
The European refugee crisis in Europe and multicultural integration

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to look into the recent refugee crisis in Europe and to argue on how this crisis turned into a humanitarian problem at a global scene. Moreover, this migration crisis has been developed into a security issue in Europe and in the same time affecting the dynamics of the European integration. For Europe, the integration of refugees is a big challenge. The debates have been focused on immigrant population as a whole rather than asylum-seekers in particular. The debate was often difficult to control because of different meaning between those who favour more assimilation policies against those who argue for protection for the newcomers' cultural identity. This research paper is trying to find out how the Europe is dealing with this huge challenge of immigrants and with their integration.

Keywords: refugee crisis; Europe; integration; multiculturalism; asylum; Arab spring; civil war; EU-Turkey deal.

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1 Introduction

Large numbers of refugees flowing into Europe felt a rising sentiment of being alienated, as a consequence of the risky path to Europe. Hundreds have died, after abandoning their homes and escaping from bombs and fanatics. The image of a three years old boy dead body, Aylan Kurdi, lying face down on a Turkish beach, while attempting to reach safety in Greece, has become symbol for the suffering of Syrian refugees and woke the West to the urgency of the Syrian refugee crisis.

In summer 2015, Europe faced the biggest refugee crisis since the World War 2 which became one of the biggest challenges for Europe. Many of them came from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Over 1 million asylum seekers and migrants came to Europe via the Mediterranean in 2015. The United Nations Organisations (UNO) refugee agency,

UNHCR, estimates that 55% of refugees worldwide came from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq (UNHCR, 2017). From then till now the development of this crisis has been a topic of discussions and how Europe integrates women, man and children will be a real test for its policy, as well as how the refugees will integrate themselves in Europe too. Many states refuse to accept any refugees, leaving the border states in their own battle to survive.

The President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker presented on 13 May 2015 a comprehensive strategy on the one hand on how to deal with the crisis and on the other hand to provide the EU with an instrument to manage the migration flows in the medium and long-terms. The objectives are to combat the irregular migration, to improve the European asylum system and to open more legal migration routes (European Commission, 2016).

2 Arab spring, civil war and crisis

The Arab Spring was the revolution first escalating in Tunisia with the Tunisian revolution against the authoritative regime, hoping for social justice and democracy, and then swept through Middle East and North Africa. All this with already existing weak democratic structures resulted in the Egyptian crisis, Iraqi civil war and Syrian civil war. The Arab Spring was just one of the reasons for conflict between Syrian government and other forces.

As the Syria crisis entered its seventh year, civilians continued to bear the brunt of a conflict marked by unparalleled suffering, destruction and disregard for human life. 13.5 million people required humanitarian assistance, including 4.5 million people in need trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, where they were exposed to grave security threats (UNOCHA, 2017). The number of people displaced within Syria was expected to rise to 8.7 million by the end of 2016 (Amnesty International, 2016a, 2016b). The spark that lit the flame began about a year ago in the southern city of Daraa after the arrests of at least 15 children for painting anti-government graffiti on the walls of a school. The community's blunt outrage over the children's arrests and mistreatment, the government's humiliating and violent reactions to their worries, and the people's refusal to be cowed by security forces emboldened and helped spread the Syrian opposition (Sterling, 2012). As a reaction to this, people started to demonstrate and this demonstration displayed people's desire for freedom and democracy too, encouraging pro-democracy activists all over Syria, after uprisings had been successful in Tunisia and Egypt. Instead of providing peace, these actions escalated in a fight between a group of fighters against the government, where the government is led by the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and soldiers who support the president. After the government responded without mercy by opening fire on protesters and killing four people, Syria began to slide into civil war.

An interesting fact in this context is that the opposition is not one single and uniform group of fighters, known as rebels. Rather, the opposition includes several groups of people, which are small and operate on a local level. Along with rebels, there are political parties who are against Assad's regime and those who are living outside of Syria. It is supposed that there could be many different groups with an estimated 100,000 fighters, all of them fighting against government, even if guided by diverse motives.

The conflict is now more than just a battle between those for or against President Assad. Numerous countries became involved, pitching the country's Sunni majority against the president's Alawites (Asare et al., 2016; Paper Masters, 2017). The rise of the Islamic state (IS) led to even greater conflict. In contiguous Iraq in 2014, a radical group named IS began to rise. ISIS stands for the IS of Iraq and Syria. ISIS is a Sunni militant group that occupies parts of Syria and Iraq. They are also known as ISIL, or the IS of Iraq and Levant. It is estimated that their membership encompasses just under 10,000 members between Syria and Iraq. The particularly dangerous element to ISIS is the fact that an estimated 3,000 of its members are foreigners, with international visas and the ability to travel freely, including their presence in US (paper matters). Making use of the chaotic situation in Syria, the IS moved into eastern Syria, where they tried to gain the land and something bigger, such as power. Now, at the same time the opposition and the government had to fight against the terrorist group IS. Beyond this possibility to battle against IS, in September 2014 USA and UK were trying to stop IS, attacking their fighters in Iraq.

Foreign involvement played a large role in Syrian war, including non-state actors like the Kurdish separatist movement which exercises its activity in Turkey, Iraq and Syria. Russia supports the Syrian government, Moscow is Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's key ally, having stuck firmly by his regime since the conflict began in 2011 (Agence France Press, 2015). As an example, Russia blocked resolutions critical of President Assad at the UN Security Council. Iran, on the other side, supports the Syrian government. Tehran has also actively supported Syria's regime, although not as openly as Russia (ibid., 2017). Iran does not officially acknowledge sending fighters to Syria, instead deploys members of its elite Revolutionary Guards as advisers.

