

NOVEMBER 2017

GLOBAL FLOWS

MIGRATION AND SECURITY

DISCUSSION PAPER



This publication is part of Friends of Europe's Peace, Security and Defence programme. In this discussion paper, international experts and practitioners consider how policymakers can address the migration-security nexus to encourage more realistic and credible European and global migration policies.

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FOREWORD



MIGRATION AND SECURITY: INEXTRICABLY LINKED

Migration is top of the global agenda - and for many politicians, policymakers and people, migration and security are closely interlinked. The discussion on migration and security is complex and multi-faceted. It is also often based on misleading information, unjustified fears and coloured by clichés and prejudices.

Far-Right populists in Europe are feeding an already anxious public with a toxic narrative linking migration to terrorism. The conversation is very similar in the United States. An EU which is open to migration will inevitably be insecure and unsafe, according to the often-hysterical views being peddled by European populists. In the race for votes, mainstream politicians often embrace the populists' message, thereby amplifying public concerns about migration.

In response, the EU has expended much time, energy and money on trying to stem migration and refugee flows. Border controls have been enhanced, maritime surveillance upgraded, attempts made to combat smuggling networks and agreements have been struck with Turkey and Libya to stop the illegal entry of migrants into Europe. Repatriation agreements signed with foreign countries allow for the quick return of illegal migrants to their countries of origin.

Lost in the often corrosive global debate on migration and security are some overarching truths: people have been on the move since time began and will continue to seek new horizons; Europe needs migrants to meet labour and skills shortages and to tackle the challenges posed by an ageing and shrinking population; security concerns linked to wars and conflict as well as climate change will continue

to prompt migrants and refugees to seek shelter in Europe and in other "safe" countries; the expected demographic increase in Africa will also mean a rise in the number of migrants coming to Europe.

The priority in Europe and elsewhere must therefore be on ensuring a better management of migration flows and to prepare the public for the continued arrival of - and the need for - migrants. This demands the introduction of legal and safe pathways for the entry of migrants, better and more flexible trade and aid policies for the development of Africa and improved international coordination on issues linked to migration. Across the globe, countries will need to develop a new, more heroic migration narrative in which diversity is lauded and living together is not only viewed as necessary, but also embraced.

This discussion paper takes a look at some of the key challenges facing global policymakers as they seek to craft a modern-day migration policy which meets some of the most compelling security concerns while also tackling many countries' longer-term need for migrants. Our many contributors offer their views and suggestions for a more realistic and credible worldwide migration policy, their thoughts on the migration-security link and their experiences in different parts of the world. These views are presented in the paper's three sections and highlight European efforts at tackling migration, on-the-ground realities around the world and cross-cutting dimensions of migration and security.

The topics and views presented in this publication are by no means exhaustive, but serve to present a snapshot of the global migration-security nexus. At a time when the story of migration remains a toxic one, these viewpoints help to debunk key myths and misperceptions and make a constructive and stimulating contribution to the ongoing conversation on migration and security.

Happy reading!

Shada Islam

Director for Europe and Geopolitics at Friends of Europe

PART 1

THE EUROPEAN RESPONSE



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Europol's **crackdown** on migrant **smugglers**



Cash is still king, and most smuggling proceeds are beyond the reach of the European judicial system

Rob Wainwright, Executive Director of Europol

For several years now, the organised smuggling of irregular migrants has been one of the most complex and fastest growing criminal enterprises in Europe, with illegal profits on a par with or overtaking markets such as drugs or firearms trafficking. This year alone in the Mediterranean Sea, over 2,500 people have died or gone missing. More than 8,500 men, women and children have lost their lives at sea in the past couple of years. These already significant figures do not include the number of irregular migrants left for dead by smugglers in the Sahara Desert.

Europol has taken several steps to support its partners in tackling migrant smuggling, including tailoring and further developing partnerships and new police cooperation tools. Strong cooperation between different stakeholders in migrants' source, transit and destination countries is a prerequisite for effectively addressing this rapidly developing criminal landscape. The establishment of the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) more than a year ago with a mission to proactively support investigations into organised migrant smuggling marked a milestone in police cooperation in this specific field.

“The memory of the 71 migrants abandoned in a refrigerated truck is still with me”

The memory of the 71 migrants abandoned in a refrigerated truck on a busy motorway on 27 August 2015 is still with me and with the Europol officials who were called to support our Austrian partners shortly after the tragedy unfolded. We worked together for over a year on the crime scene data and were able to connect the criminal group behind this terrible event to more than twenty apparently unrelated previous smuggling incidents.

It was the first time that an analysis report was not only used to display the intelligence picture but was also tailored to indicate the amount of evidence available to support prosecution. This high profile investigation shaped the EMSC’s response and highlighted many challenges. The eleven suspects in this case are on trial and we are looking forward to hearing the outcome.

Organised migrant smuggling has fundamentally changed in recent times with criminals making the most of technological progress to develop their illicit profits. More diverse and complex offers of smuggling have flooded social media with criminals advertising anything from smuggling ‘packages’ to sourcing residence permits and even registering children in local schools. The increase in social media content

from migrant smugglers is being addressed at Europol.

By recommending the closure of online accounts promoting ‘safe sea crossings’, we have significantly interfered with the smugglers’ business model. Even if a social media account can be re-created in a matter of minutes, it takes significantly more time to regather 50,000 followers. But cash is still king, and most smuggling proceeds are beyond the effective reach of the European judicial system. We have worked extensively on bringing together all relevant stakeholders to map existing best practice. The goal is to promote the constant use of financial intelligence tools to complement the migrant smuggling investigations.

Migrant smuggling is a crime that cannot be dealt with in isolation. Effective cooperation with all actors involved in managing irregular migration is essential. The EMSC strives to consolidate existing partnerships and more importantly to forge new alliances. In particular with the European Commission we have endeavoured to adapt existing policy and legal mechanisms. We supported the deployment of European Migration Liaison Officers to Africa and at the same time pro-actively reached out to Immigration Liaison Officers deployed beyond Europe with a view to completing our intelligence picture and brokering new partnerships.

A similar rationale was behind our proposal to deploy an expert to the European Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya). We have further identified synergies with Frontex



and continue to work closely together not only as part of the hotspot approach in Greece and Italy but more importantly to develop existing mechanisms such as the Africa Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC).

At European level, we pioneered the sharing of intelligence between military and law enforcement by initiating Operation Sophia. We have advanced our cooperation with Interpol and supported one of their most ambitious projects – the Immigration Specialised Operational Network (ISON) – which will soon pay dividends. The idea of partnerships, whether between countries, EU agencies or police forces, is at the core of the Declaration signed in Malta on 3 February. Europol plays a vital and active role in its implementation.

Europol and the EMSC were explicitly requested to further consolidate the support and assistance provided to partners to break the smugglers' business model. The EMSC today includes the Joint Operational Team Mare (JOT Mare), which has already profiled over 800 vessels likely to be used in serious and organised criminality, making it one of Europol's most successful projects.

Work is underway on designing JOT Mare 2.0. One task is to set up an Information Clearing

House to provide real-time cross-platform information exchange. The Information Clearing House should also encourage the exchange of information from EU member states' liaison officers, CSDP civilian and military missions, and other law enforcement and military authorities deployed in non-EU countries.

Migrant smuggling is likely to remain an enduring global threat for years to come, as the business is characterised by huge turnover, low risk and high demand. With these incentives, organised criminal groups will continue adapting and expanding their operations, consequentially increasing the pressure on EU borders. Migrant smugglers are not merely providing a service to meet demand; they are driving demand and having a marked impact on irregular migratory trends. They are utterly ruthless in their disregard for the safety of the very people whose life savings they take as fees.

Europol's goal is to disrupt smugglers' business model and make it increasingly difficult for them to move across borders and enjoy the illicit profits. Well-coordinated and targeted law enforcement action, effective external action and strong partnerships, combined with viable alternatives to irregular migration, remain the most effective answer to the challenges we face. ●

That's enough complacency! Remember, migration **works** to Europe's **benefit**



The number of forced displacements is likely to carry on with dramatic increases before falling

Gonzalo Fanjul, Head of Research at the porCausa Foundation

The end of September brought bad news for those of us willing to reform the world's broken migration regime. Three important destinations for migrants – Norway, New Zealand and Germany – held elections that gave openly anti-immigrant parties a role in government, or at least a tangible influence over policy. Meanwhile, the European Union's self-imposed two-year period in which to guarantee the fair and responsible distribution of 160,000 asylum-seekers expired with less than a quarter of the target having actually been resettled because of angered opposition of countries like Hungary and Poland – and complacency from almost all the rest.

All of this helps entrench the strategy chosen by the EU's institutions and member states: the securitisation and externalisation of migration policies, with the paramount objective being to shield Europe's frontiers. Over the last decade, the coordinated border-control agency Frontex has had its budget multiplied by 38, and the Dublin Regulation for asylum responsibility has pushed first-entry countries Italy and Greece beyond their limits.

Externally, control and repatriation agreements have been signed with dubious regimes across the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel, now even including deals with failed states like Libya.



***“Human mobility is one
of the greatest challenges
of our time”***

To compensate these partner countries for their work in dissuading potential migrants at-source, Europe offers pay outs exceeding €17bn. Every objective relating to human mobility can be seen to fall under one simple mantra: stop migrants before they reach European soil.

But will these measures actually shield Europe's frontiers? Most importantly, will they serve the purpose of an intelligent migration policy that responds to both the reality of human mobility and the long-term interests of Europe? They will not.

The number of forced displacements is likely to carry on with dramatic increases before falling. The wars sweeping the Middle East and the Sahel are just symptoms of a broader phenomenon that includes global warming and extreme weather events as drivers of income depletion and conflict. The Norwegian Refugee Council estimates that the number of those forcibly displaced for these reasons could grow to match today's total refugee count.

We cannot expect Europe to shoulder all the responsibility for resettling all these people, but the EU will at the very least have to contribute to any long-term solution based on existing international protection laws and basic principles of shared responsibility. Unfortunately, its credibility and legitimacy have been so badly dented by recent policies that it will take a great deal of sustained effort and money reinvested in the right direction before Europeans can convince others to likewise change course.

