

Md. Nazmul Islam

MIGRATION CRISIS IN EUROPE: NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

Abstract

In 2015, one of the most challenging tasks for leaders and policymakers in Europe has been to deal with the recent migration crisis therein. Despite the crisis being rooted in different parts of the Middle-east, Asia and Africa, Europe is facing its aftereffects. Because of having different perspectives like humanitarian and security issues, the situation has become complicated. As a result, response from the European Union (EU) in managing the situation has been divided. However, different measures have already been taken by the EU members and other relevant actors to find out some temporary solutions. Besides the EU, major global powers and the Gulf countries need to take additional responsibilities. For finding a durable solution, it is necessary to address root causes of the crisis and develop strategies towards the countries that help generate mass irregular migration.

1. Introduction

Twenty-eight member states of the European Union (EU) are currently facing the biggest wave of disorderly migration after the Second World War and struggling to respond to handle the surge of desperate migrants towards Europe. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that more than 464,000 migrants have entered Europe by sea for the first nine months of 2015 due to ongoing political upheaval, civil war and exploitation in the Middle-east and Africa. The rate of irregular migration in 2015 is roughly twice of 2014 and eight times of 2013.¹ It has resulted in more than 3,000 deaths, many perishing or missing in the Mediterranean since the beginning of 2015.² These irregular migrants have left their home countries to escape uncertainty, repression and extremism but unfortunately still they are in the midst of insecurity in some destination countries in Europe.

The response from Europe to the challenge has been divided. On the one hand, the humanitarian case for generosity is considered; on the other hand, Europeans feel insecure as irregular migrants are often accused of burdening job opportunities, social services, different public services and supposedly posing threats

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¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *2015 UNHCR Regional Operations Profile – Europe*, Geneva, Switzerland, 2015.

² "What is the Europe Migrant Crisis and How has It Evolved?", *The Financial Times*, 04 September 2015.

to cultural stability.³ Migrants who have been able to reach different European countries are facing several challenges and those who are trying to reach Europe are found in dire situation, succumbing themselves to death sometimes at sea. On the other hand, European countries are facing a deadlock as they have nearly reached a breaking point to solely manage the crisis. Major players and leaders of Europe have been trying to balance the interests of their countries as well as protect the rights of these newly arrived irregular migrants. Though in this situation it is necessary to work by joining hands, but unfortunately, some influential global actors tend to keep themselves mum in responding to this, worsening the crisis.

It is in this context, this paper focuses on the ongoing migration crisis in Europe and the corollary challenges faced both by irregular migrants and countries that are receiving them, root causes behind and possible options to lessen the crisis. For convenience of discussion, the paper is divided into six sections including introduction and conclusion. Section two deals with the conceptual complexity on whether these people should be termed as migrants or refugees. The third section analyses the background and current situation of the crisis. Responses of the EU and the global community have been elucidated in section four. Section five tries to find out several possible options to lessen the crisis. Section six concludes the paper. The paper is qualitative in nature and looks into migration crisis in Europe by analysing different issues and factors pertinent to the continent. The paper limits incorporating data no later than 30 October 2015.

2. Conceptual Complexity: Migrants or Refugees?

Distinguishing migrants from refugees is not an easy and clear-cut process, but it is crucial to differentiate them as different groups are entitled to different levels of assistance and protection under the international law. In Europe, the current crisis is clouded by mixed motives of migration and has become complex to the level whether the newly arrivals are migrants or refugees. This section defines migration, migrants and refugees in accordance with different international legal frameworks to find out what suits the best for these irregular migrants.

Basically, migration is a process of movement from one place to another aimed at settling temporarily or permanently in the new location. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), "migration is the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a state. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants and persons moving for other purposes including family

³ Surya Narain Yadav and P. V. Khatri, *International Migration, National Security and Economic Development*, New Delhi, India: Jnanada Prakashan, 2010, p. 117.

reunification.”⁴ The person who migrates is called a migrant. The IOM defines migrant as, “any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary (3) what the causes of movement are or (4) what the length of stay is.”⁵

When migration occurs across the international borders, it is called international migration. As a concept, ‘international migration’ is multidisciplinary⁶ and there are different paradigms viz. international security, international development and international political economy (see Table 1) and factors - push factors and pull factors in international migration.