Since August 2011, Britain and France both insist that the Syrian president has no place in Syrian government. The USA support Syrian opposition and accused President Assad of responsibility for widespread atrocities, striving to be no longer in power. Need for a negotiated settlement to end the war. The US supports Syria's main opposition alliance, the National Coalition, and provides limited military assistance to 'moderate' rebels (Lual, 2016). US-led forces carried out air strikes on IS and other targets, in which hundreds of civilians were killed (Amnesty International, 2016a, 2016b). According to the non-governmental organisation Amnesty International, by the end of the year 2016/2017, the conflict had caused the deaths of more than 300,000 people, displaced 6.6 million people within Syria and forced 4.8 million people to seek refuge abroad (Amnesty International, 2016a, 2016b).

This war's effect is that millions of Syrian people had to escape from their homes trying to find a safer place to live. Many of them escape to the neighbouring countries like Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, while the others decided to go further into Europe. They often decide to go across the Mediterranean Sea from Turkey to Greece. Their escaping was not an easy decision, but after seeing that their family members were killed, there was no other choice. Trying to see something better, they took the risk on the journey and walk for miles through the night to avoid being shot at by snipers or being caught by war parties who would kidnap young men to fight for their cause (Mercy Corps, 2017). Every year of conflict has seen an exponential growth in refugees. In July 2012, there were 100,000 refugees. One year later, there were 1.5 million. That number tripled by the end of 2015. There are now (2016) 4.8 million Syrians scattered throughout

the region, making them the world's largest refugee population under the United Nations' mandate. It is the worst exodus since the Rwandan genocide 20 years ago (ibid., 2017).

3 European response

In 2015, over 1 million people – refugees, displaced persons and other migrants – have made their way to the EU, either escaping conflict in their country or in search of better economic prospects (Eurostat, 2017a, 2017b). In the same year, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel made a big decision with her mantra 'we can do it' (in German: *Wir schaffen das*), and opened the door for thousands of asylum seekers, stranded in Hungary and elsewhere in order to enter into Germany.

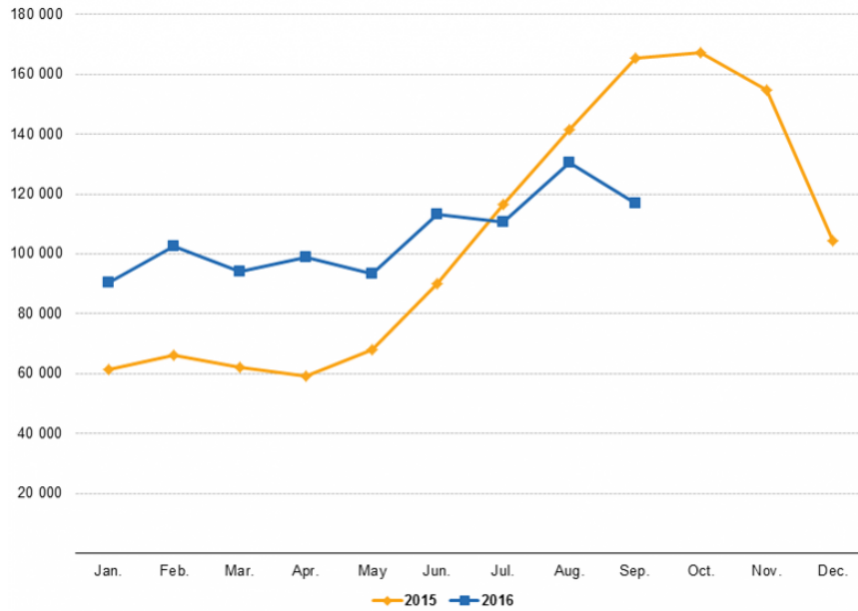
EU is facing a European refugee crisis, which is addressed by EU leaders as a joint European challenge and it is consistent with their individual and collective responsibilities to refugees. This response needs to meet the EU international law, EU legal order, EU fundamental rights and EU treaties.

In 2015, half of all refugees crossing the Mediterranean came from Syria, by 2017, that number reduced to only 10% (UNHCR, 2017). By the end of 2016, nearly 5.2 million refugees and migrants reached European shores, undertaking treacherous journeys from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries torn apart by war, persecution and a horrifying list of human miseries (ibid., 2017). Poverty and human right abuses are just some of the problems which made the people to set out from countries like Eritrea, Pakistan, Morocco, Somalia and Iran looking for better life somewhere like Germany, UK and Sweden. The conflict in Syria and the crisis of failed states are the biggest driver of migration, but as well as poverty in Western Balkan, like in Kosovo, are causes why people are looking to live somewhere else.

The number of first time asylum applicants in the EU decreased by –15% in the third quarter of 2016 compared with the same quarter of 2015, while it increased by 17% compared with the second quarter of 2016 (Figure 1) (Eurostat, 2017a, 2017b). At the same time, the Syrian conflict has made the refugees stop at the first safe point they could reach on the other side of border and placed on its neighbouring countries, with Jordan (664,110), Ethiopia (736,100), Iran (979,400), Lebanon (1.1 m), Pakistan (1.6 m) and Turkey (2.5 m) (UNHCR, 2017). There are now 2,715,789 Syrian refugees in Turkey, which makes Turkey the country with the largest refugee population in the world. Around 10% of Syrian refugees in Turkey live in the 26 camps in the South of the country (Parliamentary Assembly, 2016).