As important as it is to see the challenge of human mobility as a humanitarian crisis, this narrow perspective is both short-sighted and misleading. At present, refugees and asylum-seekers account for merely 10% of the 244 million migrants across the planet. For most people on the move, the decision to migrate as well as their choice of destination is determined by the financial and educational capacity to leave, their expectations for welfare gains, and the actual opportunities to work and live securely at the other end.

As the high numbers of undocumented migrants prove, should these push-and-pull factors operate with enough intensity, barriers will not stop economic mobility altogether, only make the process longer, costlier and far more dangerous for people. And nor should they try to, because the EU desperately needs both qualified and unqualified labour to reverse its demographic erosion, sustain its welfare states and endow European economies with the kind of creativity and entrepreneurship rightly associated with immigration. As the McKinsey Global Institute recently showcased in an influential report on the economic impact of migration, immigrants contributed to a 40-80% labour-force boost in top-destination countries between 2000 and 2014.

As harsh restrictions are not working, what should be the response? Put simply, doing what the EU said it would only a few years ago. Back in 2005, the Global Approach on Migration and Mobility (GAMM) established a sensible and ambitious policy framework combining the fight against irregular migration and human trafficking with support for well-managed mobility, guaranteeing international protection and maximising development outcomes from migration flows.

At the time, governments at both ends of migratory routes dared to experiment with new institutional ideas, such as the Rabat and the Prague processes with West Africa and Eastern Europe respectively, the Common Agendas for Migration and Mobility with Ethiopia and Nigeria, and the Mobility Partnerships the EU signed with nine countries.

GAMM's approach was imperfect, and did not inoculate Europe against the difficulties accompanying any migration debate. But it did include the three fundamental elements of any long-lasting response: first, the savviness to reduce the political radioactivity of this debate in member states by taking it to EU-level; second, the creativity to construct multilateral norms and institutions; and third, the pedagogic effort to base migration policies on facts rather than myths – post-truth politics can have lethal force against successful reform.

Human mobility is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Rather than fighting it, let's learn to harness migration for the common interest of those on the move and us in Europe. ●

Europe needs a more **human approach** to migration



***A more human approach should be at the core
of all EU policymaking processes***

Jordi Solé, Member of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)

The immigration flows that the European Union has received in recent years are not a new or isolated phenomenon. The history of humanity is one of migrations. For millennia, individuals, families and entire communities have moved in search of a better life or in flight from war and persecution, and this story continues to unfold worldwide.

Immigration is neither a threat nor a burden. On the contrary, migration should be welcomed as an opportunity to promote diversity – one of the EU's cornerstone values. Yet the EU's failure to manage its present refugee situation has

opened the door to a crisis mood in terms of debating mobility and security. There is still no agreement between member states on what “security” means or how it should be effected, and overuse of the term in political debate has led to feelings of insecurity and fear among citizens.

This in turn has facilitated populism's European and global rise with populist parties demanding a more protectionist approach. We must combat discrimination and hate speech at all levels of society. Different points of views on the topic of migration can in most cases be attributed to



a lack of knowledge, sympathy and tolerance towards other cultures and their experiences. We should therefore pursue greater efforts to enhance educational programmes based on intercultural dialogue.

A change in mind set is vital if we are to truly appreciate what drives migration. It is well known that most migrants are fleeing from armed conflicts in their countries of origin. Would we all not do the same in their place? Other migrants move to satisfy their wish for individual empowerment, to escape from the harsh poverty, instability, marginalisation and

lack of opportunities they are born to. Again, we would all probably seek to do likewise.

The desire for individual empowerment is inherent in all of us. When Europeans move abroad or when people move to Europe, we have in common the aspiration to personally and professionally improve our lives.

Furthermore, thanks to the global connectivity offered by modern technology, citizens from developed and developing countries can communicate and discuss global events and trends. A consequence of this connectivity is

that social and economic inequalities between countries have been made painfully evident to citizens from the developing world, driving their wish of individual empowerment.

But closing the opportunity gap between native and immigrant societies is still one of our biggest challenges. In this regard, empowering migrants and diasporas will bridge inequalities here as well as contribute to human development in countries of origin. To that end, the EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) should not only be migrant-centred but should involve migrants fully in the EU policymaking process so their opinions and views are duly considered.

Security does not result from greater protectionism. Protectionist attitudes create frustration and as a consequence lead to the rise of discriminatory behaviours and the spread of hate speech in European society. Building walls or fences at borders will not diminish migration flows. It will enhance opportunities for human traffickers who stand ready to take advantage of the desperate.

Women and children are among the most vulnerable, as they are often sexually exploited in exchange for illegal passage to Europe. Accordingly, for policymakers to address the security challenges faced by refugee women and children, they should work hand-in-hand with and follow the recommendations of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) dealing directly with these groups.

For one thing, it is of high importance that enough female staff members are at hand to help women and children traumatised by their horrific experiences. Unaccompanied children – particularly girls – should be given special attention, protection and treatment, as they are sadly the preferred targets of human traffickers. To fulfil these and other needs, CSOs should be invited to directly engage in EU policymaking.

Security, migration and aid agencies can only collaborate well in this crisis if they work toward the same goal of human security. It is essential here that work plans and objectives are clearly defined and made available to other organisations. Human rights is considered a cross-cutting dimension of the GAMM yet cannot be fulfilled while networks of traffickers continue operating. It is for that reason that the EU's Partnership Agreements can be used as a mechanism to tackle illegal migration networks at-source.

A more human approach should be at the core of all EU policymaking processes, particularly in the Global Strategy. Citizens should be encouraged by the EU's example to view migration not as a negative concept, but as a driver for development, cultural exchange and the reduction of inequalities between countries. It is time to push for a truly human and inclusive approach at all levels, and the EU can take a lead by acknowledging publicly that we as human beings all complement one another. ●

The **security-development** trade-off needs urgent rebalance



Given that entire communities depend on migration, economic alternatives are vital for stability and security

Anna Knoll, Migration Programme Manager at the European Centre for Development

The European Union's approach to foreign policy is increasingly interest-driven. The EU's 2016 Global Strategy reflects this shift in discourse. Migration did not appear in the previous Global Strategy but is presented today as both an opportunity and a challenge for security and development. Similarly, the May 2017 Consensus on Development suggests a more coordinated, holistic and structured approach to migration through the leverage of EU instruments. At the same time, the documents are riddled with inconsistencies.

Multiple perspectives on migration and its relationship with security and development are

integrated into the EU's new strategic global documents. A stronger security lens is applied, not least exemplified by the emergence of the new 'migration-security-development' nexus in European discussions. Yet existing tensions between different normative views remain unresolved. For example, the political pressure to rapidly reduce the number of arrivals and increase repatriations has made subordinate some of Europe's external action tools including development cooperation.

Short-term migration and security interests are not necessarily consistent with the objectives of development cooperation, to



“Given that entire communities depend on migration, economic alternatives are vital for stability and security”

reduce poverty and promote long-term stability. Strong concerns have been raised that current security-focused measures to address irregular migration such as in Libya, Niger or Mali are not sufficiently embedded within wider long-term strategies supporting stability, state-building and development, and are not sufficiently taking into account the underlying political-economy dynamics.

While complete harmony between the different perspectives on migration and security may not be fully achieved, a number of considerations could support better coordination. As a start, there needs to be more honesty about the existing tensions and trade-offs found in EU strategies concerning irregular migration in the short term and those aiming to address migration, development and stability in the longer term.

On paper, the EU's strategies do not sufficiently address their inherent contradictions concerning values and interests. This puts development cooperation at risk of being compromised. A more thorough discussion on competing interests and underlying assumptions may be a first step to building longer-term strategies in

which generally incompatible objectives can be to some degree integrated in a balanced way for different regions.

Moreover, more balance needs to be applied within the migration-security-development nexus itself. To date, much energy has been expended combating smuggling, stemming irregular migration flows and making migration more orderly. The security focus is clear to see from the response to criminal smuggling networks and the repressive policies applied in cooperation with governments in the Sahel region.

Yet given that entire communities have come to depend on migration, economic alternatives are of vital importance for stability and security in the region. Support for rapid job-creation measures and alternative livelihood opportunities exist, for instance as part of the EU Trust Fund for Africa. Both in scale and swiftness, however, they do not compare to investments in security and migration management. Without a better balance, the legitimacy and stability of local authorities is at risk, and the insecurity of migrants will be exacerbated. This balance also includes the opening and promotion of legal channels for migration.

Such a balancing can only work effectively if the security dimensions of irregular migration are addressed as part of wider strategies rather than as a standalone problem. The resultant policies need to integrate efforts for state- and institution-building, addressing violent extremism, long-term development including respect for the rule of law and human rights, and the human security of migrants. It is important not to lose sight of a bottom-up and inclusive approach that takes into account the complex political-economy dimensions of migration, security and development.

Principles and standards for specific instruments addressing the nexus could then be developed. For example, concerning the EU's cooperation on migration with partner countries, it is not always clear which actions have a distinct development objective. The current global migration phenomenon offers an opportunity to create such clarity and to develop guidelines on which development cooperation in the field can be based.

Also of growing concern has been the emphasis on returning and reintegrating failed asylum-

seekers without a clear grasp of what successful return and reintegration entails from a sustainable development perspective. The discussion and establishment of principles and standards could be useful here, as well as for other fields of external action related to migration.

The EU's Global Strategy and Consensus for Development as overarching guidance documents present narratives on migration, development and security that are only partly compatible with one another. While they do not give clear instruction on how to resolve the possible tensions emerging from objective clashes, their translation into practice opens up possibilities to better define how competing aspects may best work together. The EU's choices have so far observably prioritised the protection of European borders and security in response to migration with other aspects side-lined. A more holistic approach would not only be in the original spirit of the EU's strategic documents but would likely also realise better outcomes from migration for security and development in the long term. ●

The EIB adapts its **business model** to end the migration crisis



In 2015, around 764,000 refugees and asylum-seekers transited through the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia

Flavia Palanza, Director of the Central and South-Eastern Europe Department at the European Investment Bank (EIB)

Miguel Morgado, Director of the Adriatic Sea Department at the European Investment Bank (EIB)

As the European Union's bank, the European Investment Bank (EIB) contributes effectively to resolving the challenges created by migration. The EIB supports EU policy and emergency responses, long-term economic development and integration strategies, and provides resilience for distressed neighbouring regions. EIB funds help emergency responses by financing projects aimed at providing housing, education, healthcare and real opportunities for refugees and migrants, both in Europe and its neighbourhood.