Table 1: Different Paradigms in International Migration		
International Security	International Development	International Political Economy
Migration management presents a far greater security challenge to the destination states as immigrants are sometimes perceived as threat to the economic, social and cultural cohesion of the destination countries. ⁷	Short and long term migrations are often the result of global income inequality, with Least Developed Countries (LDCs) acting as the origin and developed countries as the destinations. ⁸	International labour migration is defined as function of supply and demand, wage disparities and size of the labour force in international political economy. ⁹

Source: Compiled from various sources.

The current irregular migration towards Europe is directly linked to the first two paradigms of international migration viz. international security and development. Such migration from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq is a factor in international security as these people are trying to reach Europe to avoid insecurity in their origin countries. But poor migration management presents a security challenge not only to themselves but also to the destination countries of Europe. This is because sometimes they are perceived as a threat to the economic, social and cultural cohesion of different European countries. Regarding discussion on global development and migration, it is vital to mention that many Africans are emigrating mainly due to economic reasons as they are the worst sufferers of unequal global development and income. Better

⁴ International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Glossary on Migration*, Geneva, Switzerland, 2004, p. 41.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶ Russell King, *Theories and Typologies of Migration: An Overview and A Primer*, Sweden: Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration (MIM), 2012, p. 9.

⁷ Surya Narain Yadav and P. V. Khatri, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁸ Robert E. B. Lucas, *International Migration and Economic Development*, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2005, p. 260.

⁹ Kavita R. Khory (ed.), *Global Migration: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 3.

living conditions and income opportunities in Europe influence them to leave their home countries.

There is mixed movement of migration (forced as well as economic) towards Europe but it cannot be gainsaid that the lion share of these is refugees because the preconditions of these people for receiving that status are same as mentioned in different regional and global conventions in this regard. According to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, “a refugee is someone who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”.¹⁰ Though it is the most accepted definition of refugee, it is inadequate to deal with the problems of millions of externally displaced persons worldwide due to public disorder, civil war, internal conflicts, massive human rights violation, famine, etc.¹¹ For removing this inadequacy, the term refugee has been expanded in practice to cover a variety of people in diverse situations demanding assistance and protection.¹² The most notable of these expansions is found in the Convention on Refugee Problems in Africa, a regional instrument adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1969, which includes people fleeing “external aggression, internal civil strife, or events seriously disturbing public order” in African countries.¹³ Besides, the Cartagena Declaration of 1984, approved by representatives and experts from Central American nations and covering Central American refugees, goes further than the 1951 UN Convention by including “persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order.”¹⁴ These regional legal norms are in fact much more inclusive and address the actual causes of current irregular movement from different Middle-eastern and African countries towards Europe.

The current irregular human influx towards Europe is a mixed-migration phenomenon¹⁵ where both economic migrants and refugee status seekers are moving together. This has made the situation complicated. But the majority of people arrived in Europe in 2015 are refugees¹⁶ as they are from the major refugee producing countries mired either in war or internal armed conflicts and for them, international protection is of the essence.

¹⁰ Article 1(A) (1), ‘Definition of Refugee’ by The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, convened under General Assembly Resolution 429 (V) of 14 December 1950.

¹¹ B. S. Chimni (ed.), *International Refugee Law: A Reader*, New Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd., 2000, p. 62.

¹² Gil Loescher, “Refugee Movements and International Security”, *Adelphi Papers* 268, London: Brassey’s for International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 1992, p. 6.

¹³ B. S. Chimni (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 63.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ UNHCR, *Mixed Migration into Europe*, Geneva, Switzerland, 2015.

¹⁶ UNHCR, *UNHCR Viewpoint: “Refugee” or “Migrant” – Which is Right?*, Geneva, Switzerland, 2015.

3. The Recent Migration Crisis in Europe: A Brief Analysis

In analysing the recent migration crisis in Europe, this section basically deals with few major aspects of the crisis with a view to getting a better understanding of the situation. The discussion includes the main reasons behind irregular migration towards Europe; major origins, destinations and routes pertinent to this disorderly movement; and conditions faced by these migrants in Europe. Elucidating these aspects does not only help unearth new information about the current circumstances but also paves the way to take proper steps to control the crisis.

