

## THE EU “COSTS” OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS

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### Abstract

Considered by some to be an instrument used by the Russian Federation against the US policies and strategies, the current refugee crisis is a social and political phenomenon, caused by the emergence of the conflicts from North Africa and the Middle East, and has been one of the most important issues of 2015. Although the entire process dates back to 2011, when the Syrian civil war started, its effects and consequences were felt in Europe with the beginning of the last year, when almost 400000 people risked their lives to leave their countries and go to Europe, in search of a safe and secure environment. Due to the fact that EU member states have positioned themselves differently towards this problem, the European Union is now regarded as an international organization that could not handle this kind of issue, failing to provide efficient solutions. The migrant issue has been addressed to at six summits to the date, where the EU leaders tried to find proper measures to adopt, although these proved to be either inadequate or slow. Thus, this paper aims to explain how the refugee crisis has affected the cohesion of the EU, presenting the way the Union has managed the migrant flux. In the end, the 2015 brought one single question concerning this issue: will the refugee crisis cause the break-up of the European Union?

### Keywords

Cohesion issues; European Union; Measures; Refugee crisis; Summit; Syrian civil war

## 1. INTRODUCTION. MIGRANTS: THE STORY OF THE CRISIS

The migrant crisis that shook the stability of the European Union in 2015 is not a new threat, but its effects have begun to be felt by European countries when the refugee flux has considerably increased. More than a million migrants and refugees crossed the borders of Europe in the last year, creating great division in the EU and disagreement between its member states over how best to cope with this crisis and resettling people (*Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts*, BBC, February 18, 2016).

The people choosing to leave their countries in the search for better life conditions and a secure environment use different methods to travel (by sea or by land), their principal routes being Turkey and Albania. In this context, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that since the start of 2016, almost 83,000 people reached Europe by sea.

The main trigger of the refugee crisis is considered to be the Syrian civil war, but there are also other factors that have contributed to an increased refugee flux, such as: the conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq, the increased level of poverty in countries from the South-East Europe (like Greece, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova), and the rise of the Islamic State, one of the biggest threats to the security of the states from the Middle East and not only.

Considered "the worst humanitarian disaster since the end of the cold war" (*UN Calls Syria 'Worst Humanitarian Disaster' since Cold War*, Christian Science Monitor, June 20, 2013), the Syrian civil war started in March 2011, when pro-democracy protests erupted in the southern city of Deraa. Some teenagers painted revolutionary slogans on a school wall and, as a result, they were arrested and tortured by the Syrian security forces, this being the event that triggered the protests. Considering that the authorities have violated the rights of Syrian citizens, people gathered on the streets and started a protest against the methods used by the security forces, but their actions had unexpected repercussions: authorities opened fire on demonstrators, killing several.

After this, the unrest caused nationwide protests against the Assad regime, demanding the president to resign. In this stage, the government chose to use force in order to calm the spirits, yet, by July 2011, hundreds of thousands of citizens were taking to the streets, across the country (Rodgers *et al.* 2016).

Violence escalated and the country descended into civil war, as opposition supporters have begun to use arms, not only to defend themselves, but also to get out security forces from their local areas. Later, they formed battle government forces, used to control the cities, towns and the countryside and by 2012, the conflict has extended into the capital, Damascus (Rodgers *et al.* 2016).

After two years of violence and conflict, the UN said that the civil war in Syria has caused 90,000 victims, figure that reached, 250,000 by 2015. It can be said, thus, that what had started just a calm protest turns into more than just a battle against the regime of president Bashar al-Assad. Besides, the rise of the jihadist group Islamic State (IS or Islamic State in Iraq and Levant – ISIL) had added a further dimension to this conflict (Brian 2014, 9-10).

A UN commission of inquiry highlighted the fact that all parties to the conflict had committed war crimes – including murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearances. Moreover, the government forces have been accused of using civilian suffering – like blocking access to food, water and health services through sieges – as an instrument of war against of the citizens of their own state (*War crimes in the Syrian conflict*, Amnesty International, April 7, 2015).