An estimated 11 million people have fled their homes in Syria as a result of conflict with a further 13.5 million in need of humanitarian assistance. Almost a million have requested asylum in Europe but the majority have sought refuge within Syria itself or in neighbouring countries. Over two million refugees – including those from Iraq, Palestine and Sudan – are currently sheltered in the Southern Neighbourhood.

These people are hosted by politically and economically fragile countries where refugees



now account for 10-25% of the population. Absorbing such a large number of people overburdens infrastructure and local services, which if unaddressed will impact negatively on the lives of local and immigrant populations alike.

The Western Balkans has been affected as one of the main migratory routes to Europe. In 2015, around 764,000 refugees and asylum-seekers transited through the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia with smaller but significant numbers moving through Albania and Kosovo. Flows have since slowed but strained economic conditions in these countries make it increasingly difficult for the region to bear the consequences of immigration and indeed emigration.

War in the Western Balkans in the 1990s triggered a mass exodus to other parts of Europe, which has long since continued. Until 2014, nationals from the six Western Balkan countries made up the largest share of asylum applications to EU countries despite their homelands being defined as “safe countries of origin”.

The EIB cuts to the core of these issues by addressing the development challenges faced in asylum-seekers’ countries of origin. The EIB has long had a presence in the regions that feed most migration flows to Europe prioritising projects that lead to job creation, economic resilience and poverty reduction. For instance, the EIB is the leading international financier in

“Over two million refugees ... are currently sheltered in the Southern Neighbourhood”

the Western Balkans and since 2006, the Bank has financed projects totalling €6.4bn and last year signed financing contracts amounting to €427m in the Western Balkans.

The EIB is also the largest multilateral in the Mediterranean, investing more than €15bn since 2007 in support of transport, water, social and energy – particularly renewable – projects. While the Bank continues its support for key infrastructure projects across the region, last year saw the market shift towards the private sector particularly in favour of SMEs. Around 68% of total lending went to private entities as opposed to an average of 46% over the past decade. Corporate lending was also on a marked increase representing three of last year's 16 signed operations supporting the manufacturing industry and ICT sector. More than 700 companies employing 130,000 individuals received finance either directly or through our local partners.

In addition to supporting projects that aim to address the root causes of migration, the EIB is also stepping up its operations in response to the refugee influx. At the onset of the crisis, the Bank quickly carried out an assessment of short-

to-long-term investment needs related to the refugee crisis in host, transit and origin countries.

The EIB is working in particular with local authorities to support medium-term investment projects for the provision of affordable housing and services such as health, childcare, transport and education. To that effect and in addition to the Berlin process, the EIB is intensifying its support by launching the Economic Resilience Initiative (ERI) which has been developed specifically in the context of the refugee and migration crisis. The ERI will support economic growth by utilising an additional €6bn of financing activity until 2021. And that is on top of the estimated €7.5bn already envisaged for the Southern Neighbourhood and Western Balkans.

Boosting economic resilience requires upgrading and developing new social and economic infrastructure as well as stimulating private sector-led growth and job creation. This is important for these regions as key economic indicators score significantly worse than the EU average. These countries have suffered for many years from structural unemployment, particularly with high levels for women and youth. The initiative is expected to catalyse an additional investment of €15bn to support economic growth, employment, vital infrastructure and social cohesion in both regions. The ERI addresses the root causes of migration too through support for job creation and by giving access to finance and basic services to the most vulnerable populations, notably young people and women.

Appreciating the severity of the crisis, the Bank is pushing to reach a wider range of beneficiaries than its normal operating model allows. Many new priority investments are in sectors and with clients the Bank has previously found difficult to serve, for example because of recipient countries' limited capacity to borrow or mitigate risk. The shift means more direct support for the private sector, which comprises nearly two thirds of the initiative.

The ERI will substantially expand the toolkit available to the EIB for these regions, now including concessional technical assistance and impact finance. A key activity will be to finance SMEs and microenterprises in locations with high concentrations of refugees.

ERI EXPECTED RESULTS

Based on portfolio characteristics, the additional €15bn of investment supported under ERI, is estimated to deliver tangible results, amongst others:

- Access to financing for 14 000 SMEs and midcaps, as well as 230 000 microenterprises, both helping to sustain 800 000 jobs. Microfinance operations have great potential to benefit women and rural populations in particular.
- Improved infrastructure is set to serve over 800 000 households with improved water and sanitation services, 240 000 households benefit from improved waste management.
- Generate energy to power over 400 000 households, 150 000 MWh of energy savings.
- Benefit 400 000 people daily with improved transport.
- EIB financing ensures that climate considerations are factored into projects. This is even more relevant as countries in the Southern Neighbourhood and Western Balkans are among the most vulnerable in terms of climate change.

Boost MENA is another initiative founded on the belief that entrepreneurship and innovation play a significant role in accelerating social progress and raising living standards. The initiative will directly assist the thousands of skilled and unskilled young people compelled to leave their countries and risk their lives for better economic opportunities. The fast-growing digital economy is seen as one of the most powerful drivers for future employment and economic prosperity.

Critically, innovative start-ups are showing promising economic and development impacts but require assistance to reach their potential. On a similar model with Boost Africa, Boost MENA will adopt a value chain approach aimed at supporting the earliest and riskiest stages of entrepreneurship in a sustainable way. Boost MENA will step up efforts mainly in support of first-time entrepreneurs – in particular young people and women – to contribute to the international response to the migration crisis. The initiative expects to boost the creation of significant numbers of quality local jobs and reverse brain drain in the region. ●

Without access to training, the **skills mismatch** won't fix itself



Skills enhancement is a pre-condition for labour matching

Michael Spindelegger, Director General of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Martin Hofmann, Senior Policy Advisor at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

The legal movement of labour is high on the European agenda with no shortage of problems to discuss. From tackling irregular migration and the alleged misuse of asylum systems to alleviating the negative impacts expected from ageing in Europe, safeguarding the rights of labour migrants and enhancing the development impacts of remittances. Addressing these issues will require a focus on common vocational training standards and labour migration schemes that together will bring the right people to the right jobs.

European governments regard the regulation of labour immigration as a core state function and an expression of sovereignty. Consequently, they show only limited readiness to shift competences to the EU. In their view, labour migration is not only significant in terms of control but is also highly sensitive in terms of public opinion and the popular acceptance of immigration policies. As such, immigration in general and labour migration in particular are policy areas in which EU member states have found it difficult to agree on binding common approaches. A shift of competences from the



national level would imply a loss of immediate control over the admission of foreigners to their territories, an approach they have never supported.

European governments do acknowledge the growing need for foreign labour in view of demographic ageing, and have developed quite sophisticated labour immigration systems. But these systems do not provide enough measures to address the existing skills mismatch. A functioning labour migration system that balances supply and demand needs to be

complex and detailed. For instance, a simple opening of labour markets in the world's most-developed countries to immigrants regardless of their qualifications is neither likely nor desirable. Each country needs the right kind of immigration with the right skill levels.

European labour markets have the highest degrees of specialisation and formalisation in the world. The sectors where labour immigration is most needed consequently require applicants with formal qualifications demonstrating extensive educational and vocational training.

At present, each European country has its own teaching standards tailored exclusively to its own labour market.

So it is hardly surprising that most non-Europeans fail to meet employers' requirements, as they have little or no chance of obtaining the necessary qualifications from their home countries. If they want to take up work in Europe, they have to belong to the small segment of highly skilled migrants, apply for low-qualified work under a seasonal scheme, or work in informal niches of the labour market. This structural mismatch of skills and qualifications between Europe and other countries has to be regarded as one of the main drivers of irregular migration and illegal foreign employment.

In order to make regular labour migration to Europe a real option, a great deal of work needs to be done. Skills enhancement is a pre-condition for labour matching. Key is the development and implementation of policies to enhance the skills of prospective labour migrants on the basis of common vocational training standards that can be offered to those still in their home countries. This would offer a real triple-win solution, benefitting the worker as well as both the countries of origin and destination.

European vocational training standards are the highest in the world, and graduates of the scheme would find their opportunities significantly enhanced in Europe or even in their home countries. Having decided to migrate, individuals would not only benefit from the

ability to follow legal channels but also from access to higher income levels. Countries of origin would gain from higher remittances and experience enhanced legitimacy as more of their citizens would see their rights protected abroad. It would also be to their advantage to have such an enhanced skills base provided by those graduates who decide to stay home.

Countries of destination would benefit greatly, having actively created an immigrant workforce that is capable of filling existing and evolving labour market gaps by way of legal and orderly migration. This scheme would contribute to economic development in countries of origin and enhance their readiness to cooperate with Europe in other areas of mutual interest.

Active policies for the advancement of skills enhancement and skills matching are comparatively new instruments but pilot initiatives have been conducted with some positive results. The EU already provides a great deal of support to third countries in the areas of labour-market reform, youth employment, social protection and the promotion of small- and medium-sized enterprises. All these measures have positive impacts on the overall employment situation but should be complemented by revised national labour market and migration strategies in Europe.

Together with the development of common training standards and programmes, this concept will provide a real basis for well-functioning and legal labour migration between Europe and the rest of the world. ●

PART 2

ON THE GROUND



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European migration policies are feeding a humanitarian disaster



Highly vulnerable people including victims of torture are de facto denied specialised health care

Inma Vazquez, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) representative to the European Union and NATO

European electoral agendas oblige a short-term approach to migration that aims first and foremost at stopping the flow of immigrants arriving irregularly. In a speech delivered this August, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker referred to this as “a highly contested policy, and sometimes questionable, yet effective”. Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) witnesses on a daily basis the unbearable human cost of this “effective” policy. Along the Balkan route, on the Greek islands and in Libya, MSF treats the victims of violence and abuse committed by state and non-state actors.