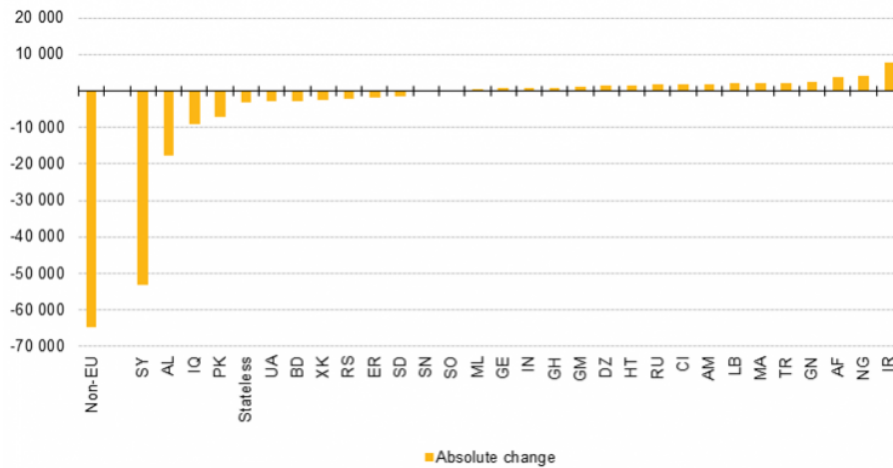
The number of first time asylum applicants in Germany increased from 173,000 in 2014 to 442,000 thousand in 2015. Hungary, Sweden and Austria also reported very large increases (all in excess of 50 thousand more first time asylum applicants) between 2014 and 2015. In relative terms, the largest increases in the number of first time applicants were recorded in Finland (over nine times as high), Hungary (over four times) and Austria (over three times), while Belgium, Spain, Germany, Luxembourg, Ireland and Sweden all reported that their number of first time asylum applicants more than doubled. By contrast, Romania, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Latvia reported fewer first time asylum applicants in 2015 than in 2014 (Figure 2) (Eurostat, 2017a, 2017b).

Figure 1 First time asylum applicants, EU-28, January 2015–September 2016 (see online version for colours)



Source: Eurostat (2017a, 2017b)

Figure 2 First time asylum applicants by citizenship, EU-28, absolute change between Q3 2015 and Q3 2016 (see online version for colours)



Source: Eurostat (2017a, 2017b)

Seeking asylum in Europe for Syrians has many reasons like protection, education, and work prospect and that’s why it is not very surprising that many Syrians, because of above mentioned advantages they are coming to Europe. Principally, there are three routes into the EU:

- *Land route via Greece or Bulgaria:* the refugees travel through Turkey, where they entry without visa. When they arrive in Europe, according to their status of visa, they can be seen as either travellers or irregular migrants. If they do not have valid visa, they have to apply for asylum or remain in an irregular situation, or continue to travel to another country and stay in the first country they reach.
- *Sea route across the Mediterranean:* the refugees are trying to reach to Greece, Cyprus, Malta or Italy, but only those who are lacking regular documents are taking this route to Europe, enter as irregular migrant and join the category of asylum seekers (UNHCR figures show over one million refugees and migrants reach Europe by sea in 2015, with almost 4,000 feared drowned) (UNHCR, 2016; Clayton and Holland, 2015). Over 800,000 refugees and migrants came via the Aegean Sea from Turkey into Greece, accounting for 80% of the people arriving irregularly in Europe by sea in 2015. At the same time, the number of people crossing from North Africa into Italy dropped slightly, from 170,000 in 2014 to around 150,000 in 2015 (ibid., 2015).
- *Air route directly:* the refugees as ordinary travellers from a third country are registered at the external border, and with this route are coming directly to any of EU member state. The problem is that no statistic of ordinary refugees is produced at EU level by country of origin, so there is no reliable information on how many Syrians use this way into Europe.

