

MIGRATION, A CURRENT ISSUE: THE CRISIS OF TODAY, THE CHALLENGE OF TOMORROW

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Abstract

The present paper aims to portray a clear perspective of the problem of immigrants, who are arriving in Europe from the Middle East conflict zones (particularly Syria and Iraq) and from North Africa (mainly Libya). The causes that conducted to the development of such a phenomenon represent the motivation for choosing this theme, as well as its effects on the functionality of the EU at an institutional level and finally yet importantly the “trenchant” visions of the European public opinion, amplified by the mass media: the pros and cons of accepting the wave of refugees.

The author's approach aims to put in balance both the positive effects of the phenomenon on the European continent, as well as the negative ones. Positive effects might consist in obtaining additional work force, as Europe is currently facing a demographic aging phenomenon. Furthermore, from the perspective of EU citizens, who believe in the cohesion of the European institutions, the acceptance of refugees represents a basic value for unity and further on stands for the formation of a homogenous European Union, therefore emphasising the importance of each individual. On the other hand, analysing the matter in the most realistic possible way, the risk of potential terrorist penetration in Europe is quite high and unmanageable.

As a research method, we will use document analysis, referring to media articles and official documents. This phenomenon is particularly complex and the crisis result will depend on the effectiveness of the manner in which each national authority as well as the European ones will handle the issue.

Keywords

Acceptance; Humanitarian Crisis; Immigrant; Integration; War

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper is to address the refugee crisis which is of great importance to Europe at the present time; this immigration wave is an atypical one, unprecedented from the World War II, therefore it also unfolds in an atypical way, while the way it will end it is still unknown. In this paper, the author explains the reasons that make this new challenge a completely different one, alike the factors that influenced the course of the crisis from its beginning to the present time.

In order to achieve such an undertaking, in the theoretical section we will address Eric Stern's theory regarding the definition of crisis and we will demonstrate its applicability to the analysed crisis. Therefore, we will present the specific elements of a crisis, meaning the three components a certain phenomenon needs to have in order to be a crisis, for afterwards to briefly describe the essential characteristics of the conflict zones, the ones that practically caused this mass migration phenomenon. Conclusively, we will analyse the several models of perception at the European level concerning these new challenges as well as the measures taken in this regard.

From a methodology standpoint, this paper represents a document analysis, using media outlets as well as governmental institution sources. In order to provide a perspective on the problem, after the presentation of the theoretical part, the author will make a short summary on the key events, which occurred recently, taking into consideration the fact that regional wars are still unfolding. Subsequently, we will analyse the key points of European perception on the refugee issue, which is divided between two opposite poles: the pros and cons for accepting the current immigration wave. At the end of the paper, we will present four scenarios, which, from the point of view of the author, have real chances to materialize in the future, in the short and medium term, as well as in the long term. This part of the paper is purely creative and is based entirely on the personal assessment of the author regarding the future possible evolution of the refugee crisis.

Choosing this theme is due to the importance, which, from the author's point of view, the new immigration wave has upon Europe, in particular in terms of institutional cohesion at the EU level. Being a challenge of such high magnitude, it is essential to understand the succeeding stages and the obstacles faced throughout the crisis, in order to be able to expose as clear as possible the causes of the partial failure, and most especially the repercussions. The importance of fathoming the problem is doubled by the

powerful example that war can have both on the countries where it unfolds, as well as on the adjoining areas, which are not directly involved in the conflict.

Also, considering the negative consequences of war, measured both in terms of human life losses, but especially in terms of migration, in the current case it is extremely important to analyse how the issue of saving thousands of people fleeing from disaster is addressed, as well as the amendment, where possible, of the current legislation. This issue is one of particular relevance for Europe, which seems to have been caught unprepared for advancing an effective reaction to manage the situation. As a result, according to the author, it is necessary to address this problem both at a state level and at the EU level, in a collective manner, in order to maintain the institutional unity based on the founding principles of the European Union.

Beyond the intention to highlight the issues, which the author considers essential in building the paper, there are sources that will both confirm and even sometimes rescind the author's opinion. Hence results the complexity of the situation, since there is not just a single approach generally accepted by all the states affected by the immigration wave. The refugee crisis is particularly complex and for this reason, the issue of unidirectional feedback will be avoided. We will try to present objectively the events and to conduct a review, complying with the chosen theoretical framework, in order to elaborate a study material as pertinent as possible on such a difficult problem.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH. ARGUING WHY IS THE CURRENT MASS MIGRATION PHENOMENON A CRISIS, ACCORDING TO ERIC STERN'S DEFINITION OF THE CRISIS CONCEPT

XXIst century, Europe. Year 2015. Apparently, the events unfolding today in the international environment appear to be new, unprecedented, or at least encountered since the end of World War II, regarding both the refugee exodus towards Europe as well as the use of new warfare methods, hybrid type. However, history has shown us that the evolution process has a certain fluency following a logical flow of events, the principle of action-effect. We can also note here the refugee crisis that appears to be a challenge to the European political leadership, while long-term solutions are yet to be delivered.