Assessing the EU-Turkey Deal and the closure of the Balkan Route, President Juncker said in September that “We have managed to stem irregular flows of migrants, which were a cause of great anxiety for many”. What should cause great anxiety for Juncker are the thousands of people now trapped in dire conditions across the Greek islands and in the midst of a mental health emergency. The percentage of patients on Lesbos that MSF referred to a psychiatrist increased from just over a third of new mental health patients in the first half of 2017 to near three quarters in August 2017.



In the first half of this year, less than a third of our vulnerable patients were officially recognised as vulnerable, and without this recognition they cannot move out of the islands. As a result, highly vulnerable people including victims of torture are de facto denied specialised health care that is non-existent on the islands. Among them was a Syrian woman survivor of rape, with a chronic untreated thyroid condition and severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of witnessing the brutal murder of her family and the death of her child in her arms. Furthermore, out of the 22 victims of torture that we referred to Athens for rehabilitation, only six managed to arrive at our clinic for treatment and rehabilitation.

Thousands of people are also trapped across the Balkans. Whether pushed into more dangerous irregular border crossings or unlawfully expelled by state authorities, they are forgotten and left with limited or no access to medical care. Based in Belgrade, MSF teams have treated hundreds of victims of violence.

The results of a survey carried out on patients from September 2016 to February 2017 reveal that more than 57% have personally experienced violent events during their journey, and 86% witnessed violence perpetrated by state authorities – almost all of it allegedly committed by EU member states, namely 48% by Bulgaria, 28% by Hungary and 17% by Croatia. When MSF shared this report with Frontex, the migration agency responded that they were only deployed at official border-crossing points, unlikely to witness these events.

Evaluating the Malta Declaration, designed to manage the Central Mediterranean route, High Representative Federica Mogherini said “The Libyan Coast Guard alone has saved 13,000 people in the last few months. We trained the Libyan Coast Guard through Operation Sophia – thereby enabling our Libyan friends to begin to exert control once again over their territorial waters, an important factor in saving lives”.

On the ground, the fate of those intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard is unknown. While those “rescued” at sea are expected to be taken to detention centres in Libya, neither the EU nor the Tripoli authorities are able to report on what has actually happened to the majority of those who disembarked.

It is worth stating here that NGOs active in the central Mediterranean rescued 46,806 people in 2016 and 38,747 people so far this year, but are not given the same praise offered by the EU to Libya. They are at best considered a pull factor and at worst accused of colluding with smugglers and traffickers, and even contributing to a mortality increase. The EU, the Italian government and the Libyan Coast Guard have put enormous pressure on NGOs, including the use of intimidation and violence, to deter NGOs from working close to Libyan territorial waters.

Libya is not a safe place for migrants. Irregular entry and stay in the country is criminalised, thus detention is mandatory with no asylum system in place. MSF has had regular access to some of the official detention centres since July 2016, and has repeatedly warned about the

“The fate of those intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard is unknown”

horrendous abuses detainees endure. People are given as little as 0.4m² in which to live, in cells without light or ventilation, and horrible hygiene and sanitation – often without access to toilets. Detainees have no access to a court, no access to the outside world, and do not know the reason for their detention or its likely duration. Outside official detention, the situation is even worse. People are directly at the mercy of smugglers, traffickers and criminal gangs.

Mogherini has conceded that “living conditions in these camps are dire and it is only access to them by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the UNHCR and related international organisations that can ensure an improvement in living conditions, sometimes to save lives.” Yet the reality is that access restrictions imposed by authorities and militias continue to severely hamper the UN’s capacity to effectively discharge its mandate.

The UN has not succeeded in developing a solid presence in Libya, has very limited access to detention centres and has very little independent monitoring capacity. Similarly, MSF staff are constantly reminded by guards and officials not to exceed their medical work, and we were recently told to stop visiting two of the detention centres. Even talking to the

detainees is not straightforward, with some centres displaying signs stating: “forbidden to talk to detainees”.

This situation also impacts the “voluntary” repatriation scheme the EU often praises itself for making a success, purportedly allowing people to begin new lives in their countries of origin. IOM faces challenges to properly monitor and verify each case independently, but we observe that guards in Libya hold detainees for a number of reasons that we do not fully understand. In some cases, people are not registered or repatriated because they “missed their opportunity” or they are sent to forced labour during the day as punishment for “misbehaviour”. Before they can go home, some detainees refer to bribes being requested, including by their own embassies.

Short-term deterrence-based migration policies have consequences that cannot be accepted as collateral damage while waiting for things to improve or waiting for governments to one day offer safe and legal alternatives. This article started with a quote from President Juncker, and will finish with another. “Irregular migration will only stop if there is a real alternative to perilous journeys.” ●



Corruption

threatens to land EU funds in the pockets of migrant smugglers



Members of armed forces participate in the transfer of migrants for profit

Matina Stevis-Gridneff, Africa Correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal* and European Young Leader

There is no stage of the illicit migration process that is not compounded by corruption. From the push factors in the country of origin through the dangerous journey to the country of destination, corruption amplifies illicit migration, endangers migrants and refugees, and entrenches destructive practices along the way.

Corruption is as old as government; migration as old as man. Both ancient phenomena have been examined and tied causally for at least two decades by academics. The resultant literature

establishes that corruption contributes to poverty and the lack of economic opportunity; it also shows that it worsens and prolongs conflicts.

Bribery and other forms of graft at individual and state level has in my observations contributed to the prolonging of the civil war in Somalia and has driven Gambians to exile in droves. A look at how the major migrant- and refugee-sending countries fare on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index is instructive of the general trend. Of 176 countries ranked in

the 2016 index, some of the biggest sending countries were at the bottom: Somalia was 176th, Syria 173rd, Afghanistan 169th, Eritrea 164th and Nigeria 136th.

Correlation does not imply causality, and there are several countries that fare poorly in the same index without high emigration. But when it comes to illicit migration, corruption has played a more obvious role. Research by the UN and academics establishes multiple ways in which migrant-smuggling networks, often criminal gangs or mixed-smuggling groups that also ferry guns, drugs or contraband, rely on corruption at every node of their operation. This involves lower- or higher-level officials, from border guards to ministers. In the case of Eritrea and Sudan, local UN Monitoring Groups established that, at the very least, members of the armed forces participate in the transfer of migrants for profit.

Within the EU, corruption continues its ugly path, always to the detriment of locals and migrants and to the profit of a few individuals. An investigation earlier this year showed that the Sicilian mafia was deeply involved in siphoning funds from migrant centres, having first used bribery to acquire contracts to run them.

In that respect, corruption within the EU creates opportunities for criminal networks to gain fresh revenue streams, and presents corruptible officials with the same. In Greece, I interviewed an Afghan national running a forged passport network providing refugees with documents that allowed them to travel within Schengen. He said he would not have been able to operate without the assistance of rogue Greek police officials.

Aid and development organisations and non-governmental groups have long known that corruption is a major concern in field operations. It is possible that the EU's emergency response to the migration crisis will soon find the same.

The EU's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) is endowed with €2.55bn to be allocated over the course of several years to African countries in major migrant-sending or transiting regions. The funding will be divested through partner organisations to projects thought to contribute to tackling both the practice and the root causes of illicit migration from or through the countries in question.

Virtually all recipient countries are known to be among the world's most corrupt. Looking back to the Transparency International index, Libya, a strategic target for the EUTF as the main launching pad for trans-Mediterranean journeys, is the world's sixth most corrupt country, an inglorious position it shares with another target for EU funding, Sudan.

Early signs of funding misallocation are cause for distress. An investigation published in October found that Libyan coast guards trained with Italian funds in a project supported by the EU went on strike demanding their salaries be raised to reflect their loss of bribes from smugglers. In Sudan, the Enough Project, an investigative think tank, found risks that EU funding could end up with the infamous Janjaweed militia, culprits of genocide.

The EU and its organs have fully fledged anti-corruption provisions, and there is no reason

to believe that efforts are not being made to minimise the risk from a legal perspective. But from a practical perspective, it is nearly impossible to guarantee the judicious appropriation of the EUTF.

In its first annual report, for 2016, the EUTF said that while “the ex-ante controls had not detected ineligible any expenditure”, it also noted that “no external audits were carried out”. It will be a huge blow to the EU’s reputation, and a breach of trust with its citizens who are funding the EUTF, if it is found to have fallen prey to corruption.

The theoretical benefits of the EUTF are debatable, and some question the legality or morality of some of the projects, in particular those seen to be funding authoritarian and cruel regimes. It is worth reminding ourselves that Libya is in a state of collapse and militias run different parts of the country, with the so-called Islamic State a new entrant to the chaos. Meanwhile, Sudan’s president Omar Bashir is the only sitting head of state to be wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity.

It is therefore imperative that the most robust processes are put in place on the EUTF’s disbursement. These might slow down funding

“EU funding could end up with culprits of genocide”

and will doubtless result in the termination of some projects that do not meet the high standards set out, but it will be worth it.

With the EUTF at such an embryonic stage, the selection of partners and clear demarcation of the projects from state actors will be critical. That will be impossible where the EUTF is deployed to fund state operations in Libya or Sudan. Such projects should be seriously considered for termination with funding directed to other projects in the same countries where better assurances against corruption can be made, for example, by distributing services directly to citizens rather than through state actors.

For the EUTF as with all donor-driven aid and development programmes, the benefits of a well-administered fund will go beyond the impact on migration flows. They will also leave a legacy of good governance in countries that desperately need it. ●

The **UN** and **EU** are failing the **Rohingya** on every level



When the military launched its raping and killing of civilians on mass, there was no change in the EU's approach

Mark Farmaner, Director of Burma Campaign UK

In a period of just five weeks this Autumn, more than half a million Rohingya fled Myanmar, most arriving in Bangladesh. The mass exodus followed a major offensive by Myanmar's military, using the pretext of attacks by Rohingya insurgents to pursue their long-term goal of driving all Rohingya out of the country.