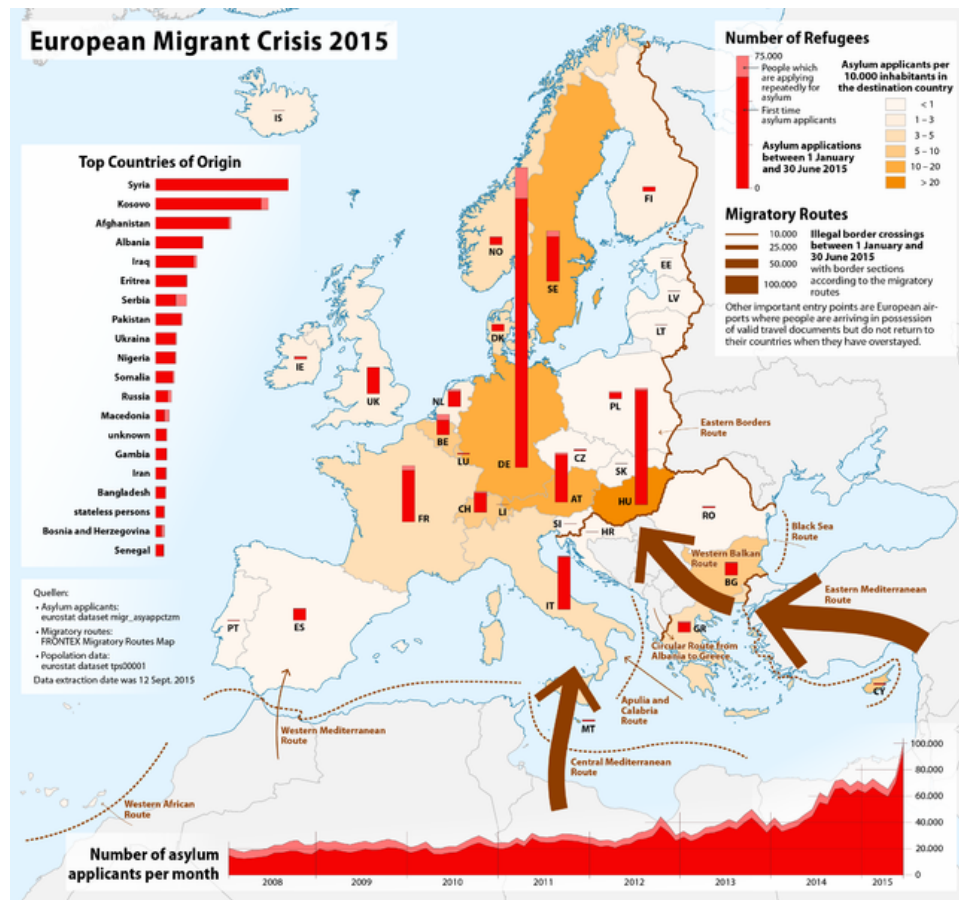
The EU's external border force in the year 2015, FRONTEX, which monitors different routes of migrants and numbers of the refugees' and migrants' arrivals in Europe's borders, deployed an increased number of officers and vessels to the proximity of the Greek islands in order to assist in patrolling the sea and registering the thousands of migrants arriving daily. In December 2015, the agency FRONTEX launched the Poseidon rapid intervention, after the Greek authorities had requested additional assistance for its borders. Most of the migrants on this route in 2015 originated from Syria, followed by Afghanistan and Somalia. There are also increasing numbers of migrants coming from Sub-Saharan Africa. Most of the migrants continued their journeys northwards, leaving Greece through its border with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). FRONTEX (2017a, 2017b) also deployed officers at Greece's northern land border to assist in registering exiting migrants.

In 2015, there were 593 thousand first instance decisions in all EU member states. By far the largest number of decisions was taken in Germany, constituting more than 40% of the total first instance decisions in the EU-28 in 2015. In addition, there were 183 thousand final decisions, with again the far largest share (51%) in Germany. The highest share of positive first instance asylum decisions in 2015 was recorded in Bulgaria (91%), followed by Malta, Denmark and the Netherlands. Conversely, Latvia, Hungary and Poland recorded first instance rejection rates above 80% (Zuesse, 2017; Europäische Kommission, 2016). The share of positive final decisions based on appeal or review was considerably lower (14%) in the EU-28 in 2015 than for first instance decisions. Around 25.7 thousand people in the EU-28 received positive final decisions based on appeal or review, of which 16.7 thousand were granted refugee status, 4.6 thousand were granted subsidiary protection, and a further 4.4 thousand were granted humanitarian status. High shares of positive final asylum decisions in 2015 were recorded in Italy (82%) and Finland (67%); Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Austria were the only other EU member

states where the share passed 50%. The highest shares of final rejections were recorded in Estonia, Lithuania and Portugal where all final decisions were negative (Eurostat, 2017a, 2017b).

The most refugee country of origin was from Syria, Kosovo, Afghanistan followed by Albania and Iraq. Between 1 January and 30 June 2015 the most asylum applications were in Germany (Figure 3).

Figure 3 European migrant crisis (see online version for colours)



Note: Asylum applicants in Europe between 1 January and 30 June 2015.

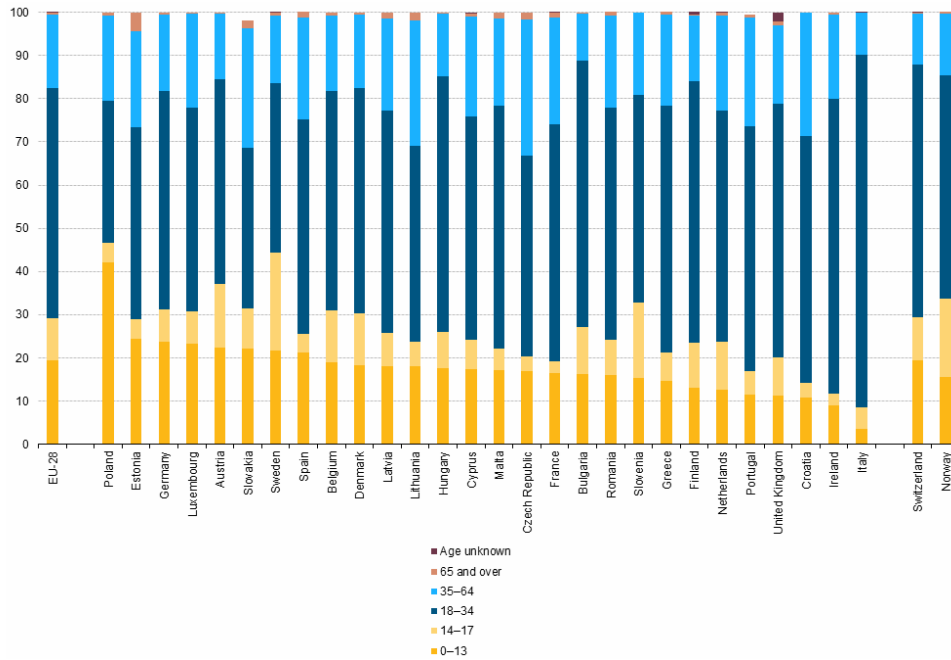
Source: Dörrbecker (2015)