We cannot look at the refugee crisis by just focusing on the borders of the European states and on the perception of collective mentality at local level (or at regional level). An overall view is required, one that would include at least Europe, Russia and the Middle East. The mechanism of the unfolding events works on the principle of communicating vessels, just as in the case of exact sciences. Therefore, related the causes of the immigration wave, beyond some media speculations that the whole process might be intentionally controlled, the main reason lies in the instability of the Middle East and North Africa region. Basically, due to the existing threats to vital existence, the right to survive.

Is this refugee exodus towards Europe a crisis in the true sense of the concept? To prove it, we will use the crisis definition provided by Eric Stern, namely that, when there is a sudden change of situation perceived by the decision maker in terms of three aspects: threat to fundamental values, state of emergency and state of uncertainty, we are facing a crisis situation (Stern 1999, 9).

We shall go on by demonstrating how Stern's theory is applicable in the context of the flux of refugees migrating towards Europe, transforming this phenomenon into a crisis.

According to the statistics provided by FRONTEX (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union) the number of refugees who entered in 2014 the territory of the European states was somewhere around 282 thousand. However, in 2015, only in the first nine months of the year, the number of immigrants entering Europe rose up to 710 thousand, almost three times more than the previous year (FRONTEX, November 13th, 2015).

Basically, to prove the applicability of Erik Stern's theory on the analysed crisis, the main condition of the author's definition, as stated above, namely to contain a sudden change of situation, is clear. Therefore, further on in our analysis we will enunciate the three aspects of a crisis, according to the theory above mentioned, namely:

- The threat to human fundamental values results from two aspects: the first consists in threats to the European institutions functionality, which do not seem prepared to deal with such a high immigrant influx entering the European territory in such a short time. It should be noted that we are referring not only to the administrative institutions, but to the overall assembly of institutions: the state and certain political and religious formations that may react in a xenophobic manner. Besides the institutions

mentioned above, we refer to the average citizens as well, who may also be affected by this crisis (through discrimination - against Muslim families that are already at the second or third generation in the host country, or - by inoculating the sense of "invasion", a feeling induced by certain extremist political factions which take advantage of the refugee crisis in order to grow in popularity). Thus, if these political parties manage to come into power, the Schengen area will be at risk as well as the freedom of movement within the EU, regardless of being Schengen member states or not. As a result, the fundamental value of the European citizens, consisting in the free movement of goods, people and capital across the EU, is threatened. If we are to refer to the death threats against the citizens from the states affected by war, the second aspect consists in a factor that leads to emigration as a matter of urgency, or else the citizens risk losing their lives.

- The state of emergency, from the EU's point of view, exists as the authorities act harder to manage effectively the integration of the refugees. The possibility of integrating the continuous flow of immigrants arriving in Europe in search of asylum decreases, while the feeling of xenophobia among the locals against immigrants increases, especially after the bloody attacks in Paris on November 13th, 2015. Furthermore, there is a clear need to take action as soon as possible since we are in full cold season and the number of refugees accommodated in inhumane conditions (some are living outdoors or with no medication available) is considerable, while the risk of frost or other diseases is very high (Topping, October 2nd, 2015).
- The state of uncertainty comes from the fact that at present time it is still unknown how this phenomenon will end and even more when it will end, since the Middle East and North Africa region (Libya) is continuously at war, an element that will cause a continuous emigration of residents from the respective areas.

Practically we have demonstrated how the inflow of the phenomenon of immigrants arriving daily in Europe follows the defining elements of a crisis, according to the theory of Eric Stern, hence the fact that we can refer, in the true sense of the word, to this phenomenon as to a crisis. However, in the following sections, we will present a "radiography" of the causes that led to the creation of this particular crisis, focusing on its impact on Europe.

3. THE CAUSES OF MIGRATION. CONTEXTUALIZING THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Middle East has experienced a security paradigm of violence and warfare for entire generations, and the causes are too many and too difficult to be able to analyse them in a few pages. The same paradigm of violence is present in the North Africa region as well, as there are, for example, numerous similarities between Libya and Iraq. The first similarity is that both countries are rich in oil. Although we are talking about countries that are rich in oil, their population is living only on the minimum wage, while the civil society hardly exists. Despite the fact that the population is poor, the political leaders of these states lived in luxury and wealth, while under their dictatorial regimes, the population was oppressed. Moreover, once with the removing of the dictators, both states have been seized by chaos and terrorism outbreaks.

Further on, it is not difficult to imagine that in such circumstances the local residents would try to emigrate, not necessarily for economic reasons, but rather to save their lives and to avoid death during the daily battles. However, in crisis situations speculators appear and identify easily new means for profit. We refer here to the traffickers from the respective areas, who claim exorbitant amounts of money, reported to the local purchasing power, in order to "guide" the local residents towards Europe, following routes that are not that secure¹ (*Le Temps*, May 12th, 2015).

We consider necessary to present a radiography of the main conflict areas in order to understand, in political and geopolitical terms, the complexity of the situation (we will make less reference to the cultural and psychosociological characteristics of the respective areas, since such an approach requires a separate work).