Although this attack had been widely anticipated, the international community made no significant effort either to prevent the attacks on Rohingya civilians, or prepare for the influx of refugees in neighbouring Bangladesh. The result has been catastrophic for the Rohingya, who

have suffered horrific human rights violations in what the United Nations has described as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

Those Rohingya who escaped to Bangladesh have reached a humanitarian crisis where, several weeks after the military offensive began, most were still not able to access basics such as shelter, clean water or proper healthcare. Although Bangladesh has been praised for reversing earlier attempts to push Rohingya back at the border, it has not given them official refugee status. Many have died since their arrival.



The international community failed to prevent the human rights violations and subsequent exodus of the Rohingya, failed initially to meet their humanitarian needs, and failed to provide them with security and status after they fled. These failures should prompt the UN and the European Union in particular to rethink their approach towards endangered populations. They must also urgently ask themselves what led Min Aung Hlaing, the head of Myanmar's military, to correctly believe that he could engage in an ethnic cleansing campaign and get away with it?

Former General Thein Sein, who became President after rigged elections in 2010, used Buddhist nationalism and anti-Rohingya sentiment to whip up support for himself and his military-backed party, and to counter the popularity of Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy. Two waves of violence against the Rohingya in 2012 left 140,000 displaced after their villages were attacked and burned.

The attacks went hand-in-hand with increased anti-Rohingya and anti-Muslim rhetoric from government-sanctioned Buddhist nationalist groups such as Ma Ba Tha, which incited hatred of Muslims and backed the pro-military Union Solidarity Development Party. Thein Sein's government took a series of steps against the Rohingya, and each time the UN, EU and other members of the international community continued to support Thein Sein's government. Though Human Rights Watch and others later assessed that the human rights violations met the definition of ethnic cleansing and crimes

against humanity, the Human Rights Up Front Initiative has not been applied by the UN.

The government said it would not answer UN calls to repeal the 1982 Citizenship Law, which excludes Rohingya from the official list of 135 races eligible for full citizenship, but would consider alternative pathways for possible citizenship, even though the proposal would mean Rohingya accepting the same identity cards given to foreigners. The EU and its member states stopped actively demanding the law be changed.

The UN worked with the government on a national census, and EU member states helped fund it, but did not make inclusion of the Rohingya a condition of support, and went ahead with finance and support even when the government refused to include the Rohingya. The government even demanded that diplomats stop using the word Rohingya. UN agencies and the EU backed down and complied.

When conditions were imposed in the 2015 election to block Rohingya political parties taking part, block most Rohingya candidates from standing and then disallow almost all Rohingya from being able to vote, the entire international community still gave support to the elections and declared them largely free and fair.

Severe restrictions were imposed on the delivery of aid to Rohingya in camps for the internally displaced. They became effective prison camps, described by senior UN officials as the worst or most squalid they had ever

***“What led the head
of Myanmar’s military to believe
he could engage in ethnic
cleansing and get away
with it?”***

seen. Cooperation, aid and support for the military-backed government was not stopped, or threatened to be stopped if these restrictions were not lifted. They were, in effect, accepted.

When the military launched its offensive in October 2016, forcing more than 100,000 Rohingya to flee, raping and killing civilians on mass, there was no change in the EU’s approach. Min Aung Hlaing was invited to speak at a prestigious meeting of EU military heads in Brussels even as his soldiers were raping and murdering Rohingya in Rakhine State. Italy, Germany and Austria all subsequently gave him red carpet tours of their countries, including visiting military suppliers.

As each new step was taken to deny the Rohingya their rights, the UN and EU not only did nothing, they lifted existing sanctions and pressures, and moved closer to the government and its military backers with increasing support. The British government even provided training. The message understood by the military was

clear. No matter what they do to the Rohingya, they will not face any consequences. This failure to defend the human rights of the Rohingya enabled the crisis that has now unfolded.

Bangladesh now hosts around a million Rohingya refugees, almost three times as many Rohingya as are left in Burma. The costs to the international community for basic aid to these people will be half a billion dollars for the first six months of support alone. The price paid by the Rohingya for the failures of the UN and EU is much higher: thousands killed, thousands more injured, almost an entire race displaced from its homeland.

It is understandable that the international community focus initially on the desperate humanitarian situation, but that should not mean overlooking the culpability of the UN, EU and others in allowing this preventable crisis to unfold. There are lessons to be learned that could prevent similar crises around the world in years to come. ●

Mexico's refugee tradition is being sorely tested



Legitimate asylum-seekers present a huge administrative challenge in terms of understanding each case

Gustavo Mohar, CEO of Grupo Atalaya

Mexican foreign policy is based on the principles of the peaceful resolution of conflict, the protection of human rights and non-interference in the domestic issues of other countries. These values are derived from our own historical experiences. Over the course of the 19th Century, Mexico suffered a series of armed invasions at the hands of the United States, losing half our territory. Subsequently, the Revolution that took place from 1910 to 1921 reinforced a national consensus in favour of social justice and the defence of the less privileged. From these beginnings, Mexico has developed a long tradition of welcoming refugees.

Throughout the 20th century, several social and political crises, especially but not only in Latin America, pushed thousands of people to Mexico seeking sanctuary from civil wars, dictatorships and coups d'état. Beginning with the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, Mexico received close to 76,000 refugees. Many of them were minors sent alone by their parents and they would never return to their country of birth.

In the '70s, military coups in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay unleashed an onslaught of repression against those considered 'dissidents'. Thousands of young men and woman were



arrested, tortured and made to disappear without a trace. The Mexican embassies became shelters for many persecuted families. In the '80s, Guatemala likewise suffered a dark period known as the Dirty War, in which close to 80,000 Guatemalan peasants fled to Mexico's southern border, where they lived for several years.

This historical background informs Mexico's approach today, as the country faces an unprecedented number of asylum-seekers arriving from Central America. In 2011, the Law on Refugees and Complementary Protection was enacted by the Mexican Congress and has

been recognised by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for its compliance with international law and standards. But the scale of the problem is overwhelming.

Most immigrants come from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, countries witnessing extensive violence due to the presence of drug traffickers and other criminal gangs. Comingled with tens of thousands of economic migrants, these legitimate asylum-seekers present a huge administrative challenge in terms of understanding each case. According to the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance,

“Mexico should insist to the US that an effective solution for economic and refugee immigration can only materialise if both countries agree to invest in ... sustainable development”

8,703 requests for asylum were filed between January and August of this year, with only 1,007 granted approval – 4,690 claims have yet to be processed.

Mexico could soon become a country of destination for thousands more Central Americans, which represents a fundamental structural change that will require a new approach to the international migration realities that Mexico has never experienced. For one thing, Mexico lacks the physical infrastructure to host such an influx or even to channel families and individuals through the country.

Culturally, modern-day Mexicans do not know what receiving substantial numbers of foreigners entails. Since 1915, foreign nationals residing in Mexico have represented no more than 1% of the total population. Mexico’s legal framework, institutional capabilities and social attitudes will face a severe test if the security crises across

Central America generate a greater exodus of refugees and/or economic opportunities fail to materialise in countries to our south.

Also in the mix are undocumented migrants trying to reach the United States, creating a geopolitical dilemma for Mexico as a transit nation, especially when considering the minors travelling alone with hopes of reaching their parents in the US. The United States has been stressing the need for Mexico to strengthen controls across its southern border to prevent the massive arrival of Central Americans from pressuring their own border. But there has been nowhere near enough financial or physical support for Mexico to perform such a request. Mexico should insist to the US that an effective solution for economic and refugee immigration can only materialise if both countries agree to invest in the sustainable development of Central America’s economic and legal institutions so as to counteract organised crime and gradually establish a robust rule of law.

As in other regions of the world, refugee policy is a highly contested political issue. Civil society organisations, the media and opposition parties accuse the Mexican government of bowing to US interests instead of enforcing Mexican law in a fair and objective way. Time will tell if the Mexican government has what it takes to keep its tradition of being a welcoming place for people running to save their lives or if it will concede to geopolitical pressures contrary to its own traditions. ●

Brazil's asylum system is lethally out of date



Brazil's asylum system has not undergone any structural changes since 1997

Robert Muggah, Co-founder of the Igarapé Institute

Maiara Folly, Researcher at the Igarapé Institute

Brazil is at the front-line of one of the most serious refugee crises in decades. The economic and political turmoil in neighbouring Venezuela has displaced thousands in search of basic survival – food and medicine. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that as many as 30,000 Venezuelans are eking out an existence in Brazil, many of them without official status.

Between January and October of this year, around 14,000 Venezuelans applied for asylum, compared to 3,375 in 2016, 829 in 2015, and just 209 in 2014. Roughly 150 new claims are

being received every day. The situation for the new arrivals is dire. Yet the issue is simply not a high priority in a country distracted by economic turmoil and political scandal. Instead, refugees are left to fend for themselves with a crutch from faith-based charities and NGOs.

For the most part, refugees are living on the streets in improvised shelters. Many have contracted diseases associated with poor living conditions and rely on overstretched and understaffed hospitals. Human Rights Watch reports that almost 2,000 migrants contracted malaria in 2016. The number



of Venezuelan women seeking maternity care has also sky-rocketed, as have reports of kidnappings, rape and trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Considering the gravity of the situation, Brazil's humanitarian response has been surprisingly limited. UNHCR has increased its presence at the border and supported local authorities and the Brazilian federal government in designing an emergency plan. And after months of delay, the strategy finally became public in late August. One of the most significant commitments was the construction of temporary shelters in the border village of Pacaraima, where Venezuelans are camping on the streets in filthy conditions, with children playing in the rubbish.

Federal authorities have also committed to providing six months' rent to non-indigenous Venezuelans living in Boa Vista, the capital of Roraima state. The municipality also announced plans to hire Venezuelan teachers and include Spanish in all of its public schools. City authorities are also opening an information centre to provide legal advice to Venezuelans.