The Syrian war took an unexpected turn after hundreds of people were killed in August 2013 using chemical weapons (rockets filled with the nerve agent sarin) fired at several suburbs of Damascus. It has not been established who was to blame for this attack, because there were no evidences against the Syrian government or the rebel forces. However, being afraid of the fact that the Western powers, especially the US, could intervene in the conflict, President Assad agreed to remove and destroy the Syrian arsenal of chemical weapons.

As a result of the conflict, more than 4,5 million people have fled Syria since the start of the war, most of them women and children, being afraid for their own lives. Syria's neighbours, such as Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, made great efforts in order to cope with the largest flux of refugees from the late years. Moreover, other 6,5 million people were internally displaced inside Syria, but the government has refused humanitarian agencies access to them. Thus, about 70% of the population is now without access to adequate drinking water, one in three people are unable to meet their basic food needs, and more than 2 million children are out of school, and four out of five people live in poverty (Rodgers *et al.* 2016).

To sum up, several reasons are to blame for the current refugee crisis. The first and the most important one is the change caused by conflicts and civil wars in the Middle East and the political turmoil in Africa resulting in torn, barely functioning or failed states, unable to provide security and prosperity for their citizens. The 2003 invasion of Iraq has sparked the first wave of refugees, most of which settled in the neighbouring countries. Back then, barring Sweden, very few European countries admitted a significant number of Iraqis (von Helldorff 2015, 2).

Moreover, the paradigm shift caused by the so called Arab Spring in 2011 and the fact that many other dictators gained power in a number of Arab countries, gave a new impetus to the migration movement. The evolution of the Syrian war, which escalated into a highly complex, protracted internal conflict, triggered a massive displacement of people within and outside the country. This does not mean that people in the Arab world do not deserve or are not ready for democracy, but the way how these changes came along, the pace of events and the management of the aftermath led to unexpected and unwanted situations. Many countries in the region did not have the capacity or the mechanisms to cope adequately with the huge challenges of this new political environment. Furthermore, the international community failed to comprehend the underlying depth of ethnic and religious divisions suppressed by the dictatorial regimes (von Helldorff 2015, 2).

Moreover, the fall of the old, undemocratic regimes, did not contribute much to the solving of the key issues that triggered the revolution: the lack of economic opportunities and the future of the Arab youth. Instead, some of the countries were dominated by chaos, lawlessness and new forms of oppression, thus generating a big number of refugees and asylum seekers that fled not only their countries, but also the rising influence of the Islamic State which filled every void left by the crumbling old regimes (von Helldorff 2015, 2).

Another cause of the present crisis can be attributed to the crises that have risen in a number of African countries. Migrants from Sub-Saharan countries originating from Somalia, Eritrea, Senegal and Nigeria flee their countries which are characterized by struggling economies, repression, lack of freedom, dysfunctional institutions and (like Eritrea) dictatorships. With the rise of Islamist extremism and the emergence of the Islamic State, the number of people fleeing these countries has increased considerably (von Helldorff 2015, 2-3).

Thus, even if it is said that the Syrian civil war was the main factor that has caused the biggest refugee flux in the last decade, the whole instability and

insecurity that characterizes the Middle East and Western Balkans regions determined people to leave their countries in the search of a better and secure environment. War in Afghanistan, instability in Iraq and the level of poverty in Kosovo are just a few examples of the forces that are driving refugees to choose Europe as shelter.

The European governments and the EU have failed to grasp the magnitude and anticipate the consequences of these fundamental shifts. The test proved to be too difficult for the European external policy, which back then was still struggling with the setting up of the new European External Action Service and the internal political divisions, caused by the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. Hence, the EU approach to the migration challenge has mostly been reactive, instead of being proactive and aimed at shaping events (von Helldorff 2015, 3-4).

## 2. TERMINOLOGY

The majority of people seeking entry to Europe are fleeing conflict and violence in their home countries, and are looking for a safe environment and for hope. Thus, it can be said that Europe has to deal with a complex refugee crisis, considering the fact that the migrant flux consists of different types of people. Now, in order to better understand the entire unexpected situation caused by the refugee crisis, it is necessary to first understand the categories of people coming to Europe.