2.1. Iraq

Dictatorial state until 2003 under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, Iraq was considered a regional centre of power, in several cases provoking

¹ See the case of the Syrian child who drowned in the Mediterranean and was brought by the waves to the shores of Turkey, link: <http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/criza-imigrantilor/imaginea-care-a-zguduit-europa-un-baiat-sirian-de-3-ani-inecat-este-adus-de-valuri-la-tarmul-meditaranei-in-turcia.html> accessed on 14.11.2015.

regional conflicts that led even to the formation of international coalitions (the first Gulf War) or to the usage of chemical weapons (during the war against Iran, in the Persian Gulf, in the '80s). Once with the removal of Saddam Hussein from power, in 2003, the international environment wanted to establish a functioning, democratic Iraq. However, the bloody local history, stemming mainly from the religious conflicts between the Shia and the Sunni, facilitated instead the appearance of an instability outbreak in which various terrorist groups like Al Qaeda or more recently, the Islamic State, have encountered an environment favourable for their development.

Currently, the terrorist organization Islamic State controls an important area of the northern Iraq and the critical battles were fought in 2015, for gaining control on Mosul, the third largest city in the state. Regional instability has led to the weakening of almost all Iraq's national army, favouring instead the consolidation of Shiite militias, in order to counter the expansion of the Islamic State. Among the most significant Iraqi Shiite militias, we can mention The Badr Organization, Saraya al-Salam, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, Saraya Taleaa al-Khorasani and Kata'ib Imam Ali (Gulmohamad, April 17th, 2015).

From a geostrategic point of view, the situation becomes even more complicated, as there are other forces interested in expanding their state control in the area. For example, the militias mentioned earlier are subordinated to the Hashd al-Sha'abi movement, entity that is under the coordination of Iran (Gulmohamad, April 17th, 2015). Even more, an important ally of Iran is the Russian Federation, which, since September 2015, has launched a military offensive against the Islamic State in Syria. The hazards of the Russian military involvement in the Middle East are numerous and perhaps the most important is the risk of "accidental" collision on the field, between the Western forces and the Russian ones. Once again, the issue is complex and requires a separate approach.

Returning to Iraq, the Baghdad leadership may follow the Syrian model and the government in Baghdad may demand for military aid from the Russian Federation. The consequences would be detrimental not only to the region itself but to the entire Euro-Atlantic structure, since a more active involvement of Russia in the Middle East would strengthen its influence in the region and weaken the one of all Western states that have regional interests. Moreover, the dilution of Western presence in the Middle East would increase the state of chaos, as it has happened following the American withdrawal from Iraq or the one of the international coalition from Libya, since 2011. The fact

that Russia would become involved military will not ensure, from any point of view, the maintenance of order in Syria and Iraq. Moreover, if we are to draw a parallel with the current Ukrainian situation or with other interventions from the past (as the one in Afghanistan in the '80s), we can argue that Moscow's involvement beyond its borders, in whatever form (military intervention or through hybrid war), can produce only chaos. Such a situation would require a more active involvement of the United States (being the first military power in the world, with the greatest capacity to intervene) in order to prevent the conflict evolution, otherwise the risk of increasing tensions in the area would be very high. The state is grinded by conflicts and the course of events does not seem to follow a positive trend of evolution, which is why we are justified to believe that Iraq will henceforth generate waves of refugees for a long period. Being in the middle of a precarious security situation, living in a country that finds itself in a permanent state of war, people from these areas are now trying to flee danger and establish themselves in safe areas, in terms of military and economic aspects, such as the Western European states.

2.2. Syria

In Syria, the situation is even more complicated, since, on one hand, the political government in Damascus lost its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens, and on the other, in front of the West. Instead, it enjoys considerable support from Moscow, including through direct military intervention (Russian intervention in western Syria). Similar to the other totalitarian states in the region, Syria has been led by Bashar al-Assad (who currently has limited control) until the outbreak of a bloody civil war, which caused more than 100 thousand deaths in the last four years (according to the portal *I am Syria*, November 2015).

The dramatic characteristic of the situation is difficult to describe in a few lines, but in order to help us form an incipient image of the area, we must, for example, understand who are the actors operating in Syria. Therefore, we have the rebels fighting against Bashar al-Assad and at the same time against the Islamic State, the forces which are loyal to Bashar al-Assad, the Islamic State, the Western forces which support logistically and with air strikes the rebels fighting against the Islamic State and more recently, the Russian Federation, which fights against any threats posed to dictator Bashar al-Assad. These threats are coming not only from the Islamic State but also from the rebel groups supported by the West, which are fighting against the Syrian

leader. This fact can be easily understood from the Russians bombing actions on the Syrian city of Homs, as the city is not controlled by the forces of the Islamic State but by the groups fighting against Bashar al-Assad (Gulmohamad, April 17th, 2015).

The Kurds, the spearhead in the fight against the Islamic State, could try to benefit from the conflicting policies between the United States, Russia and Turkey. While the United States aim at defeating the Islamic State, Russia tries primarily to defend its interests by protecting Syria's President, Bashar al-Assad. Turkey, however, seeks mainly to prevent the spreading of the Kurds and supports the rebel groups in the fight against al-Assad. Meanwhile, the main objective of the Kurdish militants is to create a Kurdish region starting from Derik to Efrin along the Turkish-Syrian border and to unite the three Kurdish administrations in the provinces of Koban, Efrin and Hasakah.¹

Thus, we can deduce that the war in Syria will not be resolved in a short or medium term, so that the Syrians will continue to be part of the migration flows coming towards Europe and even more in an increasing number.