To alleviate pressure on fragile border cities, the federal government is considering using the Brazilian Air Force to relocate migrants to other parts of the country. However, human rights activists fear that the relocation efforts may not be pursued on a voluntary basis, which is a major cause for concern. In addition to the failed attempt to extradite around 450 Venezuelans in December 2016, state security forces have more recently forcibly removed

another 500 Venezuelan migrants who were living at Boa Vista's international bus station, and allocated them to an extremely precarious and isolated football stadium.

Furthermore, many officials are concerned that immigrants are not only burdensome but an electoral liability. Some local authorities have called for asylum requests from Venezuelans to be denied, and even for the border to be closed. As an election year approaches, there are signs that such proposals could be increasingly embraced by populist politicians. In a continent-sized country such as Brazil, asylum processing and refugee assistance cannot be restricted to just two or three compliant cities as is currently the case. States and municipalities must be incentivised to step-up and work in a coordinated manner.

Brazil needs to deliver on its commitment to develop a new resettlement programme. Previous initiatives were fully funded by UNHCR and offered few places relative to Brazil's sheer size and potential. In almost 15 years, no more than 800 refugees have been resettled in the country. With international funding waning, Brazil has not resettled a single claimant for

“With no digital system in place, no one actually knows how many asylum-seekers are in Brazil”

14 months. An enlarged programme targeting particularly vulnerable groups and involving all levels of government, private companies, civil society and international organisations is critical, and could serve as a model for Latin America.

Crafting a more coherent strategy is not just a matter of “doing the right thing”; there are stark implications of Brazilian inaction. For one thing, Brazil has no federal institution devoted to migration. As a result, relevant skills and resources are scattered across different ministries. Astonishingly, the national asylum system has not undergone any structural change since 1997, when Brazil received fewer than 500 asylum claims a year. At the moment, fewer than ten case workers process new claims. Unsurprisingly there is a backlog of over 35,000 asylum cases.

Particularly disconcerting is the fact that Brazil has no digital system in place to track its migrant and refugee population. No one actually knows how many asylum-seekers and refugees are in Brazil. There is no centralised information repository with refugees’ nationalities, age or gender, let alone their protection needs. If Brazil wishes to upgrade its system for the 21st Century, it needs at the very least a unified database. Information should be gathered at entry and exit points,

processed at the federal level and then used to drive informed public policies.

As a sign of progress, the country’s National Immigration Council approved a resolution in March allowing immigrants from all bordering countries to apply for two-year temporary resident permits. While measures such as this are commendable, they are flawed. For instance, although the temporary residence application is straightforward in principle, it requires immigrants to submit documents that are inaccessible to most new arrivals. And while a recent judicial decision exempted Venezuelans from paying the permit’s high fees, most migrants lack access to basic information on the pros and cons of residency versus political asylum.

Reactionary nationalism is on a global rise with more border walls and security fences continuing to be built against migrants. It is imperative that Brazil be different and match the rhetoric of an open-door policy with real improvements in the management of refugee protection and resettlement. Venezuela’s current crisis provides Brazil with an opportunity to enact necessary changes and to honour its tradition as a defender of those who are poor and vulnerable. ●

Iraq's peaceful future depends on new schools



Children often work selling water at nearby military checkpoints to earn an income for their families

Alexandra Saieh, Advocacy Manager for the Norwegian Refugee Council in Iraq

After three years of brutal ISIS rule, the Iraqi army backed by the mostly-Shiite militias of the Popular Mobilization Forces retook Hawija city in September. Although the Iraqi government is now firmly in control, many families will not return home anytime soon.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) spoke to families who had just fled their homes in Hawija to camps near the city of Kirkuk. Sitting in Daquq camp, one Iraqi woman who fled two days prior said she was happy to be free from militant rule but scared of what the future may bring, scared of returning home. The same day, a number of women told us the last time

their children went to school was in 2013, the same year clashes between anti-government protestors and Iraqi security forces turned deadly, fuelling anti-government sentiment amongst residents in the town.

Looking west to Anbar province, the reality of prolonged displacement is clear. Fallujah and Ramadi, majority-Sunni cities, were some of the first to fall to ISIS. The same cities were among the first to be retaken by the Iraqi government more than a year and a half ago. The area then became a test case for the government's ability to rebuild and reintegrate its citizens following years of ISIS rule. But in Anbar province, about



130,000 people still live in camps, often with inadequate shelter and services, minimal support from aid organisations and heavily restricted movement.

NRC is one of the few humanitarian organisations that deliver life-saving aid at a displacement camp in Anbar called Kilo 18. Our teams there provide water, toiletries, mattresses and other basics for people who have fled ISIS-held areas. The “temporary” site hosts internally displaced Iraqis in one of the world’s harshest environments. Temperatures top 50°C in the summer, and as well as being

crowded and under serviced, local authorities prevent people from moving in and out. The reasons for these restrictions are numerous but the widely held perception amongst the surrounding communities is that these families have links to ISIS. As a consequence, their personal security is seriously threatened.

Many people from nearby Ramadi, which was retaken by the Iraqi government almost two years ago, have not been able to return home. Displaced families must be screened by Iraqi security before being allowed to return home, and many people have no idea when this will

happen. Without security clearance, people remain in camps for an indefinite amount of time, effectively living in detention.

In other cases, families may not have a home to return to because it was destroyed by airstrikes or fighting between ISIS and Iraqi security forces. While the rebuilding and reconstruction process has started, a lack of funds means that it is progressing slowly. In other cases, the authorities have relocated families involuntarily in order to accommodate others.

Such uncertainty is one of the biggest challenges that humanitarian organisations face in serving these people. The unpredictable nature of the transit site means that providing anything more than informal education is nearly impossible. To make matters worse, the Department of Education in Anbar does not have the funds to pay teachers or support formal schools. The lack of freedom of movement and high transport costs pose additional barriers for children to receive education. Parents are often forced to send their children to work selling tea and water at nearby military checkpoints to earn an income for their families.

In Kilo 18, there are no secondary schools or youth programmes, leaving teenage boys idle and disengaged. They sometimes take up odd jobs to earn money for their families or resort to negative coping mechanisms such as violence. This is a consistent problem across Iraq where nearly 3.7 million children and young people attend school irregularly or not at all. Those who lived under ISIS have lost up to three years of schooling while boys who attended ISIS schools

“Idle young people will resort to violence”

have received a radicalised curriculum. The longer these children are out of school, the less likely they will be able to reintegrate successfully.

Two key measures can be taken by humanitarian organisations, the Iraqi authorities and foreign governments. First, it must be acknowledged that these sites are anything but temporary. Doing so will mean education can be scaled-up, particularly for those who have lost three or more years of schooling. This should include catch-up classes and psychosocial support in displacement camps and transit sites like Kilo 18. Second, in recognition that idle young people will resort to violence, youth-friendly and youth-led activities such as skills-building and sport must be provided to lay a positive foundation for livelihoods and to rebuild community cohesion in the future.

Many families told us they fled areas under ISIS control expecting to find safety and freedom. They instead often found themselves confined in a camp or transit site for an indefinite amount of time with an unknown future. Iraqi authorities must ensure these people are protected while their basic rights such as freedom of movement are upheld. Meanwhile, the Iraqi government, together with humanitarian organisations and donor governments, must ensure these families have basic services including while they remain displaced. ●

PART 3

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES



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Is global **migration governance** finally here?



Current international frameworks are not fit to handle such a complex phenomenon as migration

Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

A great deal of attention is being given to migration by governments, the media and citizens. Governments, though, still lack the capacity to manage migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner that fosters its positive aspects and limits the negative, while respecting and promoting the human rights and other rights of migrants. Lack of accurate data, factual errors, myths, scare-mongering and political opportunism do not facilitate the task. It is clear that migration cannot be seen only from a national perspective and governed exclusively with national measures; it requires international cooperation.

While multilateral institutions responsible for transboundary matters such as human rights, trade, health, labour, security and climate change have integrated aspects specific to migration, these are often developed without a holistic and integral understanding of the phenomenon's complexities. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), with its broad presence throughout the world, its almost universal membership, and as the only intergovernmental organisation whose mandate relates exclusively to migration, has been recognised by its membership as leading the field. IOM is dedicated to promoting humane



and orderly migration for the benefit of all, and does so by providing advice, assistance and services to governments and migrants, and working closely with other intergovernmental and NGO partners.

Despite this, and the regional and international dimensions that cannot be ignored, there is paradoxically no institutional framework that coherently regulates international migration. Nor is there an international organisation with the mandate to create such standards. In the absence of a formally established top-down system of global migration governance, a bottom-up approach has arisen, composed of ad hoc rules and informal cooperation mechanisms to which states selectively adhere.

At the global level, a variety of fora, conferences and coordination mechanisms have been created on migration-related issues such as

the 1994 Conference on Population Dynamics in Cairo, the Global Commission on International Migration and the Global Migration Group, the 2006 and 2013 UN High Level Dialogues on migration and development, the IOM Dialogues on International Migration, and the Global Forum on Migration and Development. At regional level, a series of consultative processes have been created as informal and non-binding discussion fora. These processes have been productive in building understanding, confidence and, in some cases, agreement on practical migration measures. The result is a complex and disparate system of parallel processes and entities dealing with migration matters at global, regional and sub-regional levels.

Recently, two major developments have dramatically impacted the global migration governance discourse. First, migration's inclusion as a goal of the Sustainable

Development Agenda, specifically to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration”, places the issue within a crosscutting agenda that strives to benefit all and “leave no one behind”. Migration and human displacement also featured in the Paris Agreement – with broad recognition of migration as a means of prevention, response and adaptation to climate change – and in the follow-up to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. A third and most prominent development has been the New York Declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 19 September 2016, in which 193 heads of state and government reiterated their commitment to the rights and protection of migrants and refugees, recognised their shared responsibility to manage large movements of refugees and migrants in a human, sensitive, and people-centred way, committed to address the root-causes of large population movements, strongly condemned racism and discrimination against refugees and migrants, and strengthened the global governance of migration by bringing IOM into the UN system.

