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**The europe's crisis 2015: the role of eu external action**

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**Abstract**

The article is dedicated to the analysis of the influence of migration situation in Europe on the EU existence. The main reasons of Europe's migration crisis in the connection with the political events (revolutions, wars etc.) inside the countries of migrants' origin are examined in the research. The scientific work shows all the key issues of 2015, which created the new insight of European project in general. The main difficulties and threats of European unity because of the excessive migration flows are investigated in the article. The principal discordances between the EU member states concerning the refugees' acception and the possibility of the Schengen area downfall are emphasized in the scientific paper.

The conclusions concerning the need of effective Europe's external action are made in the article. The migration situation forecast for the nearest future as well as the necessary recommendations towards the EU refugee problem solving is brought up in the research

**Key words:** EU migration crisis, refugees, asylum seekers, external affairs, migrants' protection, Schengen area, internal peace and security.

**Європейська криза 2015: роль зовнішньополітичної діяльності ЄС**

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**Авторське резюме**

Стаття присвячена аналізу впливу міграційної ситуації в Європі на існування ЄС. У роботі досліджено основні причини міграційної кризи в Європі у зв'язку з політичними подіями (революції, війни та ін.) усередині країн-постачальників мігрантів. Перелічено основні чинники, що сприяли створенню нового сприйняття Європейського Союзу у 2015 р. Розкрито основні труднощі та загрози Європейській єдності через непосильний наплив мігрантів. Виділено основні розбіжності між країнами-членами ЄС стосовно надання притулку біженцям. У статті наголошено на можливості розпаду Шенгенської зони та посилення прикордонного контролю між державами ЄС

Зроблено висновки про потребу здійснення ефективнішої зовнішньої політики країнами єдиної Європи. Спрогнозовано розвиток міграційної ситуації у найближчому майбутньому. Розроблено необхідні рекомендації щодо подальших дій для вирішення проблеми біженців у країнах Європи.

**Ключові слова:** міграційна криза ЄС, біженці, шукачі притулку, зовнішні справи, захист мігрантів, Шенгенська зона, внутрішній мир та безпека.

**Stating of the problem.** The European countries faced some unpleasant events at the very beginning of 2015. The eurozone crisis and the Islamist terrorism continued to annoy the EU societies with a new force. Hundreds of migrants and refugees drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. The war in Ukrainian East escalated.

Many challenges which emerged before still need to be dealt with: the horrendous conflict in Syria and the brutalities of the "Islamic State", the rise of unemployment and poverty in many Member States, economic stagnation, the increase of right-wing populism and extremism and the general loss of faith in the European project and the European institutions. The pressure is on and Europe needs to act.

The eurozone leaders have to re-think their austerity policy after the Greek election results and the two more elections in other southern eurozone member states: (Portugal and Spain) showed us even more politically disjointed Europe, than it was considered before. The UK tries to give an indication where the country stands in Europe and whether in the future

Europe will be able to count on one of its most important members or not.

And with the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Copenhagen Europe has to find a delicate balance between security and civil liberties, between openness and vigilance. Europe has to decide what role it wants to play in the world, but most of all it needs to decide what it wants to be and for that it needs its citizens. 2015 could well be the year of make or break for Europe [6].

**Analysis of research and publications.** The topic of migration is probably one of the most contentious issues in contemporary politics. The European migration issues and the immigrant integration policy was widely investigated by Elizabeth Collett [2]. A huge work, focused in particular on a refugee crisis was made by Henry Chu [1]. The root causes of forced massive migration flows to Europe were studied by B. Dekker [3], L. Drake [4], J. Durieux [5], C. Janda [8] and R. K. Jenny [9]. All the authors wrote about the global migration crisis and about the challenge, which is met by states and for human rights.

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The article aims to lighten up all the main problems, treated by the EU states in connection with the threat to loose the unity because of the different views towards the refugees' problem resolution.

**The main statement.** The unprecedented crisis over an alarming rise of migrant arrivals is causing strong tensions among and within European Member States on how to deal with the continuous flow of refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants who see the European Union as the Promised Land for them and their children.

Migrants are coming by overloaded boats, packed on tiny dinghies, by train through the Balkans, on foot across the Sahara or hidden inside vehicles crossing the English Channel, but they keep coming [7].

There are no physical borders which can deter someone who is ready to risk his or her life. Only utter despair and a lack of alternative can push someone to embark on an uncertain, highly risky adventure with unforeseeable outcome. To quote Angela Merkel, the refugee problem is one of the greatest challenges facing the EU, laying bare the limits of European integration and open border principles.