2.3. Libya

Muslim country located in North Africa, Libya differs from other North African states, in that the *Arab Spring* manifested here reflects a much more violent manner, while the overthrow of dictator Muammar Gaddafi was achieved through a forceful intervention of a Western coalition headed by France, Britain and the United States. Since many paramilitary groups struggled to monopolize power after Gaddafi's overthrow, in 2011, the country was seized by chaos. Currently, the legitimate government is exiled in the Eastern part of the country (the Parliament in Tobruk, the Government in Beyda), while the capital, Tripoli, is occupied by an illegitimate regime. Taking advantage of the regional instability, the Islamic State established terrorist factions inside Libya in an attempt to create a corridor from the Middle East to central Africa, if it is to correlate the influence of the network including on the

¹ For a thorough understanding of the complexity of the regional situation, the following videos are of great help: <https://www.facebook.com/ezraklein/videos/10153793162638410/> and <https://www.facebook.com/ezraklein/videos/10153737513773410/?pnref=story>

Boko Haram terrorist group, which has vowed loyalty to the Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi caliph (Akbar, July 13th, 2015).

On the 2nd of November, the illegitimate regime in Tripoli threatened to send hundreds of thousands of migrants in Europe, in case the international community will not recognize its legitimacy. Jamal Zubia, spokesperson of the General National Congress, threatened, at the same time, indirectly the European Union with measures that would reverse the policies adopted by the Libyan state in order to stop the immigration wave heading towards the European continent, which include repatriation programs and the existence of detention facilities. "We protect the gates of Europe, but Europe does not recognize us and does not want to. So why should we stop the migrants here?", this being the statement of Jamal Zubia in an interview for The Telegraph newspaper, in which he dropped hints that such intentions still exist, while for the European Union, such an approach to the migrants' crisis issue is a cause for concern (Freeman, November 2nd, 2015).

Resorting to such an approach also indicates that the illegitimate regime is not an actor willing to abide to the international norms. On the contrary, forcing the hand of the European Union in a situation in which it manages with major difficulty the large number of migrants already finding themselves in Europe, while the number of those who are yet to reach the European continent is a cause for concern, indicates the not so good intentions of this regime concerning the solving of the migrants' crisis. Regarding the manner in which such an action would take place (hundreds of thousands of people cross the Mediterranean using boats), it evidently indicates a low concern of the illegal regime for the fate of the migrants who could die drowned, and the possibility of transforming the situation into a weapon, used by the regime from Tripoli against the EU in their attempt to obtain international recognition, by forcing the hand of Brussels.

As evidenced by the current situation in the country, following the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi from power, Libya became immediately one of the leading exporters of insecurity in the region, having direct effects on the EU's Southern border. Moreover, the immigration wave from Asia, the Middle East and Africa from the recent months, which has overwhelmed the EU member countries, mostly use Libya as starting point towards Europe (Freeman, November 2nd, 2015).

Migration is not a new problem for the European continent but the scale of the phenomenon affecting Europe and the EU at present time is unprecedented. This is because the contemporary crises and conflicts

occurring in certain parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East have generated massive waves of migration. Even more, Libya, since 2011 until now, has gone through a troublesome stage in its evolution and quickly turned into a migration hub, a junction linking North Africa to southern Europe, the smuggling networks creating a bridge across the Mediterranean which ensure access for Africans, Asians and all immigrants from the Middle East to the European continent.

In order not to face the today's huge wave of immigration, the EU member states should have become significantly more actively involved during the previous years in the fight against terrorism in the MENA space (Middle East and North Africa) and should have fought networks such as Al Qaeda and its subsidiaries, the ones that became detached from it (Jabhat Al-Nusra and even the Islamic State). Furthermore, the strategic analyses should have been made in time, since the growing instability in the MENA space led to the increasing gap between these spaces and the European Union.

Thus, specialists from the European countries should have anticipated that the precarious security situation from the conflict zones was to generate immigrants, who would try in an increasing number to benefit from the European Union's "open door" policies in order to penetrate easily on its territory by requesting asylum. If the European Union would have addressed earlier the current situation, the European institutions would not be now pressured for taking such quick decisions. The whole matter is focused on the concept of time. Perhaps the European involvement in settling the regional conflicts would not have had an overwhelming success, but the timely preparation of strategies, in order to cope with a situation of massive migration, would not have put so much pressure on the European countries, facing a situation in which they must quickly manage the problem.

4. EUROPE'S REACTION TO THE IMMIGRATION WAVE

The most used routes in order to enter Europe via the Mediterranean are through Italy, Greece, Spain, or via Turkey. The growing number of refugees arriving from the conflict areas raises concerns at the European Commission level, while new studies and analyses that would prepare the European institutions in managing the new crisis are necessary. Thus, going through the official documents issued by the European Commission, we can deduce an all too technical approach of the institution, lacking a long-term

vision, a strategic approach towards the phenomenon, which would involve a series of predictions on how the integration of the refugees in the European societies could be achieved (European Commission, October 14th, 2015). According to the Commission's assessment, the arrival of 3 million people in Europe would mark a 0.4% growth of the European continent's population and about half of those entrants will qualify for obtaining the refugee status (European Commission, October 14th, 2015).