1. Migrant: the United Nations defines a migrant as “an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate” (International Organization for Migration). This definition formally encompasses refugees, asylum-seekers and economic migrants.
2. Refugee: a refugee is an individual who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (Article 1 A (2), Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951).
3. Asylum-seeker: an asylum-seeker is “A person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant

international and national instruments. In case of a negative decision, the person must leave the country and may be expelled, as may any non-national in an irregular or unlawful situation, unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian or other related grounds" (International Organization for Migration).

### 3. WHY EUROPE?

Many refugees choose to go to Europe because the EU collectively recognizes not only the right to non-refoulement, which states that "no one may be removed, expelled or extradited to a State where there is a serious risk that he or she would be subject to the death penalty, torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" (Article 19(2), *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*), but also the right to asylum (Article 18, *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*). But the refugees' road to Europe is a difficult and risky one, no matter if they choose to travel by land or by sea.

People fleeing through Libya to Italy must typically cross the Sahara desert, where they are at the mercy of exploitative smugglers (*Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration*, International Organization for Migration, 2014, 85-104). Once in Libya, refugees can face the risk of being imprisoned in detention centres where they can be terrorized or physically and mentally traumatized (Amnesty International, *Libya is full of cruelty: Stories of abduction, sexual violence and abuse from migrants and refugees*, May 10, 2015, 19-24).

The route to Turkey into Greece is also very dangerous: after crossing the border from Syria, refugees are smuggled by vehicle and foot across the country to the coast, risking becoming a victim of organized criminals on the coast (*Europe's Refugee Crisis*, International Rescue Committee, September 2015, 6). Thus, refugees on either route to Europe are at high risk of being trafficked or attacked at some point during their journeys (*Italy interviews*, International Rescue Committee).

As a result, the EU border agency, Frontex, recorded 1.8 million illegal border crossings in 2015. Meanwhile, the EU Commission estimates that another three million irregular migrants will enter the EU until 2017. Currently asylum systems in Greece and Italy proved that they cannot possibly cope with such numbers, therefore, it can be said that it seems very unlikely that the present system will find the solution to manage the hotspot approach. So far, just 683 migrants not entitled to protection have been returned to their country

of origin, and only 481 asylum seekers have been relocated to other member states under the emergency relocation mechanism (*The Migrant Crisis in the EU*, Migration Watch UK).

#### 4. WHAT WERE EU'S RESPONSE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE REFUGEE CRISIS? ACTIONS AND CHALLENGES

Faced with a mounting crisis, the European Union proved to be unable to cope with the humanitarian disaster within its own boundaries and to provide to its member states effective solutions for this tragedy. The EU initially left Italy on its own, so the member state had to try to rescue sinking boats in the Mediterranean, thus launching operation Mare Nostrum in 2013, but that was not able to carry on the search and rescue process later than October 2014 due to lack of political and financial support from other EU member states (*EU under pressure over migrant rescue operation in the Mediterranean*, *The Guardian*, April 15, 2015).

After almost 1,000 people died in a series of shipwrecks off the coasts of Libya in April 2015, the EU leadership finally decided to take some collective measures, expanding the search and rescue capacity of its border control mission (*Migrants' bodies brought ashore as EU proposes doubling rescue effort*, *Reuters*, April 20, 2015). However, this was just one step of what should have been the European effort to manage the refugee crisis. Even if the European Commission outlined a number of several recommended responses to the crisis, the European leaders largely failed to find a common ground and agree to them (*Europe's Refugee Crisis*, *International Rescue Committee*, 13-14).

EU's member states agreed to receive a number of almost 22,000 refugees, identified as being in need of resettlement by the UNHCR, over two years (*JHA Council – Minister for Justice and Home Affairs reach an agreement on the relocation mechanism for asylum seekers*, *Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg*, July 20, 2015). This was an important step to take, but there are 59,5 million people displaced all over the world, thus, the number established by European states is quite insignificant.

Another possible solution proposed by the European Commission was represented by a temporary relocation scheme of 40,000 Syrian and Eritrean asylum-seekers, who would be moved, over the next two years, from Greece and Italy to other EU member states, in order to process their asylum claims. However, the European leaders failed to agree to mandatory quotas for

relocation, but established aims for voluntary targets. So far, they have only agreed to relocate 32,256 of 381,000 asylum-seekers from Italy and Greece, again a number that does not make any difference (*EU member states miss target to relocate 40,000 migrants*, The Guardian, July 21, 2015).