The New York Declaration also includes plans to start negotiating the adoption of two Global Compacts, one on refugees and another for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM) to be adopted in 2018. The agreement offers the unique opportunity to establish the foundations of a comprehensive and holistic framework governing migration, including its humanitarian, development, human rights, climate change, and peace and security dimensions. The promise of the GCM is that migration, like other areas of international relations, will at last be

guided by a set of common principles and approaches. The GCM is expected to include not only actionable commitments, but also means of implementation and a framework or institutional architecture to follow up and review its implementation.

This new institutional architecture requires, in my opinion, the creation of a mechanism whereby states, relevant UN organisations, civil society, the private sector and academia can collaboratively ensure, first, that the technical assistance and capacity building required to implement the commitments is available to states and other actors; second, that progress on implementation is periodically reviewed and assessed; and third, that the sharing of experiences and best practices continues to be facilitated, with further discussion on outstanding or future critical migratory issues. Fundamental to this mechanism is enhanced interagency coordination at the global, regional and national levels to ensure that relevant expertise is available, but also to support synergies with other UN-coordinated capacity building, policy development and technical work, particularly towards the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.

While current international structures and frameworks are not fit to handle such a complex phenomenon as migration, we are today, for the first time, on the cusp of a real opportunity to move forward. Given the stakes for hundreds of millions of people, their families and societies, and the challenges faced by governments, we simply cannot fail to bring this Global Compact for Migration to fruition worldwide. ●

The double-edged sword of **climate change** migration in the **Asia-Pacific**



... there are no silver bullets in this policy area

Matthew Dornan, Deputy Director of the Development Policy Centre at the Australian National University Crawford School of Public Policy

Hedda Ransan-Cooper, Post-doctoral Fellow at the Australian National University

Despite decades of strong economic growth, the Asia-Pacific region is still home to a majority of the world's poor. The often precarious livelihoods of these women, men and children makes them especially defenceless against the threat of intensifying natural disasters, sea-level rise and other changes wrought by increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Consecutive reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have warned that poor people are likely to be impacted most

severely by the changing climate. Populations in countries with large delta flood plains, like Bangladesh as well as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific, have been identified as exceptionally vulnerable. In this context, migration offers an important coping mechanism for those affected, but also has the potential to create new problems in and of itself.

International and internal migration can help to reduce the economic and social pressures faced by areas severely affected by climate



change. In the case of some SIDS, whose very existence is threatened by rising sea levels, international migration may be the only long-term adaptation strategy available. Internal migration, which is far more widespread than international movements, is also important. For example, resettlement has the potential to help those stricken by disasters and slow-onset climate change impacts.

But both forms of migration have the potential to heighten vulnerability by forcing households to move to marginal land, to consume unsafe water or food, or to move to countries or regions where they do not enjoy legal protections. Migration can also exacerbate tensions where one group moves into geographical or business areas dominated by another.

Migration experiences and effects are commonly not attributed to climate change. Yet the underlying causes are a complex mix of economic, social, cultural and climate-related factors, all of which are inter-related, with climate change playing a driving role. This point is evident from the growing intensity of cyclones hitting SIDS in the Pacific over the last decade.

The relationship between migration and climate change is undoubtedly complicated, and further research is needed to better understand the nexus between migration, climate change adaptation and development in order to inform policy responses. What we can say is that, because migration is often the only available coping strategy, restricting the migration options of households and individuals can undermine

adaptation, increasing the adverse impacts of climate change and causing more harm than good.

The risks and challenges associated with migration nonetheless need to be managed. Lessons from decades of experience in migration policy point to the importance of orderly and planned migration, as well as to the benefits for human development from migration that is voluntary and supported by robust legal protections and safeguards. We need to be wary of migration that is maladaptive – that could increase migrants' exposure to a range of risks. Regional cooperation will be critical here.

Dialogue emerging from the Global Compact for Migration already puts inter-governmental cooperation squarely on the agenda. As a result, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has been formally recognised as part of the United Nations. Together with state actors, diaspora groups and other civil society migration groups, the Global Compact is tasked with facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration. In the Pacific Islands, many countries have recently joined the IOM as member states with active requests for lessons on how to manage migration in a changing climate.

Finding policy solutions is extremely challenging, not least due to the politicised nature of migration in many countries. A platform for thoughtful and transparent dialogue both within and between countries is needed to build trust so long-term solutions can be developed. We also need to ensure communities that we anticipate will move are not neglected in the lead up to their

probable relocations. Holistic perspectives are required that make sure migrants not only have legal protection, but also that they can thrive from a human development perspective. This will necessitate inter-agency cooperation and a breaking down of silos within governments across all relevant policy areas.

As we have learned from the mixed experiences of migration worldwide, there are no silver bullets in this policy area. Moving between countries is a complex human endeavour that will inevitably result in both positive and negative impacts. The maintenance of a productive and respectful dialogue between migrants, researchers and policy actors is critical for making sure migration brings positive outcomes as a sustainable climate change adaptation pathway. ●

“Consecutive reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have warned that poor people are likely to be impacted most severely by the changing climate”



Remittance regulations are backfiring for security



Remittances are a lifeline, a strong alleviator of poverty

Leon Isaacs, Joint-CEO at Developing Market Associates

Remittances, the money migrants send home, are a vital lifeline for a billion people around the world. It is estimated that over two billion remittance transactions (averaging less than \$300) are made each year. The World Bank estimates that \$429bn was sent to developing countries through formal channels in 2016 alone.

The term “formal channels” is critical here, as it means using licenced operators at both ends of a transfer. It is estimated, however, that there is at least another \$300bn that could be going illegally or informally. This occurs for several reasons and is problematic for people wanting

to send money as well as for policymakers. There are measures that can be taken to address parts of the challenge but there are no easy solutions.

It is important not to forget that remittances are a lifeline for most migrants as a strong alleviator of poverty. They are private funds sent by people who want to take responsibility for improving their family’s economic future. It is therefore important that the transfers are safe, legal, fast and reasonably priced.

In Europe, the regulatory regimes covering remittances – the Payments Services Directive



and the E-Money Directive – ensure legal protections are available to senders and receivers. This includes making sure that money is safe, transactions are transparent, redress procedures exist and data is protected. For policymakers, regulations mean that transactions are screened for Anti Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing (AML/CFT) compliance. It is vital for regulators to see if funds are being used for illicit purposes, be they the funding of terrorism, tax evasion or other nefarious purposes.

The AML/CFT considerations have risen to the top of policymakers' priority list. While this

is understandable, it has meant that AML/CFT concerns have won out against the development benefits of remittances. This is short-sighted and has led to a number of restrictions on people's ability to send money through formal channels. It therefore makes it harder for long-term development in the regions migrants are coming from.

Unfortunately, not all migrants can use legal remittance services, and of course some choose not to. One of the reasons why some transactions go through informal/illegal channels is that in most EU countries you not only need to produce formal identification documents,

“Some people actually choose illegal operators because they offer a better service”

but you must also show that you are legally in the country. For those who cannot do this, there is no choice but to use an illegal operator.

Some people actually choose illegal operators because they offer a better service than regulated businesses. The service standards are different depending on where you want to send the money, and some illegal operators offer faster, cheaper and more convenient services. For some, use of these “Hawala” operators occurs because they are more trusted in their community than the brand names we are familiar with.

There are also those who choose to transfer their money through illegal operators because they have something to hide from the authorities. By their very nature, illegal transfers are beyond the oversight of policymakers and present a real threat, particularly if money is being transferred to fund terrorist actions. It is therefore alarming when policy decisions lead to more illegal/informal transactions. In the current environment, the requirements put on companies sending a remittance transaction of a few hundred dollars is not significantly different from transactions of millions of dollars. This puts onerous requirements on business and individuals that serve migrant remittances. More proportionate regulation is required.

If a person is not able to send \$200 through formal channels because they cannot prove they are resident in a country, it would be totally naïve to think they will not send money at all. Instead they will use another method such as sending cash through a friend, using a contact’s bank account, Hawala, hand smuggling and so on. Disproportionate regulations can ensure authorities will lose sight of a large volume of transactions that would otherwise be in clear sight. Significant fines on banks for perceived misdemeanours in AML/CFT practices, particularly in the US, have seen banks close the accounts of many money transfer companies in a practice known as de-risking.

This has particularly affected transfers to countries such as Somalia, where the AML risk is considered too great. The policy has forced more transactions into illegal channels, an effect directly opposite from the intention. There are no easy fixes or a one-size-fits-all approach. What we need is proportionate regulation that sets lower levels of due diligence for lower value transactions, and that encourages transactions from the informal into the formal sectors. Remittance companies can play their part by ensuring they offer low-priced, safe, fast and convenient remittances.

The key is to ensure that we have dependable oversight and intelligence on all transactions, not just those that are easy. The current regulatory situation forces more remittances from the formal into the illegal sector, which is going to produce dangerous results that could adversely affect the security of all of us. ●

Forget the media's hate.

The true story is one of cultural convergence



Prejudice is a global security threat

Paul Walton, Head of the Executive Office of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures

Despite prevailing political and media narratives, people on the north and south of the Mediterranean have positive perceptions of each other and believe that their “shared way of life and hospitality” outranks migration, instability and sources of conflict as key qualities associated with the region. This is the surprising conclusion of the latest Anna Lindh Foundation report on public attitudes to intercultural relations. Based on a 13-country poll carried out by Ipsos-MORI – the third of its kind since 2010 – the report exposes positive trends in terms of adherence by the majority to the values at the core of the European project.

The study points out that there is more convergence than divergence on fundamental values and real willingness to live together with the acceptance of cultural differences between Europeans and people in the south and east of the Mediterranean.

More than seven in ten people surveyed in Europe and its Mediterranean neighbourhood responded that they would “not mind at all” working with a person from a different cultural background, having them as a neighbour, having their children attend the local school or marrying into their family. While the findings from



individual countries vary (the most welcoming respondents found in France, Portugal and Tunisia), the survey exposes that the values of citizens continues to give great importance to the acceptance of diversity.