Thus, integrating such a large number of people would increase the costs of the EU budget, but as we stated earlier, there are also opinions saying that the refugees could bring advantages to the European economy, acting as growth incentives. "It will represent an impact on growth, a weak but positive impact for the EU as a whole, which will determine the increase of the GDP with 0.2 to 0.3 percent by 2017", according to the European Commission (BBC News, November 5th, 2015). However, beyond the pure "technical" impact, we must look at the problem, dealing with an impressive number of immigrants arriving, from different angles, as they have a very different culture with strong traditional and religious tendencies. When we speak about European institutional capacity to receive refugees, beyond the economic issues, we must refer also to the cultural aspects.

In this respect, according to the latest Eurobarometer opinion poll commissioned by the European Parliament in September 2015, at the European level there are strong opinions regarding the refugee wave. Everyone accepts that we are dealing with a crisis, but the views are totally opposite when it comes to the ultimate challenge: do we have the capacity to integrate them within our societies or will we close the borders, meaning that we will close the principles of the European Union as well? (European Parliament News, October 16th, 2015).

For example, in Croatia, according to the results of the opinion polls conducted before the parliamentary elections from November 2015, the situation proved to be one close fight between the centre-left wing, the social-democratic tendencies and the conservative opposition. The latter militates in favour of strengthening the border control, as the rules for crossing the country are very strict (Al Jazeera, November 8th, 2015). The programmes promoted by the candidates including on how they will manage the large numbers of refugees that cross Croatia to reach Western Europe help candidates to rise in polls. It depends only on the choice of the electorate, whose members are subjects to the propaganda messages promoted by each political entity (Al Jazeera, November 8th, 2015).

Germany, by contrast, has adopted from the beginning policies that encourage the arrival of immigrants, arguing that they have to create inclusively the opportunity for going to school for the refugee children. An association of teachers "states the need for an additional 25 thousand teachers. Some schools simply accommodate refugees, and most of them, however, do not speak German. It is therefore necessary to create elementary schools for children", says Ludger Wössmann, member of the IFO Institute, a research think - tank for social and human sciences (The Economist, October 24th, 2015). The basic idea of such an approach regarding the integration of all immigrant children into the same class, regardless of age, can be interpreted as an attempt to avoid later discrimination in society. The argument is that despite the age difference among children, in terms of education level and language knowledge, all have the same characteristics, being necessary to allocate attention and focus equal efforts on each.

Most economic analysts from Commerzbank or from central administrations believe that the economic effects of the refugee crisis are positive. Additional costs provided by Germany for hosting and feeding the refugees, estimated at 4 billion euros for this year and 10 billion euros for the coming years, are incentive programmes that should facilitate the integration of immigrants within the German society (The Economist, October 24th, 2015). The analysts from Commerzbank, the second largest bank in Germany, consider that this will be a growth in the German economy from 1.7% to 1.9% in 2016. Local, state and federal German administrations will continue to have a budget surplus of 23 billion euros this year and 13 billion in 2016, according to different estimations made by four leading German think - tanks (The Economist, October 24th, 2015). These positive effects could arise from the fact that it creates additional work force, which would increase the efficiency of German institutions, in the case that a proper integration of immigrants in the labour market would indeed succeed.

However, it is harder to measure whether the cultural differences between the immigrants and the native population will be manageable on the long-term. After the attacks episode in Paris, on November 13th, 2015, there is a high probability across Europe that the feeling of intolerance against Islamists will grow. In this respect, for example, in the neighbouring country, namely Poland, "Solidarity within the European Union is a key feature, but the European countries should not bear the burden of their EU allies for which they make themselves responsible", these being the words of the Prime Minister Beata Szydlo, in a statement to the Parliament (The Jerusalem Post

apud Reuters, November 18th, 2015). Thus, the Polish Prime Minister draws attention to the actual definition, or redefinition of the term "solidarity". The head of the Warsaw Government pronounced itself in this way against the import of problems created by others.

Polish Prime Minister benefits of support from a high percentage of the electorate in her attitude towards the receiving of Islamic immigrants. According to a study conducted in 2013 by the Centre for the Research of Preconceptions – a professional academic centre under the aegis of Warsaw University – revealed that over 69% of Poles do not want the ones who belong to other cultures, diametrically opposed to the indigenous, to settle in their country (Leszczyński, July 2nd, 2015). Thus, we can deduct quite easily that Poland will align its immigration policies to the similar ones of Slovakia, the Czech Republic or even Hungary, if at the society level the current trend will be maintained.