Migration to Europe is not a new phenomenon because after the end of the Cold War, citizens from Central and Eastern Europe, North Africa, Middle-east, South and Southeast Asia and Latin America started to migrate to Western Europe as an opportunity to reduce unemployment, earn remittances and reduce demographic pressures.¹⁷ But the recent political turbulence in some parts of the Middle-east, Africa and Asia is reshaping the migration trends towards Europe. The vast majority of the irregular migrants are likely to leave their home countries because of war or repression but a significant portion, between 20 to 30 per cent, is likely to run off poverty rather than conflict, particularly from West African region.¹⁸ These people take risks in the hope of reaching Europe mainly for two reasons. Firstly, Europe is a wealthy region geographically closer to the Middle-eastern and African countries. Secondly, some countries of Europe (especially Scandinavian countries) are popularly known as better providers of protection and services to asylum seekers and refugees and that is why majority of these irregular migrants tend to reach Europe.

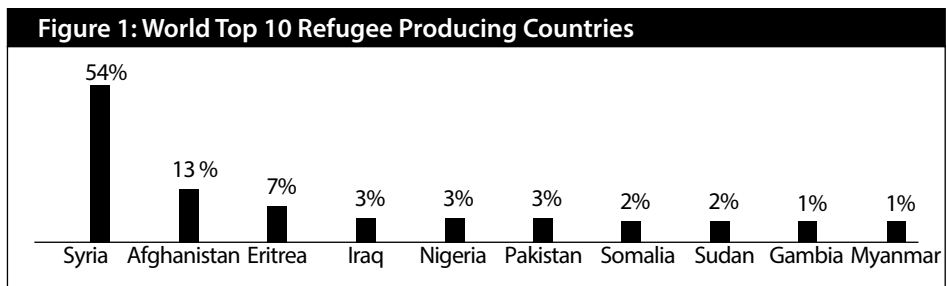
The number of irregulars border-crossing towards Europe started to increase in 2011 as thousands of Tunisians started to arrive at the Italian island of Lampedusa following the onset of the Arab Spring. Many Sub-Saharan Africans, who had previously migrated to Libya during the Gaddafi era, had to leave Libya to flee the unrest in the post-Gaddafi era.¹⁹ The recent surge at EU's maritime borders includes growing numbers of Syrian, Afghan and Eritrean migrants and refugees. Syrians, who are fleeing because of their country's four and a half year old civil war, are the largest group. Afghans looking to escape the ongoing war with the Taliban made up the second largest group of migrants after Syria. Deteriorating security and grinding poverty in Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ukraine, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan have also contributed to the irregular influx. Though there are different reasons behind migration from these countries, protracted conflict therein is the main reason that has forced unfortunate citizens to flee their motherlands.

¹⁷ Myron Weiner and Rainer Munz, "Migrants, Refugees and Foreign Policy: Prevention and Intervention Strategies", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1997, p. 25.

¹⁸ "Refugee Crisis in Europe: News and Discussion", *The Mess Forum*, 04 September 2015.

¹⁹ Rachela Tonta, "The Crisis in the Middle East and Its Impact on Europe", available at <http://networks.hnet.org/node/73374/announcements/79983/crisis-middle-east-and-its-impact-europe>, accessed on 10 October 2015.

According to the UNHCR, the total number of worldwide displaced people reached 59.5 million at the end of 2014, the highest level since the Second World War, with a 40 per cent increase taking place since 2011.²⁰ Among them, Syrian refugees became the largest refugee group in 2014 (3.9 million, 1.55 million more than 2013) by overtaking Afghan refugees (2.6 million) who had been the largest refugee group for the last three decades.²¹ The UNHCR estimated that more than 320,000 migrants had crossed the Mediterranean till September 2015.²² As of mid-September 2015, 84 per cent of Mediterranean Sea arrivals came from the world's top ten refugee-producing countries (54 per cent from Syria, 13 per cent from Afghanistan, 7 per cent from Eritrea, 3 per cent from Iraq, 3 per cent from Nigeria and 3 per cent from Pakistan). The top ten nationalities also include Somalia (2 per cent), Sudan (2 per cent), Gambia (1 per cent) and Myanmar (1 per cent).²³



Source: Frontex and UNHCR, 2015.