All these findings are, of course, set against a backdrop of a political-led discourse that depicts the Mediterranean as riven with conflict over refugees and migrants, political instability and a so-called clash of civilisations. The findings expose a much greater public sense of media negativity from the north in the south, and consequently a greater demand for better media training and education to counteract it.

Mobility is also still a defining issue, with evidence of a growing appetite for cultural exchanges between civil societies to the south and north of the Mediterranean. How this demand interrelates with the reality that barriers to mobility are increasing in the region is critical. Prejudice is a global security threat, and access to cultural mobility at scale can be central to challenging the distorted perceptions fuelled by ignorance.

Indeed, watching events unfold from Alexandria, Europeans appear fearful. They seem afraid to lose their well-being, security and peace in everyday life. This conclusion, which finds

some correlation in the political field through the manipulation of identities – wrongly that they are endangered by migrants or by loss of sovereignty to the EU – might have an impact on the prioritisation of values by citizens and the perception of the other.

An initial analysis of the survey results provides a number of recommendations for policymakers and civil society leaders alike.

First, intercultural citizenship learning should be embedded in both formal and informal education with urgency. This is about taking the long-term approach: to invest in successive generations, arguably an investment in our evolution, and enable learners to transform themselves and society. We need to sow the seeds of change by empowering young women and men with the skills and attitudes to engage with one another constructively across lines of difference, promoting shared values of equality, respect and dialogue. It is equally essential for intercultural education to include the current world situation, explaining why refugees are fleeing their homes and provide data on the impact of immigrants on local stability, economy and culture.

Second, the focus should shift to cities and local authorities. The successful city of the future will present a landscape where intercultural encounters provide openings for new forms of expression and creative enterprise to develop social and commercial networks, and eventually new realities of diversity. It is at the local level that intercultural dialogue can be portrayed and understood as an obligatory element

“It is time for us to speak up and act together”

for multilevel flourishing cultures, sustainable prosperity and, above all, a better quality of life.

Third, a research- and evidence-based approach should be taken to the media, promoting how to frame a story in a way that gives appropriate context to migration and provides space for more positive interactions. In an era of alternative facts, access to data with no external interpretation is essential so viewers can understand just how reality varies from the provocative headlines often found in mainstream media or the distorted visions that can characterise online sources. Equally important is to facilitate stable spaces for journalists of the region, supporting practitioners to reflect critically on cross-cultural reporting, promoting joint media exercises, and engaging at the level of owners and editors who may be increasingly motivated to address growing distrust in the media.

Voices supporting the convergence of values are all too quiet compared to those who cite a clash of civilisations. It is time for us to speak up and act together, so the reality of positive interaction can make it to the mainstream. ●

Fixing refugee **women's** unequal access to information, legal representation and decision making power in Europe



The Istanbul Convention is a step in the right direction, but symbolic efforts cannot stand alone

Evelien Wauters, Human Rights and Refugee Law Expert at Women Refugee Route (WRR)

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Women make up half of displaced people around the world yet there is no adequate gender dimension in the migration discourse. Policy and practice often overlook gender considerations or associate women as vulnerable sufferers of uneven development.

These perspectives not only fail to understand women as individuals in their particular social or cultural context but equally overlook their potential as actors of change for themselves and others. To provide adequate opportunities for these women as well as support their individual and collective actions, these constructs should be disentangled and dominant platitudes rebutted.

Service providers in the field should integrate a gender dimension into their organisations and recognise women as more than mere objects of charity. Women in a refugee situation are often homogenised and portrayed as oppressed monolithic subjects, ignoring their individual and varied subjectivities and potential to take action and make choices. Their political, economic and social agency should be put front and centre. In this sense, a decolonised feminist perspective on the empowerment of women in law, policy and practice is greatly lacking for women in a refugee situation.



The empowerment of women should take place at several levels. In order to address the need for a more gender-nuanced approach to migration and asylum policies, women should not only be included in decision-making processes but an effort should be made to alter the discourse and implement gender-sensitive policies. The implementation and ratification of conventions and guidelines, such as the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and the 1991 UNHCR guidelines on the protection of refugee women are important steps in the right direction by expressing the needs of women who are subject to violence. However, symbolic efforts

cannot stand alone. Empowering women in a refugee situation also requires streamlined protection, information and assistance at all stages of the migratory route.

Through experience and knowledge acquired through working with refugee women on the ground, and in close cooperation with NGOs and other institutions, Women Refugee Route (WRR) is implementing multiple measures to empower refugee women and those working with them. This is achieved not only through the training of volunteers or professionals but also by influencing the policies affecting refugee women so as to apply a more gender-sensitive perspective.

All actors involved should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming this gender perspective into all policies and programmes. Each decision and policy must be subject to prior analysis, assessing its effects on women and men respectively. Practice shows that volunteers often possess the necessary skills to provide support to vulnerable groups but rarely have the training to approach each case in its specificity.

The objective here is for displaced women and girls to receive access to the necessary support and crucial information that can help them determine their future. Secondly, awareness must be spread concerning the additional barriers refugee women face: frequent exposure to gender-based violence and sexual assault. In addition, they are at a statistically high risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

Too often, decisions affecting the lives of these women are being made without taking their perspective into consideration. We are aiming to provide refugee women with the relevant training and tools to claim equal representation in all decision-making fora. Refugee women themselves may be empowered through access to information, knowledge on their legal status and rights, the building of a relevant skillset, the establishment of support networks and advocacy tools.

Another important measure is the creation of safe spaces, free from violence. The effective prevention of and response to sexual harassment and all other forms of gender-based

violence is crucial to the free movement and self-determination of women. Safety together with physical and psychological integrity should be promoted by unconditional access to health services including reproductive and sexual healthcare. When planning these services, particular thought should be given to the health needs of trans and non-binary people, and the specific barriers they may face.

To fight inequality and protect the human rights of refugee women, gender inequality must be addressed in all fields related to migration, including development. Any form of structural inequality plays a great role in forcing women into subordinate roles in society, preventing them from fully accessing services and gaining autonomy. In a nutshell, gender mainstreaming refugee policies must become part of the general practice.

As a start, gender-segregated data needs collecting to gain a clear overview of the problems at stake. Next, the silence surrounding the specifics of women's situations needs to be broken. This may be implemented by applying gender-positive actions to give specific attention to women, and by including men and women in a broad discussion questioning the way decision-making takes place in refugee policies. Lastly, a control mechanism should be applied to ensure that different initiatives are practically put in place and that faults can be remedied. Imposing a structured system of reporting or organising a gender committee would see this task achieved. ●

PART 4

RECOMMENDATIONS



These recommendations draw on the viewpoints and ideas presented by the authors of the articles in this discussion paper.

EXPAND AND IMPROVE LEGAL OPTIONS

To improve security, governments must do much more to introduce or improve policies which allow for legal migration. Migrants and refugees often face a limited selection of legal options when they are forced to leave - or choose to leave - their homes. Stringent identification and documentation requirements, long waiting times, processing fees and similar restrictions can prevent people from seeking safe, legal migration routes. As a result, many – including the most vulnerable groups, women and children - must choose to pursue more dangerous means of escape and often end up in the hands of unscrupulous human traffickers. Safe and legal avenues which take into account the security of migrants and refugees as well as the realities of immigration and asylum processes should be expanded and improved.

TAKE THE LONG VIEW

There is no “migration crisis”. As such, applying short-term, deterrence-based policies is not a sustainable solution to a phenomenon which cannot – and should not – be wished away. Governments and other actors in the migration debate must take a comprehensive and long-term approach covering both

“push and pull” factors. This should include a focus on sustainable development, efforts to boost economic resilience and ensure good governance. Such efforts increase the legitimate options for would-be migrants at home, preventing them from seeking income via illegal and dangerous means. Countries which host migrants and refugees must also invest in their long-term future, including better integration and work options. Such an approach will ultimately serve to improve the safety and security of both migrants and host societies by ensuring a more cohesive society that is less prone to radicalisation.

CREATE INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMMES WHERE THEY DO NOT EXIST – AND EVALUATE THEM WHERE THEY DO

Many countries do not have the tools required to handle the evolving global migration situation. Without proper institutions which can manage and respond to migratory movements or adequate systems to track the number of migrant and refugee arrivals, countries cannot handle the movement of large numbers of people. This increases security risks, with reports of kidnapping and human trafficking.

Policies must be adaptable enough to respond to changes in population flows. This will require the flexibility to evolve and to update existing institutions as well as the regular evaluation of ongoing programmes. The efficient collection of data and information is a crucial first step.

HOLD INSTITUTIONS AND COUNTRIES ACCOUNTABLE

Countries which fail to engage constructively in managing global migration and refugee flows should be challenged and held accountable. This is true of EU countries which are not doing their share in playing host to recently-arrived refugees and migrants, some Western Balkan countries in which refugees have been subject to violence and countries like Myanmar which are engaged in a deliberate policy of repression and persecution of their Rohingya population. Special attention should be paid to the needs of women and children migrants which are the most vulnerable.

ENHANCE COORDINATION AND COOPERATION AT ALL LEVELS

Migration is a global issue. Institutions and states must work together across international, regional, national and local levels to ensure that they complement each other. This includes the sharing of information and exchange of

good practice and experiences. Relevant stakeholders will need to break out of their 'silos' and engage across sectors. This is the case of the improved information-sharing between military and law enforcement initiated by Europol. At the same time, recognising that migration's greatest impact is at the local level, institutions and states must provide much-needed support to local authorities in cities which have a leading role in ensuring the security and integration of migrants.

PROVIDE ACCESS TO UNBIASED DATA

In an age of 'fake news' and disinformation, those espousing the often toxic narrative surrounding migration have found an ideal soapbox. In order to change the narrative and to highlight the realities of migration, it is vital that people have access to reliable and well-researched data on the impact of immigration on local economies and cultures, as well as on safety and security risks. At the same time, migrants and refugees should have access to reliable information to ensure their security before, during and after they leave their countries. Facts and data have value even in a 'post-truth' world, and can make all the difference in transforming the current corrosive narrative surrounding migration into a more positive one.



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