Several reasons are to blame for the current refugee crisis. The first and the most important reason is the change caused by conflicts and civil wars in the Middle East and the political turmoil in Africa resulting in torn, barely functioning or failed states, unable to provide security and prosperity for their citizens. The 2003 invasion of Iraq has sparked the first wave of refugees, most of which settled in the neighbouring countries. Back then, barring Sweden, very few European countries admitted a significant number of Iraqis.

Today many countries in this region, such as Lebanon and Jordan, are home to a large number of refugees from previous Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. The capacities of these countries are already stretched thin and the new wave of refugees fleeing Iraq and Syria seriously threatens their social capacities, internal peace and security.

The paradigm shift triggered by the so called Arab Spring in 2011 and the staggering disposal of long standing dictators in a number of Arab countries gave a fresh impetus to the migration movement. The spill over of the ensuing Syrian war which has escalated into a highly complex, protracted internal conflict, backed by Russia and triggered a massive displacement of people within and outside the country. Libya's case proved to be even more difficult. Many countries in the region had neither the capacity nor the mechanisms to cope adequately with the huge challenges of this new political environment. And the international community failed to comprehend the underlying depth of ethnic and religious divisions suppressed by the dictatorial regimes. Some of the countries slid into chaos, lawlessness and new forms of

oppression thus generating a big number of refugees and asylum seekers that fled not only their countries but also the rising influence of the Islamic State which has filled every void left by the crumbling old regimes.

Another aspect of the present crisis can be attributed to the lingering crises in a number of African countries. Migrants from Sub-Saharan countries originating from Somalia, Eritrea, Senegal and Nigeria flee their countries which are characterised by struggling economies, repression, lack of freedom, dysfunctional institutions and (like Eritrea) dictatorships. With the rise of Islamist extremism and the emergence of the Islamic State the plight of migrants has been given a new dimension of unbearable horror. All these dramatic changes have caused ripple effects in the region and beyond, triggering mass migration. Before the Arab Spring, especially prior to 2013 this migration flow mostly stopped at the North African border, either because migrants were able to find work in transit countries and in Libya, which made a commitment to stem the flow of illegal migrants towards Italy and Europe. The fall of Libya's old regime not only put an end to those deals but made room for smugglers and traffickers who promptly seized the new opportunities for their business.

The European governments and the EU have failed to grasp the magnitude and anticipate the consequences of these fundamental shifts. The test proved to be too difficult for the European external policy, which back then was still struggling with the setting up of the new European External Action Service and the internal political divisions, caused by the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. Hence, the EU approach to the migration challenge has mostly been reactive, instead of being proactive and aimed at shaping events.

The conclusions of the Tampere European Council in 1999 marked the beginning of EU policies in the field of migration. Against the background of a single economic market, the Union has set off to expand its competences and build an area of freedom, security and justice. Beneficiaries of this project were to be EU citizens and migrants legally residing in the EU.

Conscious of the need to provide shelter and protection for third country nationals fleeing persecution, the EU developed a growing body of legislation pertaining to refugees and asylum seekers. Even though the EU prides itself on being a champion of highest human rights standards, there is one issue which deserves particular attention. It is the question of access to asylum and international protection. At present there are barely any lawful channels for refugees to reach Europe. In order to be able to lodge the asylum claim refugees have to come to Europe. That means that they need to cross the border to reach the European territory. Border crossing

is illegal unless the potential asylum seeker is in a possession of a visa – the requirement imposed to almost all the countries of origin of migrants. In the absence of a visa the only way to reach the European shores is to resort to the services of smugglers and traffickers. This is the fundamental flow of asylum and migration policies casting doubt on the recognised rhetoric of the existence of the legal right to seek asylum.

Italy and Greece have been swamped with migrants putting a heavy strain on their capacities to provide necessary services and adequate care. To cope with the loop holes in the asylum system some countries have tried to build physical barriers as a means of deterrence. Greece has built a barbed wire fence on the Greek-Turkish border to stop the flow of refugees coming from as far as Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. But the smugglers have quickly switched to other options using the island of Kos as an alternative. Bulgaria and recently Hungary have resorted to similar actions. The physical barriers can perhaps provide temporary relief and alleviate pressure but can neither stop migrants from coming nor provide a sustainable solution. No sooner is a border closed than another crossing point emerges elsewhere.

Europe needs a comprehensive and fair system underpinned by a uniform application of asylum law in all EU Member States. An alternative option should be to offer a considerable number of humanitarian visas for refugees coming from countries ravaged by war.

EU policy is torn between two conflicting agendas: on the one hand the core narrative of the EU integration project revolves around the concept of building a society based on democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. On the other hand security and the protection of borders are equally important, enabling free movement and guaranteeing safety to the European citizens. To strike the right balance between these two opposing agendas proves to be a daunting task.