3.1 Refugee demographics

More than four in five (83%) of the first-time asylum seekers in the EU-28 in 2015 were less than 35 years old: those in the age range 18–34 years accounted for slightly more than half (53%) of the total number of first time applicants, while nearly 3 in 10 (29%) applicants were minors aged less than 18 years old (Eurostat, 2017a, 2017b).

This age distribution of asylum applicants was common in almost all of the EU member states, with the largest share of applicants usually being those aged 18–34. There was one exception to this pattern: Poland reported a higher proportion of asylum applicants less than 14 years old (42%) (Figure 4) (ibid., 2017).

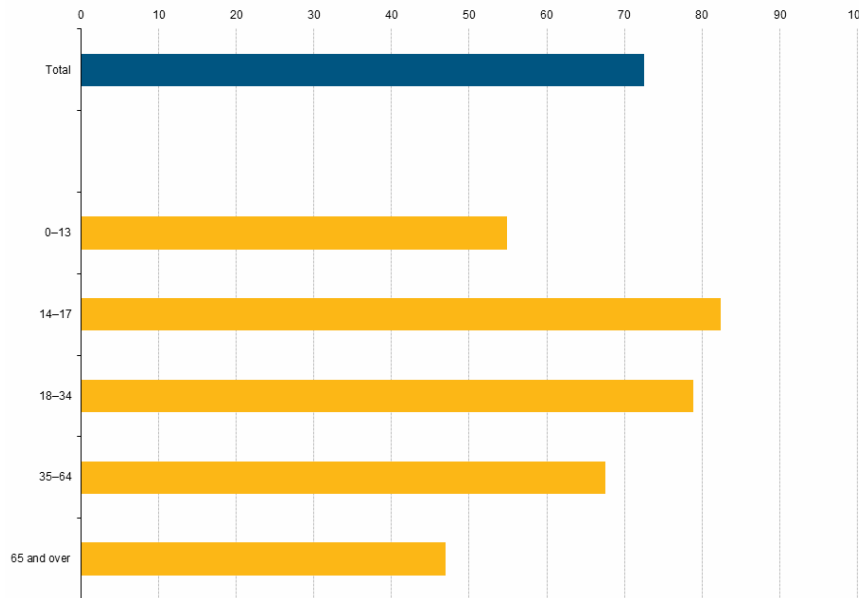
Figure 4 Distribution by age of (non-EU) first time asylum applicants in the EU and EFTA member states, 2015 (see online version for colours)



Across the EU-28, the gender distribution was most balanced for asylum applicants aged 65 and over, where female applicants outnumbered male applicants in 2015, although this group was relatively small, accounting for just 0.6% of the total number of first time applicants (Figure 4) (Eurostat, 2017a, 2017b). The distribution of the first-time asylum seekers by gender shows that there are more men than women. Among the younger age groups, males accounted for 55% of the total number of applicants in 2015. There was a greater degree of gender inequality for asylum applicants who were 14–17 or 18–34 years old, where around 80% of applicants were male, with this share dropping back to two thirds for the age group 35–64 (Figure 5) (ibid., 2017).

At an age where children should play with friends or do homework, around 50% of refugees are children, trying to survive. According to the international organisation World Vision (2017) since 2011, hundreds of thousands of people have died, 5.1 million Syrians have fled the country as refugees, and 6.3 million Syrians are displaced within the country. Half of those affected are children. Countries neighbouring the Syrian Arabic Republic are hosting more than 4.8 million registered Syrian refugees, including more than 2.2 million children (UNICEF, 2017).

Figure 5 Share of male (non-EU) first time asylum applicants in the EU-28 member states, by age group, 2015 (see online version for colours)



Source: Eurostat (2017a, 2017b)

As well Europe as other states have their moral and legal obligation to protect all refugees and migrant who are in need. Responsibility of member states is to examine asylum applications and to give a protection. Providing people with food, water and shelter is an enormous strain on the resources of some EU member states. This is especially the case in Greece and Italy, where the vast majority of refugees and migrants first arrive in the EU (The Publications Office of the European Union, 2017). In total, the EU has dedicated over €10 billion from the EU budget to dealing with the refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016. Many people arrive in the EU need basics such as clean water, food and shelter. The EU is financing projects to address the most urgent humanitarian needs of the 50,000 refugees and migrants hosted in Greece as of May 2016 (ibid., 2017). In April 2016, the European Commission announced an initial €83 million worth of humanitarian funding for emergency support projects to assist refugees in Greece. The projects address the most urgent humanitarian needs of some 50,000 refugees and migrants currently hosted in over 30 sites in Greece (European Commission, 2017).

