directed by the Visegrad countries, has led to concerns over the rule of law in these countries. In contrast to Western European liberalism, by adopting the concept of cultural counter-revolution, these states would turn the European Union towards politics built on maintaining religious and national self-identification, in which societies would be solely based on ethnically homogenous, Christian, and traditionalist values. Looking ahead to 2018, the EU policy of these Central European states lead to more insular and contradictory approaches than in 2017 (Zgut, 2017).

France’s World Cup as a new breath for migrants

The FIFA World Cup of 2018, held in Russia, finished with the triumph of France over Croatia under the supervision of their coach Didier Deschamps, who himself played in the FIFA World Cup in 1998, 20 years earlier (Wiggins, 2018). A day after Bastille Day, when France clinched its second-ever World Cup victory over Croatia, all migrants including Muslims, fans and spectators, euphorically took to the streets and pointed out that this was a big success for diversity in the French Football Squad (“If France wins the World Cup”, 2018). “*Yes, the diversity of the team is in the image of this beautiful country that is France*”, said midfielder Blaise Matuidi, through a translator prior to the match, whose family roots are in Angola and the Congo. People in the arena and throughout Paris sang “La Marseillaise” until dawn and called the team “Black, Blanc, Beur,” noting how black, white and North African players came together, and how diversity just won the World Cup. Immediately after France’s victory, the social networks flooded with posts and comments. Football fans and onlookers took to Twitter on that day to call on France to bring an end to its “hypocrisy” and to urge it to acknowledge the foundational, positive and advantageous role immigrants and Muslims play in developing French society (Blum, 2018). Some called on France to recognize this win as a much-needed wake-up call for the country to espouse flexible policies on

migration, preserving the rights and dignity of all migrants and Muslims. Others claimed that Africans and Muslims were the important actors in this second World Cup victory, and now it is time to provide them with justice. People also tweeted phrases on that day like “Immigration makes France stronger” and “Immigrants get the job done” On that day; it seemed that all people were more thrilled to support the migration issue after the World Cup win and called for Europe to take on a more coherent and clear-cut decisions over migration. Some people emotionally mentioned that this victory is a great linchpin for us to express that migration is not a fatality, but a diversity, that is an advantage. France’s World Cup win in some way has been a new breath of hope for migrants and refugees from the Middle East, Africa, and other neighboring countries. In fact, this World Cup win is not only a triumph for France but also a political victory for all migrants awaiting acceptance on Europe’s borders. The racial and ethnic diversity of the French World Cup squad proposed another, more optimistic and brighter lesson on immigration, globalization, and citizenship. Once more, the diversity of France’s World Cup team demonstrates to all how immigration, at its best, holds the key to an enlightened and a more humane future for us all.

Focal Suggestions and Recommendations on EU’s Migration Policy

As a policy analyst I would like to list the primary recommendations and suggestions concerning the migration pressures presently occurring in and around Europe and to do so objectively (See Table 4). Following the armed conflict in Syria, migration misery of those forced to flee their homes in the region with nothing more than they could carry and measured in their tens upon tens of thousands turned out to be a crucial issue in Europe. But why? Why is migration perceived as a fatality, or Islamophobia, rather than a diversity; an exchange of ideas; goods and values; as well as an opportunity for economic development in Europe? When the world was created, there were no borders, people were free, and the community was free. people flowed freely between different lands and from continent to continent. So, is it really that difficult to relocate migrants and refugees at a proportionate level in different European countries; people who have lost everything they had and whose lives have undergone persecutions and other violations in their country of origin? The obligation to help people in this situation are embodied in the ECHR and the Refugee Convention 1951, and let us not forget also that the countries in Europe are signatory to those conventions. To be realistic, Europe today, faces extreme difficulties responding to a refugee crisis of such magnitude. However, if it wishes to honour the conventions referred to it has to try and the effort to do so has to be at the top of its agenda.

By this, I do not mean that Europe has to open its doors to all migrants without regard for essential protocols. What I am saying, is that before imposing new policies and frameworks on migration, Europe should first seek to change the attitudes and mindset among the masses and not just in a few member states but in all. Only by having an optimistic and a cohesive approach within European society, can migrants and refugees assimilate with the local people of Europe on an equal basis and without fear of victimisation. Today, migration in Europe should not be viewed as crisis, but as an opportunity. Sadly, the EU has soured relations with the bloc's member states on this issue and with predictable results.

Cultural-counter revolution, fear of terror, xenophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism, populism, euro-scepticism, all are a phenomenon in the region. Migration is an intensely sensitive issue that really gets under everyone's skin and polarizes society, touching on the sense of identity of groups and nations, it mobilizes solidarity and integration in some people, but it somehow elicits fear and abhorrence in others like in Europe among the masses. Unfortunately, in many EU member states, populist political groups, in particular, some mainstream politicians, interlocutors and media outlets (the huge role of media here is unavoidable), are constantly benefiting from peoples apprehensions about migration and are doing everything possible to keep those anxieties alive. In order to tackle the migration problem, first, Europeans need to work together in the field where in the past they have been more enthusiastic to act on their own; and they should have to define their integrated priorities based on a genuine sense of solidarity and coherence over the migration crisis. The EU's policy has to be a sustainable cornerstone for managing waves of migration dutifully. The EU leaders need to rebalance the initiatives by improving the financial offer and mechanisms, which will be able to open up new legal pathways for migration, and the protection of vulnerable people. Thus, the EU should upgrade the financial dimension of the concept of migration. It should undertake concrete and credible proposals for obtaining broad access to legal migration, such as a temporary work, educational visas, scholarships, and visa facilitation. At the same time, it should focus mainly on the protection of vulnerable migrants and refugees by offering humanitarian visas and programs for the relocation of refugees. Moreover, the European states have to address the Catch-22 problem at the heart of the migration challenge. To conclude, upgraded legal pathways for migrants and resettlement programs for refugees seem the most promising approach to bringing the numbers of irregular migrants down. What the EU urgently needs now is more of a long-term plan based on a combination of open solidarity and creative flexibility. Migration is not a fatality, migration is an opportunity, and all states including the European states have to benefit from the opportunities that migration offers.

Table 4. General Proposals for the Future Development of the EU's migration policy

- » The most realistic and accurate EU migration policy is one based on common insight and thinking over migration
- » The implementation of flexible solidarity and burden – a sharing policy that can form the elements of a coherent migration policy including asylum regimes, border controls, legal migration, societal integration between the sides, relocation schemes, and financial support;
- » Setting some clear objectives and obligations on the acceptable level of political and economic migration for the union;
- » Determining the relevant instruments to put these commitments into action, over and above what has already been projected;
- » Devising a well-designed partnership with third countries of origin or transit whose cooperation is necessary for any efficient migration policy;
- » In the case of need, the implementation of state-to-state diplomacy over migration based on a state's specific situations.

Note. Composed by the author.

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