To minimise the number of potential asylum seekers the EU Member States have adopted the concept of 'safe countries', where citizens supposedly do not face the risk of political prosecution or inhuman, degrading treatment and to which, therefore, migrants can be sent back automatically, respectively their applications should be examined in an accelerated procedure. The concept has been criticised by human rights organisations because of a blurred definition of what is considered to be a safe country and doubts that the necessary safeguards may be compromised.

Not all migrants are refugees and genuine asylum applicants. Prior to 2013 and before the current refugee wave from war torn countries, migrants were often fleeing economic hardship and poverty. Seeking asylum for economic reasons is in principle not recognised as a valid ground

for protection so the applicants are either obliged to leave (or are deported by force) or they chose illegality from the outset.

In protecting the EU borders through the concept of integrated border management and helping the third countries to increase their capacities to control the outflow of migrants the EU has reinforced the image of a 'fortress Europe' where borders and security matters most. The growing tension between border control, labour market requirements and its human rights commitments have the potential to seriously undermine the very basis of the EU project.

The EU has failed to fathom the importance of migration as a strategic issue risking serious tensions among and within EU Member States. A more comprehensive foreign and security policy is absolutely essential to prevent, anticipate and manage massive migration arrivals. If the EU is serious about migration it should strengthen its foreign policy clout and develop a top diplomacy with global outreach.

Admittedly, that a number of countries still hold potential for additional migrant flows generating. The inability of the international community to grasp the significance and consequences of the Arab revolutions has left many unresolved questions. One of the pressing issues is the (lack of a) long term prospect for young people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. Algeria and Egypt both face an uncertain future. Other countries in the region struggle to maintain fragile political equilibrium punctuated by sporadic violence of Islamist militants.

Regarding the cooperation with third countries of origin and transit the new deals should be discussed, taking into account the concerns and priorities of these countries, notably in connection with the growing presence and influence of the Islamic State.

At present a few countries continue to receive the vast majority of asylum seekers, notably Germany, which has recently issued a forecast for 800 000 applicants for this year only.

Countries which are asked to respect readmission obligations need to be offered more incentives and better conditions to fulfil their obligations. With no prospect for a better future the returnees will use all means to return back to Europe. Debate should be launched to decide what to do with those who do not qualify for asylum but are not returnable to their countries [7].

The EU in order to survive without perverting itself and its ideals must think of an alternative way of migration policy implementation. It will inevitably entail major political costs in case of positive changes. In particular, moving towards more substantial sovereignty pooling on asylum and migration is unlikely to be acceptable to all member states – or at least not for all at the same rate.

A double-pace approach, with a core set of countries triggering reinforced cooperation and encouraging others to join at a later stage, allowed Schengen to become what was until recently praised as a European 'success story'. A quarter of a century later, a compact and resolute avant-garde might once again be needed to push integration forward, but hopefully this time on less imbalanced foundations [10].

**Conclusion.** The European migration problem has been long overdue and is now reaching its apotheosis with the scale of the current migration wave. Nobody doubts that a single state cannot cope with the migration issue alone. It is also unanimously acknowledged that sustainable solutions must address the root causes. Yet it seems that the situation is only getting worse, which is proven by the unprecedented number of refugees and migrants trying to reach the European shores in 2015. In the absence of a global initiative and a sustainable political solution the grand political crises affecting the Middle East will continue generating flows of refugees and migrants. Whereas other countries, notably the US should play a role, the EU is particularly concerned, given its geographic proximity. Building fences and reinforcing security prerogatives against the flow of migrants can only displace the pressure from one entry

point to another. Making the access to Europe ever more difficult can only increase the amount of money the traffickers charge for their services.

The current migrant crisis has put a spotlight on how domestic politics of individual European countries could undermine the importance for a fair and thorough debate. Because of the rise of anti-immigrant, extreme right parties in Europe migration has become a subject of political bickering in almost every EU country. But with the massive unrest in a number of countries, with a rise of conflicts and dysfunctional states the number of migrants is set to rise. Migration movements are a phenomenon of the new era and one of the most pressing issues of our time [7].

The EU for sure has a strong need for more efficient management of migration flows at all their stages. The information campaigns on the actual possibilities for legal immigration, and for the prevention of all forms of trafficking in human beings must be held in close co-operation with countries of transit and other countries, which could also treat migrants and let them stay.

All the competences and instruments at the disposal of the Union, and in particular, in external relations must be used in an integrated and consistent way to build the area of freedom, security and justice, as it was declared at the very beginning of the Union creation.

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