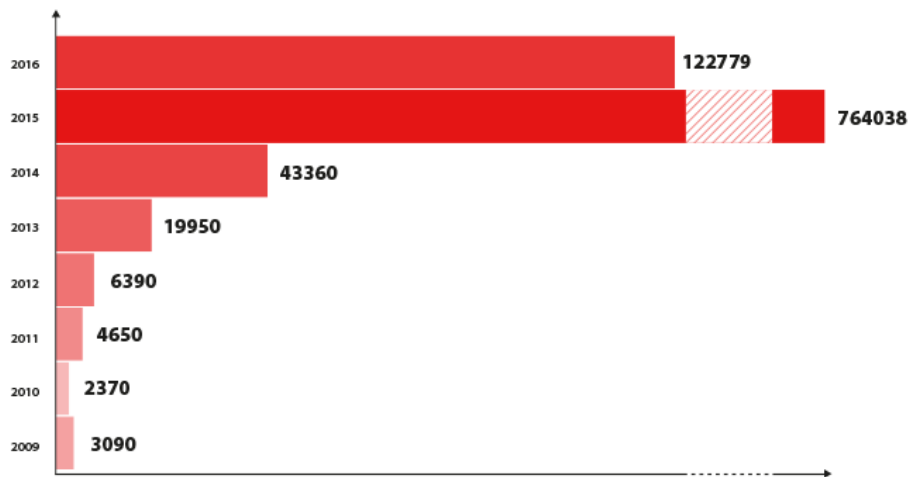
Based on a European Commission proposal, member states have agreed for the first time to relocate 160,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy to other EU countries by September 2017. However, as of July 2016, only 3,000 asylum seekers have been relocated (The Publications Office of the European Union, 2017). Considering arriving in Europe in legal and safe way, a voluntary resettlement programme decided to transfer around 22,500 people from outside to an EU member state.

3.2 Balkan route

The record number of refugees arriving in Greece in second half of 2015 made a huge effect on the Western Balkan, where refugees and migrants were trying to make their way via former Yugoslav of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia and then towards Western Europe. Since then, around half a million people migrated to Europe via the Western Balkans, Greece and Turkey. The route became a popular passageway into the EU in 2012 when Schengen visa restrictions were relaxed for five Balkan countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and FYROM (FRONTEX, 2017a, 2017b). This way is known as Western Balkan route, too.

In 2013, some 20,000 people crossed the Hungarian border illegally. Nearly all of them applied for asylum after crossing. They were encouraged by a change to Hungarian law that allowed asylum seekers to be transferred to open holding centres, which they absconded soon after. In July, the Hungarian authorities further amended asylum legislation and strengthened their border controls. Migrant flows from Greece tailed off, but overall numbers rose dramatically again in 2014 (Figure 6) (ibid., 2017).

Figure 6 Illegal border crossings on the Western Balkans route in numbers (see online version for colours)



Source: FRONTEX (2017a, 2017b)

Starting from Greece, refugees and migrants took a long walk through Macedonia, Serbia, and Croatia toward Europe. In 2015, dramatic photos and videos show women, men and children crossing the Greece-Macedonian border wading through the river. The situation became more complicated when this act came to end. Because of unconditional circumstances and personal concerns, refugees and migrants decided to leave and try to find new home in some safer and better place, like Germany or Sweden. Because of EU visa policies and CEAS (Common European Asylum System), this route was the easiest way. But on the other side it was dangerous, knowing that this route is the major route of smugglers moving the illegal migrants in and out of Europe, what was a cause of closing this route. After Austria's initiative directed to Balkans countries, to close their borders, a thousand of refugees got stuck at the Macedonian-Greek border at Eidomeni. The reason of closure was because many of them arrived in Western Europe in illegal way, without

registering in the country where they first arrived. At this time, Europe and Turkey reached an agreement, which at this point was the only hope for the EU for solving the crisis problem.

The decision to end the Balkan route did not solve the problem because refugees and migrant still arrived in Europe. It caused a huge humanitarian crisis, like forcing them into makeshift camps without access to basic needs like water, food healthcare and shelter. Europe is a traditional leader in humanitarian assistance and it is founded on strong values such as dignity, non-discrimination and safety.

3.3 EU-Turkey deal

Since the Syrian civil war, Turkey left the borders open for victims of the Syrian conflict, thus absorbing about 2.5 million refugees. But after reaching a critically huge number of refugees, Turkey felt forced to close their borders.

Europe and the United Nations criticised Turkey's decision and urged to re-open the borders.

The huge numbers of refugees crossing Turkey's borders without visa, and in an irregular way to reach a desirable destination such as Greece, have made Europe and Turkey to conclude an urgent agreement.

On 18 March 2016, EU heads of state or government and Turkey agreed on the EU-Turkey statement to end the flow of irregular migration from Turkey to the EU and replace it with organised, safe and legal channels to Europe.

In the midst of the refugee crisis and with thousands of migrants and refugees arriving in Greece every day, this seemed to many like a plan almost impossible to implement. Yet, one year on, the statement continues to deliver proof of its effectiveness on a daily basis. Irregular arrivals have dropped by 97%, while the number of lives lost at sea has decreased equally substantially. The EU has delivered on its financial commitment to support Turkey in its efforts in hosting refugees and providing support on the ground and in resettling Syrian refugees directly from Turkey to EU member states. Turkey has followed up on its commitment to step up measures against people smuggling and has been cooperating closely on resettlement and return. Despite challenging circumstances, the first year of the EU-Turkey statement has confirmed a steady delivery of tangible results. While continuous efforts need to be made by all sides and all EU member states, the EU-Turkey statement has become an important element of the EU's comprehensive approach on migration (European Commission, 2017).