Moreover, the EU failed so far to make the necessary changes to the Dublin System, thus refugees have no other option than to travel irregularly through Europe. While the European Commission is currently reviewing the Dublin System, there is already widespread recognition that it is out-of-date (Cathryn Costello *et al.*, *Enhancing the CEAS*) and, as a consequence, citizens from all over the world, but especially from the EU member states, lost their trust in the European organization, considering that EU does not have the necessary instruments to cope with such a crisis.

Germany recently announced that it would no longer apply the Dublin System and would instead allow Syrian refugees to apply for asylum no matter where they entered Europe (*BBC Trending: Why are Syrian sending love letters to Angela Merkel?*, The BBC, August 26, 2015). This is a welcome change in policy, but, in order to get to Germany, refugees must still face many dangers in their journeys through Europe.

One argument that European leaders often make against adopting better policies for refugees is that such policies will act as a “pull factor”. In short, the argument refers to the fact that if Europe becomes a safer place for refugees, then the number of displaced people that choose to come to the European continent will significantly increase. Thus, European countries would never accept this argument from any other region with refugees fleeing to its shores. Indeed, Europe advocates for other countries to keep borders open and protect asylum-seekers (*Council conclusions on the regional impact of the Syria Crisis*, Council of the European Union, November 18, 2013, 1-2).

More importantly, the argument itself is specious. The situations that refugees are fleeing are so severe, that they will risk anything to find safety. Research shows that people are aware of the risks involved in journeys by sea to Europe, but choose to take them anyway due to their lack of real options (*Before the Boat: Understanding the Migrant Journey*, Migration Policy Institute, May 2015, 3-8). No matter what Europe’s policies are, refugees will keep coming, searching for a secure and safe environment for themselves and their families.

As I have mentioned before, after the European Council meeting in The European Council meeting on 20 July 2015 adopted a resolution on relocating 40,000 people from Greece and Italy in clear need of international

protection as well as a resolution on resettling 22,504 displaced people from outside the EU. The Council will formally adopt the decision in September. However, the Member States failed to agree on how to distribute the asylum seekers and postponed the decision until the end of the year (*European Migration Crisis: Failing Policies, Fatal Journeys*, Trocaire, September 2015, 1).

The increase of the refugee flux has caused tensions between EU member states, within the European Council, as well as between different states and the European Commission as a consequence of the implementation of anti-migration policies, which is the case of Hungary. Thus, Hungary not only did not agree with the EU established refugee quota, but, moreover, closed its borders with Serbia and Croatia for the migrants (by building a metal fence), mobilizing, at the same time, soldiers and tanks at the border, so as to defend EU external border. As a response to its measures, the European Commission opened infringement procedures against Hungary, as well as Italy, Greece, Malta and Croatia, for not applying common asylum system in the refugee crisis.

What is worse is that some of the member states decided that, taking into consideration the fact that the European Union's cohesion started to fall apart, it is high time for them to leave this organization because it does not bring them any benefits. Such an example is Great Britain, which not only refused the quota system proposed by the EU and agreed to accept only 20,000 refugees from Syria over the next five years (*Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts*, BBC, February 2016), but also organized a referendum on whether Britain should remain in the European Union, hold on Thursday 23 June, 2016.

## 5. HOW IS THE EU HELPING NOW?

The European Commission presented a comprehensive approach to cope with the refugee crisis in Europe through its European Agenda for Migration, highlighting the available tools and instruments at the EU level and in the member states. Delivered in line with the humanitarian principles of independence, impartiality, neutrality and humanity, EU humanitarian aid cannot be considered to be a migration management tool, due to the fact that humanitarian assistance is provided to victims of conflict and natural disaster in third countries according to vulnerability criteria and needs assessments

(*Refugee crisis*, European Commission, March 10, 2016, [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis_en)).

However, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) addresses the refugee crisis in Europe in different ways:

- It helps refugees in the transit countries located outside of the EU borders;
- It provides the EU member states and other countries requiring immediate material support to cope with the migrant influx with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism;
- It is a leading global donor of humanitarian aid in all the main countries refugees arrive from, the so called "source countries" (*Refugee crisis*, European Commission).