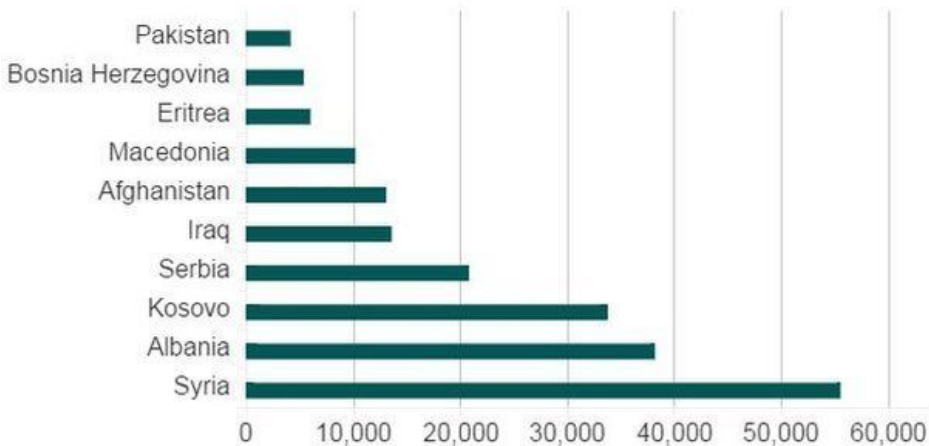
Returning to Germany, although the first European power is also the main driver concerning the refugees' accommodation (along with Sweden), the issues concerning their integration were immediate. One of the main reasons consists of the difficult integration into the educational system and the labour market for the unskilled refugees. The World Bank estimates that the illiteracy rate among those aged between 14 and 24 years old as follows - 4% for the Syrians, 18% for Iraqis and 53% for Afghans (*The Economist*, October 24th, 2015). In addition, the minimum income offered by the government for each individual, about 8.5 euros per day, is not of great help. Asylum seekers, who do not secure a job, end in the situation of being unemployed, which is not productive at all for the German economy. In this respect, the argument belonging to the expert Ludger Wössmann, member of the IFO Institute, regarding the creation of special classes for educating young immigrants regardless of age, is applicable. However, pros and cons of adopting such measures will always exist.

Thus, according to the figures provided by the Agency for Employment in Berlin, it is easy to notice that the percentage of asylum seekers who have managed to get a job increased by 8% every year around July, but on the other hand the percentage of those unemployed increased by 23% (*The Economist*, October 24th, 2015). The number of unemployed is much higher among Syrian asylum seekers (*The Economist*, October 24th, 2015).

The chart below illustrates the number of applicants for asylum in Germany, scattered by country of origin. We observe that the number of those coming from Syria after the war is much higher than the rest¹.

Top ten nationalities applying for asylum in Germany

Figures from January to August 2015



Source: German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

BBC

At the European level, the opinion differences problem on the refugee crisis, having on one hand countries like Germany and Sweden and on the other the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, comes from the specific policies adopted by the governing parties in each of these countries. For example, in Poland, Law and Justice Party came to power in November 2015 and Beata Szydlo is today's Prime Minister. Following a series of measures and dismissals taken at the state institutional level, the direction promoted by the new government is marked by Euroscepticism, while it advocates for strengthening relations with the United States. The Euroscepticism position is due also to the different approach to the refugee crisis, after the terrorist attacks in Paris Poland pronouncing itself against accepting the immigrants'

¹ *Apud* BBC News, September 29th, 2015, link: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34392080> accessed on 18.11.2015.

quota determined in Brussels (Deutsche Welle, November 14th, 2015). And this precise element puts Poland in an antagonistic position regarding Germany.

Hungary is in a similar position, stating that the differences in opinion between the conservative party led by Viktor Orban, FIDESZ, and the European Union are even much more pronounced than in the case of Poland. The causes of these differences are multiple, one of them being the forthcoming relations between Hungary and Russia, due to the expansion (2014-2023) of Paks nuclear power plant, while there are different approaches as well regarding the refugee crisis and the immigrants acceptance rates. From the very beginning, Hungary placed itself in opposition, when it was determined at the EU level for each country to receive a refugee quota depending on its economic and administrative possibilities (Salzmann, September 26th, 2015). In addition, all these opposite directions among the Central European states and Brussels can cause more stringent border controls, halting free movement in the Schengen area and the European Union in total and can eventually lead to the dismantling of the EU.

Regarding Romania, accepting mandatory quota allocated by the Union triggered controversial debates in the domestic press, in some cases reticence on the receiving being obvious. Opinions are divided between those who support the receiving of refugees, on the one hand, and in opposition those who aver that there would be only risks in this regard and no benefits, thus ruling against (Isaila, September 11th, 2015). However, from a political point of view, it seems that Romanian decision makers have a permissive attitude towards receiving refugees, militating in favour of separating the terrorist issue from the issue of the immigrants who are fleeing the war. "The tragedy of Paris should be taken as such. It is a terrorist attack against France amid a huge wave of refugees who are looking for safety in Europe, for themselves and for their families. (...) We are not allowed to let the social fabric of our countries be destroyed, we must not let xenophobia, ultra-nationalism, chauvinism to become relevant in our society", declared President Iohannis, being asked whether Brussels should change its approach after the attacks in France, in terms of mandatory quotas of refugees (HotNews.ro, November 18th, 2015).

5. POSSIBLE EVOLUTIONAL SCENARIOS

At the European level, opinions about the management of the crisis caused by the massive flow of immigrants are clearly split, as well as the policies adopted by each state. For this reason, the situation is extremely complex, as there are countless possibilities for future evolutions. Of these, we chose four scenarios, which we will further discuss.