According to the EU-Turkey statement, all new irregular migrants and asylum seekers arriving from Turkey to the Greek islands and whose applications for asylum have been declared inadmissible should be returned to Turkey (European Parliament, 2017) The Greek island of Chios, because of its proximity to Turkey, was home for around 3,000 refugees and migrants. Refugees mostly from Syria and Afghanistan achieve their crossing from Turkey every day, where on the other side in Greece smugglers were waiting the refugees during the night.

According to the EU-Turkey statement, all new irregular migrants and asylum seekers arriving from Turkey to the Greek islands and whose applications for asylum have been declared inadmissible should be returned to Turkey (ibid., 2017). Because of thousands of irregular migrants and refugees are transported from conflict areas and/or underdeveloped countries to wealthy Western states, the EU and Turkey have decided to work together to

end the illegal migration from Turkey to Europe. These transfers are usually facilitated and arranged by migrant smuggling organisations (Demir et al., 2016).

In their ‘EU-Turkey agreement’, the EU and Turkey agreed that:

- 1 All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands as of 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey.
- 2 For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled to the EU.
- 3 Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for irregular migration opening from Turkey to the EU.
- 4 Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or have been substantially reduced, a voluntary humanitarian admission scheme will be activated.
- 5 The fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016. Turkey will take all the necessary steps to fulfil the remaining requirements.
- 6 The EU will, in close cooperation with Turkey, further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated €3 billion under the facility for refugees in Turkey. Once these resources are about to be used in full, the EU will mobilise additional funding for the facility up to an additional €3 billion by the end of 2018.
- 7 The EU and Turkey welcomed the ongoing work on the upgrading of the Customs Union.
- 8 The accession process will be re-energised, with chapter 33 opened during the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union and preparatory work on the opening of other chapters to continue at an accelerated pace.
- 9 The EU and Turkey will work to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria (European Parliament, 2017).

Turkey and the EU also agreed to continue stepping up measures against migrant smugglers and welcomed the establishment of the NATO activity on the Aegean Sea (European Council, 2016). Turkey hosts by far the biggest number of refugees – about 3 million in total, of whom 2.5 million are Syrian. In order to support refugees in Turkey, the EU and its member states are providing €6 billion through a dedicated facility between 2016 and 2018 (The Publications Office of the European Union, 2017).

3.4 *Common European Asylum System*

There is much of confusion between the notion of a refuge, asylum seeker and migrant. ‘asylum seeker’ means a person who applied for asylum under the 1951 refugee convention on the status of refugees on the ground that if he is returned to his country of origin he has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political belief or membership of a particular social group. He remains an asylum seeker for so long as his application or an appeal against refusal of his application is pending (Migration Watch UK, 2017; Migration and Home Affairs, 2017a, 2017b). ‘Refugee’ is a person fleeing, e.g., civil war or natural disaster. ‘Economic migrant’ is a person who is trying to leave the own country for a better life (ibid., 2017). The position of asylum is a

fundamental right, where one person refers to a legal permission to stay somewhere as refugee, international obligation of all and its first recognised in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the protection of refugees, article 1 of the convention, as amended by the 1967 protocol, defines a refugee as follows:

“A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

The EU is an area with open borders between all member states having subscribed to the Schengen system and shares a fundament of joint values; therefore, states should jointly enable a high standard of protection of refugees. The EU had made decisions to work together and have committed to establish a Common European Asylum System.

Because of the high number of asylum applications, there is a European Union law known as Dublin regulation. This regulation determines which country is responsible for processing the request of asylum seekers. In general, this means: in which country an asylum seeker enters for the first time, that country is responsible for registering the asylum application. Asylum seekers have no right after a registration to move on to another country, because they will be immediately sent back to responsible country and this transfer is called Dublin transfer, but not all of those arriving in Europe chose to claim asylum, but still many do. The total number of asylum claims to the EU in 2015 was around 1,321,560. Germany is the most wanted country for asylum applications, where the refugees made the journey through Greece and Western Balkans. Syrians accounted for the largest number of applicants in 13 of the 28 EU member states, including 266 thousand applicants in Germany (the highest number of applicants from a single country to one of the EU member states in 2016) (Eurostat, 2017a, 2017b).

The other part of Dublin system is EURODAC system that establishes an EU asylum fingerprint database. When someone applies for asylum, no matter where they are in the EU, their fingerprints are transmitted to the EURODAC central system (European Commission, 2017).

New EU rules have now been agreed, setting out common high standards and stronger co-operation to ensure that asylum seekers are treated equally in an open and fair system – wherever they apply (ibid., 2017).

4 Refugees' integration

Integration of refugees has been one of the most important challenges in the EU since Europe has been dealing with the refugee crisis. But Europe as a place with different cultures, languages and tradition, the integration of refugees will make this little complicated. Since years Europe has been dealing with migrants and refugees, and their different backgrounds. At a time where the Europe is receiving a huge number of refugee and migrants, it is important on one side to support national governments and on the other side to achieve the political, cultural, economic and social integration of new arrived refugees. Their integration is important for the refugees, too, and it is the most relevant issue and solution.