Developing countries host the largest share of refugees and the LDCs alone provided asylum to 25 per cent of the total refugees worldwide.²⁴ Even though most Syrian refugees have primarily been hosted by neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, the number of Syrian refugees applying for asylum in Europe steadily started to increase between 2011 and 2015, totalling 428,735 in 37 European countries (including both EU members and non-members) as of the end of August 2015. A good number of them applied for asylum in Germany as it had been the most generous in receiving these irregular migrants.²⁵

3.1 Major Migratory Routes to Reach Europe

As the migrants are from different countries of origin, they use different routes to reach Europe. Frontex recognises several general routes (both sea and land)

²⁰ UNHCR, *Mixed Migration into Europe*, op. cit.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² UNHCR, *Refugees and Migrants Crossing the Mediterranean to Europe*, Geneva, Switzerland, 2015.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ UNHCR, *World at War*, Geneva, Switzerland, 2015.

²⁵ Available at <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>, accessed on 30 September 2015.

used by irregular migrants to enter EU countries.²⁶ These include Western African, Western Mediterranean, Central Mediterranean, Apulia and Calabria routes to Italy, circular route from Albania to Greece, Western Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean routes.

Two EU member states of South Europe *viz.* Greece and Italy serve as the main points of entry for migrants and refugees due to their proximity to the Mediterranean. In 2012, 51 per cent of irregular migrants entered EU via Greece.²⁷ This trend shifted in 2013 after Greek authorities enhanced border controls which included the construction of a barbed-wire fence at the Greek-Turkish border. But by July 2015, Greece once again became the preferred Mediterranean entry point, with Frontex reporting 132,240 illegal EU border crossings for the first half of 2015, five times the number detected for the same period in 2014.²⁸ Syrians and Afghans made up the lion share of irregular migrants traveling from Turkey to Greece. Migrants from some Sub-Saharan African countries also try to reach Europe through Greece and Balkans.²⁹

Figure 2: Main Migratory Routes into EU across Sea



Source: Frontex, 2015.

²⁶ Frontex, *Migratory Routes Map*, Warsaw, Poland, 2015, available at <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map/>, accessed on 05 October 2015.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*



Source: The Independent, UK, 02 September 2015.

The Central Mediterranean passage connecting Libya to Italy was the most trafficked route for Europe-bound migrants in 2014. Frontex reported 91,302 illegal border crossings into Italy for the first half of 2015 and more than 2,000 people died along this route during this time.³⁰ Shifting migratory patterns for the last few years have also exposed Hungary to irregular migration. A growing number of Syrians and Afghans traveling from Turkey and Greece through Macedonia and Serbia has made Hungary the latest frontline in Europe’s migration crisis. Similar migration from Kosovo through Serbia also contributed to influx into Hungary and Frontex reported 102,342 illegal crossings into the country in 2015.³¹

3.2 Conditions Faced by Irregular Migrants in Europe

Although each migrant or refugee camp around the world has its own story, there is a common factor among all these camps - shortage. There are shortages of food, water, shelter and medical facilities, security within the camps especially for women, children and aged persons. Migrants currently staying in Europe are facing the same crisis as the European countries have reached a breaking point in their ability to manage the situation. In addition, the Dublin Regulation (revised in 2013) has worsened the situation that makes the entry-point states bound to bear the unilateral responsibility for migrants.³² This EU law stipulates that migrants must remain in the first European country they enter and that country is solely responsible for examining

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² "Explaining the Rules for Migrants: Borders and Asylum", *The New York Times*, 16 September 2015.

migrants' asylum applications. Migrants who travel to other EU states from bordering states face deportation back to the bordering EU country they entered first due to this regulation that is deteriorating the condition of bordering states like Greece, Italy, France and Spain.

There is another concern that France, Greece and Italy are alleged of not protecting the rights of these forced irregular migrants. There are many migrant detention centres across these countries and several rights groups contend that a number of these detention centres violate Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment.³³ In Italy, migrants face fines and deportation under the controversial Bossi-Fini Immigration Law, which stipulates that migrants must secure work contracts before entering the country.³⁴ This 2002 law makes illicit migrants and aiding illicit migrants punishable by fine or jail. In Greece, the prolonged detention of migrants and asylum seekers, who are sometimes 'mixed in with criminal detainees', has elicited repeated censure from rights groups. In Hungary, a new series of emergency law was adopted in September 2015 that would allow its police to operate detention centres, in addition to making illegal border crossings and aiding migrants punishable by prison time.³⁵ The government also deployed armed troops at the border and erected a barbed-wire fence on Hungary-Serbia border. In April 2015, a public opinion survey found that 46 per cent of the polled Hungarians believed that no asylum seeker should be allowed to enter Hungary.³⁶ However, migrants in the richer north and west find comparatively well-run asylum centres and generous resettlement policies. But these harder-to-reach countries still remain inaccessible to many migrants who are seeking international protection.