Since the consequences of the refugee crisis begun to be felt in Europe in 2015, the Commission has provided humanitarian aid amounting to over 21 million euro to the Western Balkans, especially to Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Aid is given through the humanitarian partner organizations to the most vulnerable refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and represents a great contribution to the provision of emergency assistance (in terms of food, water, hygiene, non-food items, health, basic protection) at transit points, such as borders and registration facilities (*Refugee crisis*, European Commission).

The Commission also gave support to the refugees in Turkey, who have fled their countries due to the violence spread in Syria and Iraq, especially to those vulnerable refugees living outside the camps. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the Commission provided total assistance of 175 million euro in Turkey, including humanitarian aid and longer-term assistance. In November 2015, the EU decided to establish a legal framework – a Refugee Facility for Turkey (that will receive a total amount of 3 billion euro to coordinate with the beginning of January 1, 2016) – to coordinate and implement actions financed in order to provide refugees in Turkey with efficient and complementary support (*Refugee crisis*, European Commission).

As far as Libya is concerned, the European Commission's contribution was more than 8 million euro in humanitarian aid since mid-2014, according assistance to internally displaced people and other vulnerable groups (in terms of food, protection, cash support, hygiene, health care, non-food items) (*Refugee crisis*, European Commission).

As mentioned above, the EU has provided its member states and other countries requiring immediate material support to cope with the migrant influx with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. This means that the Commission coordinates the delivery of immediate material to help EU member states and neighbouring countries facing major peaks in the refugee crisis, that overwhelm their immediate response capacities. The assistance, provided only after the affected country has requested, is based on voluntary contributions from countries participating in the Mechanism (*Refugee crisis*, European Commission).

The Mechanism has been activated for help in coping with an increased refugee influx several times in 2015. Hungary, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia and Greece have received material assistance such as winterized tents, beds and blankets, that have been ensured by the Mechanism participating countries in order to help them better deal with the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers (*Refugee crisis*, European Commission).

It should be mentioned the fact that the Mechanism is coordinated by the European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which is closely monitoring the refugee crisis and facilitates a coherent and efficient European response (*Refugee crisis*, European Commission).

The European Union, along with its member states, is a leading donor of humanitarian aid in all the major countries and regions from where the refugees are currently coming. Such countries are Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Horn of Africa, Western Balkans, etc. in 2014, the European Commission provided over 70% of its annual humanitarian aid budget to projects helping refugees and internally displaced persons (Chatty, Dawn, and Cynthia Orchard, "High Time for Europe to Offer Temporary Protection to Refugees from Syria", openDemocracy, October 2, 2014, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/cynthia-orchard-dawn-chatty/high-time-for-europe-to-offer-temporary-protection-to>).

After the decision of the European Council to provide at least 1 billion euro to help refugees, the Commission has increased its humanitarian aid and civil protection budget with 200 million euro for 2015 and 300 million euro for 2016. This money will be directed to the UN Refugee Agency, World Food Programme and other organizations – like Red Cross family and international NGOs – to help refugees especially in and around Syria (*Refugee crisis*, European Commission).

All in all, even if the European Union makes great efforts in order to cope with the refugee flux, by allocating more resources in order to provide migrants with better life conditions and security, the measures EU adopts do not represent solutions to the real cause of the migration crisis: conflict, human right abuse, economic poverty and so on. Thus, there is still the need for a proper EU response to the refugee crisis that has caused many problems to the cohesion and credibility of the European community at regional and international level.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The European Union has been strongly criticized for the lack of initiative and the inefficient measures implemented in order to cope with the migrant crisis. Until now, as I have already mentioned, the methods used by the European Union and its member states regarding the refugee flux proved not to address the real cause of the problem, thus did not have any significant results.