The debate was often referred between those who are more for assimilation policies, where the newcomers accept the dominant values and those who think that the multicultural integration is important, where is needed to respect the newcomers' cultural identity. The rights on non-discrimination and equality are principles of international law as well as European law, where every person must be equally treated. But beyond the international and European law the practical result can be used too, like MIPEX, the Migrant Integration Policy Index. The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a unique tool which measures policies to integrate migrants in all EU member states, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA (MIPEX, 2015b). These 38 states members are development countries and MIPEX research on how they invest in equal rights, opportunities for newcomers, giving them chance to the labour market, health, education, family reunion, political participation, access to nationality, permanent residence and anti-discrimination (MIPEX, 2015a). Sweden and Portugal in 2014 have the highest ranking within the EU.

Many of these refugees live a life year after year hoping that one day will return home, but the only solution until that would happen is to build a new life in their target country and to integrate into that local community. Before starting to explain the integration of refugees and migrants in Europe, it is important to define what integration means. For UNHCR, integration is a dynamic two-way process leading to full and equal membership in the host society. The 1951 Refugee Convention lists a range of socioeconomic and legal rights associated with successful integration. These include freedom of movement, access to education and jobs, access to public relief, the possibility of acquiring property, and the possibility of citizenship (UNHCR, 2016). In Europe, this crisis has open big opportunities and project on integrating the migrant and refugees. Comprehensive integration should be developed in the framework of the principles at European, national and regional level. In addition, EU programmes such as Erasmus plus, the asylum, migration and integration fund (AMIF) and the European social fund (ESF) must be taken into consideration for the integration of refugees (Europe-infos, 2017). Refugees' cultural, religious and national background is different from the one in Europe. To manage this diversity, it is important for Europe to support their integration by providing effective learning opportunities for them, ensuring that they have access to labour, where they can make an economic contribution to the host nation, helping them to fit in their new homes and become contributing members of society, focusing on many priorities such as educational, sociocultural, health and language integration. The refugees need basically the same needs as the people in that country, hence Europe has an obligation to respond on that. As the refugees and migrants are coming like an individual, they must be treated individually and not as a group having the same needs, because many of them coming from Syria might be doctors, engineers, and they could work in Europe as well, but those who are coming with low education would need different types of support, such as job practice. At the beginning, the basic needs are important and must be fulfilled, else it would just be a waste of time trying to make multicultural integration for all newcomers, which is important for unity in the receiving country.

On the other side, the refugees' and migrants' preparation to accept the host language and culture could turn out to be difficult, too, because of their hope that one day they will be able to return back home. Therefore, they might be unwilling to integrate somewhere where they do not want to live permanently.

It is known that multiculturalism provides social tolerance and the main object of it is to prevent conflict, in order to create a harmonious, cohesive and strong society, and all states and migrants must follow these rules. The – often surprising – conclusion of many multicultural projects is that providing views on reality is essential, namely mediation among different and diverse perspectives of realities (Ahamer, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2013; Ahamer et al., 2011).

Multiculturalism is supposed to integrate migrants; and migrants are expected to adopt the values of a liberal and freedom-oriented society, of which they do benefit, after all (Müller et al., 2013; Duraković et al., 2012). But because of some and insufficient adaptation these values on the parts of migrants, many political figures like Angela Merkel and David Cameron claimed that the multiculturalism in Europe has failed. Because of refugees' different values, traditions, religion and culture, the migration policy in Europe became questionable. The problem of EU integration are growing fear of terrorism and security issues in Europe, as well as the refusal of many refugees to respect the values of the target countries. At the same time, EU states are responding in a wrong way by tightening borders.

Despite the call for humanitarian needs, the European concern of social and cultural disturbance have been increasing in the EU states members, where EU stands politically divided. The EU was not prepared for such an influx of migrants. That's why support for rightist parties has increased in Central and Eastern European countries: Poland, Hungary and Slovakia, they find it too difficult to implement the system for the settlement of refugees. After the terror attacks in Paris, Turkey and the Köln incident on New Year's Eve, security concerns raised and it became a major issue, as a result of which the EU member states have tightened border control to limit the refugees' inflow.

5 Conclusions

Since the Arab Spring, Europe is dealing with the so-called refugee crisis. Because of her advantages in Europe since 2011, illegal border-crossing were detected, after more than 52,000 would-be migrants (Ufheil-Somers, 2017) arrived at the Italian island of Lampedusa.

At the present time, the EU finds itself in the middle of the migration crisis, caused mostly from the Syrian civil war, in which a huge numbers of people different nationality are trying to enter Europe. The fact is that political disorder and instability in the Middle East and North Africa had forced a huge number of people to leave their homes and to seek asylum in Europe. Insofar as they have a legitimate reason to flee from their homeland, according to the Refugee Convention and international protocol, they have a right for protection. Another fact is that many people died while attempting to reach Europe from Turkey to Greece or from Libya to Italy. Greece has been the most affected with this crisis; because of its geographical position, Greece was favoured for crossing the Mediterranean. Both the lack of regulation in migration process and unsafe vessels of transportation were the reason why the refugees and migrant put themselves in danger. To avoid this disorder, Europe should do some reforms that will help both the state authorities and refugees to solve the problem. First of all, the Dublin system does not work fairly as it was thought it would. The first criteria of the Dublin system, namely giving the responsibility to the first arrival country, makes this responsibility

disproportionate. Seeing that the asylum seeker is in that first country registered and has no right to seek asylum in other country, in the case of doing so, there is possibility of being returned.

Even if the anti-immigration and anti-refugee political parties have been doing very well in recent years, this should not stop the refugees to secure multiculturalism. Refugees should contribute to a successful integration in Europe such as learning their language, culture and tradition, trying to show that they are part of a community too.

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