Although the EU, IOM and UNHCR are working intensively to meet the basic needs and protection of these helpless people, the given facilities and services remain far behind in contrast to the demand. Budgets for migration and asylum issues have not been kept up with growing demands and needs. In August 2015, the European Commission approved a 2.4 billion euro (US\$ 2.6 billion) emergency aid package, with 560 million euro (US\$ 616 million) for Italy and 473 million euro (US\$ 520 million) for Greece to subsidise their migrant rescue efforts for the next six years.³⁷ These funds still fall short of the growing magnitude of the crisis. Moreover, as the migrants always remain in the midst of insecurity and frustration, it is necessary to counsel them properly especially the children so that they cannot feel negative about their lives and get motivated for leading a normal one.

³³ European Court of Human Rights, *European Convention on Human Rights*, Strasbourg, France, 1953.

³⁴ Alberto Di Martino, *The Criminalization of Irregular Immigration: Law and Practice in Italy*, Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2013, p.7.

³⁵ Balazs Koranyi, "Hungary Passes New Laws to Stem Inflow of Migrants", *Reuters*, 04 September 2015.

³⁶ "Hungary has Strict Immigration Policy", *The Budapest Beacon*, 17 May 2015.

³⁷ Alexander Saeedy, Barbara Lewis, Louise Ireland and Digby Lidstone, "EU Approves 2.4 billion Euros Funding for Migration Crisis", *Reuters*, 10 August 2015.

4. Response from EU Countries and Global Community

Response to the challenge has been divided and there are two facets of the repercussion of this crisis. On the one side, the humanitarian case for generosity is considered, while on the other, there is a feeling of insecurity among European as the migrants are accused of burdening job opportunities, social services, accommodation and other public services as well as supposedly posing threats to traditional European culture.

Muted humanitarian response from some EU countries is coming out due to Europe's increasingly polarised political climate, where many nationalist and anti-immigrant parties are growing. Religion of the migrants has also become another factor as some EU nations like France and Denmark have cited security concerns for justification of their reluctance in accepting Muslim migrants from the Middle-east and North Africa, particularly in the wake of the Paris (*Charlie Hebdo* shooting on 07 January 2015) and Copenhagen terrorist shootings in early 2015.³⁸ In this regard, Charles Kupchan, former Senior Fellow of Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) says that the backdrop to this crisis is that many European countries are facing difficulty in integrating minorities into the social mainstream. Many of these immigrants are coming from Muslim countries and the relationship between immigrant Muslim communities and the majority population is not good.³⁹

Underscoring this point, leaders of Eastern European states like Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic expressed a strong preference for non-Muslim migrants. In August 2015, Slovakia announced that it would only accept Christian refugees from Syria.⁴⁰ Poland has similarly focused on granting asylum to Syrian Christians and the head of the country's immigration office admitted that applicants' religious background would have an impact on their refugee status applications.⁴¹ In Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orban explicitly explained his anti-migrant policies in an anti-Muslim language.⁴² While selecting migrants based on religion is a clear violation of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the EU's non-discrimination laws, these leaders defended their policies by pointing to their own constituencies' discomfort with growing Muslim communities.

By contrast, Germany and Sweden have unveiled some of the most generous asylum policies in the EU. In September 2015, Berlin pledged six billion euro (US\$ 6.6 billion) to support the 800,000 migrants and German officials signaled that the country would take '500,000 asylum seekers a year' after the outbreak of the conflicts

³⁸ Susanne Gargiulo, Greg Botelho and Steve Almasy, "Copenhagen Attacks: Police Kill Man during Shootout", *CNN*, 15 February 2015.

³⁹ Jeanne Park, "Europe's Migration Crisis", *Council on Foreign Relations*, New York, 23 September 2015.

⁴⁰ "Slovakia to EU: We'll Take Migrants - If They're Christian", *The Passport*, 19 August 2015.