As a consequence, the International Rescue Committee proposed, in a paper conducted on the topic of Europe's Refugee Crisis, a set of measures to be further implemented. These include:

- Address the reasons why people are coming to Europe. In order to do that, the EU should focus more on making diplomatic and political efforts to solve the conflicts that caused people to flee their origin countries and to end persecution. Improving cooperation with international organizations and establishing common objectives within the EU would definitely help to identify new instruments and mechanisms to fight against the rebel forces in the Middle East and to find better solutions to end the war. Moreover, EU humanitarian and development actors should cooperate with other donors (such as the Arab Gulf states, Japan, South Korea and others) to ensure a massive increase in humanitarian support for countries neighboring Syrian and other regions of conflict (*Europe's Refugee Crisis*, International Rescue Committee, pp. 13-14);
- Improve reception conditions in the southern Mediterranean, especially in Greece. One first step to accomplish this goal would be to support and expand the search and rescue missions that are meant to save refugees from drowning in the Mediterranean. In the regions were the local authorities

are unable or unwilling to give their help, the EU should intervene. Furthermore, the EU and its member states should provide technical support for the humanitarian response in Greece and Italy, two of the most affected countries. This support should focus on ensuring that all those who arrive in these two states have immediate access to shelter, food and water, health care, hygiene, information and protection. In order to play their part, the governments of Greece and Italy should ensure that the help received from the EU reaches local authorities;

- The EU and its member states should develop and implement an early warning system and a coordinated and rapid emergency response mechanism. Taking into consideration the fact that the conditions in the countries from where refugees flee have considerably worsened and that conflict and violence still characterize those areas, the EU should be able to anticipate the fact that the flow to Europe's shores will continue for the foreseeable future. Thus, the instruments mentioned above could help the European community to find proper solutions to deal with this recurrent crisis.
- Increase safe, legal routes to and through Europe for refugees. Without safe, legal ways to apply for asylum from home or transit countries, or to get to European states and apply, refugees are forced to turn to smugglers. Furthermore, without reform of the EU's asylum rules, refugees must continue their dangerous journeys from Europe's shores to other EU Member States. In this context, the European Union and its member states should develop an arsenal of all possible tools for safe entry into Europe. Some tools that may be included are as follows:
  - Humanitarian visas offered in third countries hosting refugees and, where possible, in countries of origin (U. Jensen, "Humanitarian Visas: option or obligation?", 2014, 50-52);
  - Humanitarian and medical evacuation programmes;
  - Flexible application of family reunification admission, particularly in cases involving lost, separated or unaccompanied children;
  - Resettlement;
  - Other forms of admission, including private sponsorship schemes;
  - Regular mobility schemes from which refugees can benefit, such as education and work visas.

- The EU should allow much greater legal movement of asylum-seekers from the southern Mediterranean to other European countries. This goal can be achieved by:
  - enabling more frequent, flexible use of family reunification mechanisms under the Dublin System;
  - abandoning the Dublin System and developing non-coercive mechanisms to allocate responsibility for asylum claims;
  - agreeing to relocate more asylum-seekers from Italy and especially Greece to other Member States through a permanent relocation scheme (*Europe's Refugee Crisis*, International Rescue Committee).
- The EU and Member States should ensure that asylum-seekers have their applications processed according to international standards. Europe needs to implement a comprehensive, common asylum policy with minimum standards of protection (*Europe's Refugee Crisis*, International Rescue Committee).

## 7. CLOSING REMARKS

Considering all things, I can conclude that the refugee crisis really shook the architecture of the European Union, showing how unprepared was this organization to face and cope with such a situation. As a consequence, the European community started to lose faith of its own citizens and to lose its credibility among other international and regional organizations.

However, the European Union and its member states have taken some measures to deal with the refugee flux, but all these measures did not address the real cause of the problem, which is the conflict and violence that characterize the regions from where the migrants are coming to Europe. Thus, in order to find proper solutions to deal with the refugee crisis, Europe should first concentrate on stabilizing the situation in Syria. A possible way to do that is to create a security zone in the north of the Syrian state, as Turkey and Bulgaria have already proposed.

Then, all EU member states should develop a common perception of the risk generated by the migrant crisis, in order to allocate necessary resources to identify and implement common measures. After that, countries should decide on the number of refugees they can receive, in accordance with their possibilities and so as not to harm their own interests. And, if the real

cause of the refugee problem is not addressed soon, then the migrants will be still fleeing to Europe in the next few years.

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