5.1. Best case scenario. Effective integration in the European societies

Complicated situation for the present time, the crisis is caused by a large number of refugees who are fleeing war and seeking shelter in the developed countries of Europe. However, Europe will prove, if not on the short-term (6 months – 1 year – 3 years), then on the medium term (3 – 5 years) and on the long term (10 – 15 years), a high absorption capacity and labour market integration for the newcomers. This would be gradually accomplished through special education policies and programmes.

In turn, a high percentage of immigrants will prove a powerful ability to adapt, many of which being already specialized in various fields of activity. Thus, they will make their contribution in the economy of the European countries, according to the predictions of some economic analysts, such as Pierre Moscovici, EU Economic Commissioner, and other representatives of the European Commission (BBC News, November 5th, 2015). Initially this fact will happen in the more developed states of Europe such as Germany, Sweden or France, being the first who showed a higher degree of tolerance, but over time the effect will spread and the other member states of the European Union will be encouraged by the success in integrating the immigrants and will widely open their doors in order to receive them.

Conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, particularly in North Africa (mainly Libya) are unlikely to diminish in intensity, even in this best case scenario event, which will continue to generate waves of refugees. However, as we mentioned, Europe will prove the capacity of absorbing the immigration wave and the principle underlying the formation of the European Union will maintain itself and will even strengthen the continental alliance, which in future decades will turn into the United States of Europe.

5.2. Worst case scenario. The dissolution of the European Union and the spread of extremism

Europe, if we can still talk about unity within it, was caught unprepared in the refugee crisis context, the administrative institutions of the EU proved their inefficiency through inadequate policies or even through their absence in facing the external challenges. On short-term (several months - 1 year or up to 3 years) member states will have to act individually as they will perceive the wave of immigrants as a threat against their national security, not necessarily for reasons related to terrorism, but taking into consideration economic reasons. Basically, the local citizens will reject the idea of allocating funds for integrating foreigners who are often perceived as inferior, different and uneducated (Leszczyński, July 2nd, 2015).

Therefore, danger lies in two things: first, the spreading of terrorism hot spots throughout Europe. The weak controls at the southern European border will facilitate the infiltration of terrorist members of the Islamic State or of other extremist networks. Therefore, the terrorist attacks will increase, giving the risk that the recent episode, which occurred in Paris in November 2015, to repeat countless times, while as a result the reaction against Muslim communities will become tougher. Secondly, because of the murderous attacks, that will keep on having victims in an even higher number in Europe, the political parties belonging to the far right wing will grow in popularity, following that on the medium term (5 years) to take power in most countries of the old continent. Therefore, the idea of unity within the EU will be forgotten, while extremism and chauvinism will take roots much easily within the states not following a collective and common policy, the central point being Brussels. From this point until the repetition of the Holocaust events will not take long, since these states will be under the leadership of far-right parties. If such a scenario will happen, it will prove that history has taught us nothing and that the world does not progress over time, but rather it may even show regressive tendencies, heading rapidly towards self-destruction.

5.3. Most probable scenario. The crisis will continue, there will be few solutions

It has been proved that we are facing a crisis in the true sense of the concept. More than that, it is quite clear that the situation is difficult to manage, primarily because of the lack of unity inside the EU. Member states

cannot be forced from outside to take political directions, only their own citizens can influence this process. Nevertheless, the population is subjected to the media propaganda, while the political actors use mass-media to promote their "ideologies". Practically, there is no ideal type of approach, which will guarantee that following a certain set of rules would minimize the costs and produce incomparable greater benefits.

We live in a world dominated by realism and wars will continue to unfold in conflict areas, which will automatically continue to produce mass migrations. Consequently, the European states will face continuous waves of refugees, many of them reaching a certain point when they will be bound to close down the borders because of their inability to handle the situation. Even Germany, the promoter of accepting refugees, began to have difficulties in managing the asylum applications, which in the near future will not generate positive results, if the current migration flows continue as such (The Economist, October 24th, 2015). Despite the fact that it is difficult to precisely predict what will happen in Europe within the next 15 years and given that the policies regarding the refugee crisis are changing from day to day, the most probable scenario consists in numerous attempts adopted by the European states to handle the high number of refugees, while the difficulties regarding their integration will increase. Furthermore, divergences between the European states regarding the management of this crisis will continue to exist, some countries being for accepting immigrants while others, as noted above, adopt a counter position. In this case, a common approach to the issue of tackling the crisis in a unitary direction will be impossible to achieve. Only time will show whether we will evolve in a favourable direction, towards unity and cohesion, or if things will rotate 180 degrees.

5.4. Less probable scenario. The idealist world and the ending of wars

From this moment on, if there will be an increasingly active involvement of the West in the conflict areas to eradicate terrorism, process that will indeed require time, within a few years, the Western world, led by the United States (the country with the highest military capacity for military interventions for the campaigns carried out in the Middle East and North Africa), will be able to manage the conflicts unfolding in the Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Russia will give up on its own initiative regarding the involvement in the Syrian conflict, as Kremlin will realize that unsustainable costs are necessary in order to back up these campaigns. Bashar

al-Assad will be ousted and instead a democratic scheme will be established, while in 15-20 years a certain degree of political maturity will be achieved, producing a level of internal stability even adequate to attract foreign investors. The situation will be similar in Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Eritrea and other countries from the third world. With such an evolution, the development of the respective states will be gradually felt. As a result, by next generations, we will no longer talk about refugees coming into Europe, but about business travellers or tourists from the former conflict zones.

This scenario is unlikely to occur and the chances are minimal. The wars in the Middle East and Africa even have a tendency to increase. In this respect, the bodies of the United Nations will have to become more active since, although we, as inhabitants of Europe, live decently and the hazard of death is not acute, somewhere just two thousand kilometres away, people leave their houses in the morning fearing that at the end of day they may not be alive.

The four scenarios mentioned above are just a few directions in which things can evolve, but the author admits that there are an infinite number of possibilities and even immixtures between these scenarios.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The first, essential and most profound act of thinking that a political decision-maker and his advisers must make is the one related to the nature of the crisis they are facing; not to confuse it, nor try to change it into something that it is against its nature. From the author's point of view, the refugee crisis is one in which, due to many complex reasons and in a context which is difficult and rich in events of major impact, the reason of humanity and also the vision on reality and pragmatism have been lost. In the present paper, I tried to analyse the main directions of the humanitarian crisis generated by war, both in the decision-making process, but also as a way of implementation, aiming also to identify the causes of a possible failure. It is necessary to note that by failure, the author does not mean the failure of the European states existing in their national form, but he refers to the failure of the Union's cohesion on the one hand, and on the other, the author refers to the inability of reaction in the event of a humanitarian crisis.

A first conclusion was that, in terms of accepting refugees who are trying to save their lives, the decision was legitimate, lawful, fair and legal.

However, in this regard a problem is the answer to the following question: Which are the chances that among these refugees, economic migrants or even terrorists could be infiltrated? The answer, most likely, does not exist. If there were a way to know with certainty what will be the finality of the crisis when adopting any type of strategy, the decision to apply or not a specific strategy would have been greatly simplified. Even when there are sufficient and legitimate reasons to engage in a process of this magnitude, which involves significant resources, both human and financial, it will not be an easy choice, since costs can be so great that, in the end, to say regrettably it was a failure. Among the consequences that can occur, taking into account the unforeseen course that the situation can take at some point or another, there are the unknowns which represent the biggest obstacle in taking such decisions.

Secondly, regarding the final section of the analysis part, an attempt was made in order to provide a possible answer to another question: can such a humanitarian crisis, unfolding at the present time across all Europe, be efficiently managed? If yes, what would be the most appropriate manner? And which would be the results in the short, medium and long term? Once again, although it is difficult to find the best answer to this question, the author considers that the West involvement in a unified and collective formula in order to resolve the conflicts directly at source, in their home countries, is beneficial, as well as necessary. The statistical data presented in the paper revealed the complexity of the current mass migration phenomenon and the lack of cohesion the EU is facing at the present time, in front of an external challenge that might soon become a domestic one. In the author's opinion, this is the most relevant issue and here stands the failure of a common and more effective management of the refugee crisis strategy.

Regarding the social integration component, in the author's opinion, the difficulties which have been encountered have two causes. Firstly, until now, the failure of the efforts meant to integrate the immigrants within the labour market and the educational system through the phenomenon called acculturation, is due to trying to transform the immigrants world into a totally different one. This desire is best reflected in the antithesis between liberalism, which characterizes the autochthonous population, and the religious and traditionalist nature of immigrants. The integration plans will probably have to be adapted to the reality of this category of immigrants, in a manner that would not emphasize the inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions already existing. Secondly, the reconstruction of a state that is still at war is an utopian thinking in the author's point of view (Syria, Iraq, Libya), which is why the

West should engage more actively to stop regional conflicts. Finally, reconstruction must be carried out by local governments, with the support, by all means, of the Occident.

To ensure that the measures shall be applied, the existence of a framework to enable such an ambition is necessary, while the states that are in a permanent armed conflict do not fit in the pattern. Thirdly, reconstruction must be, above all, a desire and a target belonging to the local administrations of the countries from the third world, and not to the West. The Occident must stop the conflicts and provide support for these states, for them to be able to develop in the future. However, the task of adequate reconstruction must firstly be attributed to the local power structures. From this point of view, though in the vast majority of the duration of war and on a declarative level support and adhesion to implement democracy were offered, facts have proven that such a concept is difficult to implement, and the more it stretches in time, the more it will lead to the development of new crises, such as the refugee crisis.

In the process of analysing these challenges, brought by the immigrant crisis, the author has encountered also limits, the most important of them being the adaptation to a particularly high volume of information that a situation of this magnitude generates. Due to the desire to synthesise, but at the same time to include the key points, it is the reason why certain important parts of the phenomenon have been neglected. Nevertheless, presenting all the relevant aspects and the dimensions generated by the regional wars, as well as the multitude of effects which they had on Europe, would have been an unrealistic target.

Taking into account the information presented in the paper, this work represents, in the author's opinion, an attempt to simplify the process of understanding the refugee crisis, taking into consideration the reasons for which it is difficult to be managed, as well as the challenges that will continue to exist.

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