⁴¹ Jeanne Park, *op. cit.*

⁴² "Amid Refugee Crisis, Hungary Prime Minister Says Muslims Not Welcome", *Aljazeera America*, 03 September 2015.

in the Middle-east.⁴³ German Chancellor Angela Merkel has warned that if Europe fails on the question of refugees, then it would not be the Europe, the region, wished for.⁴⁴ Similarly, Sweden's liberal asylum policies helped to ease the situation and the country granted refuge to the largest share of EU applicants (317.8 per 100,000) in 2014.⁴⁵ Stockholm had previously announced that it would offer permanent residency to all Syrian applicants in 2013.⁴⁶

In this regard, it may be noted that Germany and Sweden's open immigration policies also make demographic and economic sense as Europe is going through a trajectory of declining birth rates and ageing population that lead towards demographic deficit. Migrants can positively contribute to overcome this demographic deficit in Europe. For example, the UK's current population is 61 million and is likely to reach 70 million in 2028. According to Eurostat, the UK will have the largest population in Europe by 2060 and 70 per cent of this growth will be due to immigration.⁴⁷ Thus, migrants could boost Europe's demography as well contributing to its economies not only as workers but also as taxpayers and consumers. There is, however, a caution that EU citizens might come to consider migrants as economic competitors, not contributors.

The US, which signed the 1967 Protocol to the Refugee Convention but not the original 1951 Convention, has traditionally taken bulk of refugees resettled by the UNHCR.⁴⁸ But, as a global power, it is yet to be vocal enough in countering this crisis. In September 2015, after a long wait, the US broke its surprising and unlikely silence over the issue and Secretary of State John Kerry announced that his country would accept an additional 10,000 Syrians in 2016 and an additional 30,000 global refugees over the next two years.⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, Europe needs more support from the US and it can lead a global response in this crisis even though the people of the US have mixed reactions regarding migrants arriving in Europe.

Different international organisations like IOM and UNHCR are working closely with the EU in strategic cooperation to promote a holistic, coherent and humane approach in migration management and humanitarian issues. Global icons like Pope Francis and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon have called for taking positive action and urged EU leaders to act decisively and quickly to stop these tragedies.⁵⁰

⁴³ "Germany to Spend \$6.6 Billion on 800000 Refugees and Migrants", *NBC News*, 07 September 2015.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ "Sweden's Asylum Offer to Refugees from Syria", *BBC News, Sweden*, 23 October 2013.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Christopher Langton, "The Effects of Global Demographics", in Bastian Giegerich (ed.), *Europe and Global Security*, London: Routledge, 2010, p. 60.

⁴⁸ UNHCR, *States Parties to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol*, Geneva, Switzerland, updated on 17 April, 2015.

⁴⁹ "US to Boost Refugee Intake by 30000 Over Two Years", *The Wall Street Journal*, 20 September 2015.

⁵⁰ "Pope Francis and United Nations Chief Ban Ki-moon have been United in Calls for Action", *Australian Broadcasting Corporation News*, 20 April 2015.

5. Possible Options to Lessen the Migration Crisis

Primarily, shrinking the escalation of conflicts around different parts of the world might be the most effective way to manage the crisis. However, it should not be regarded as panacea. In addition to that, other initiatives like revisiting migrant quota system, giving working rights to the migrants, more response from Gulf countries, ending repression and extremism and following immigrant integration policies could be workable options. In this regard, this section mainly analyses these issues with a view to have various way outs.

As war is the prime reason behind the crisis, it is important to understand that war can damage a specific country but the impacts can affect other countries like the EU is currently facing. For example, what has been the problem for Lebanon after the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011 became the problem of Germany in 2015. Hence, it is imperative for the major powers to intervene more actively to resolve the ongoing conflicts in countries like Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq and Eritrea for their own interests. It is easy to say that many of the migrants would never have left home if there were no war and peace would be the surest way of curbing their numbers. But the situation inside these countries is so complex and involves so many parties that there is no realistic short-term possibility to bring peace therein. The alarming fact is that even if fighting formally stops, post-war condition will not make them safe for many returning citizens and there is an apprehension among them that even if there is a solution, their origin countries would not be a place as it was before.⁵¹ Therefore, it is necessary to restore the peace process after the conflicts stop and rehabilitate victims of the war as soon as possible.

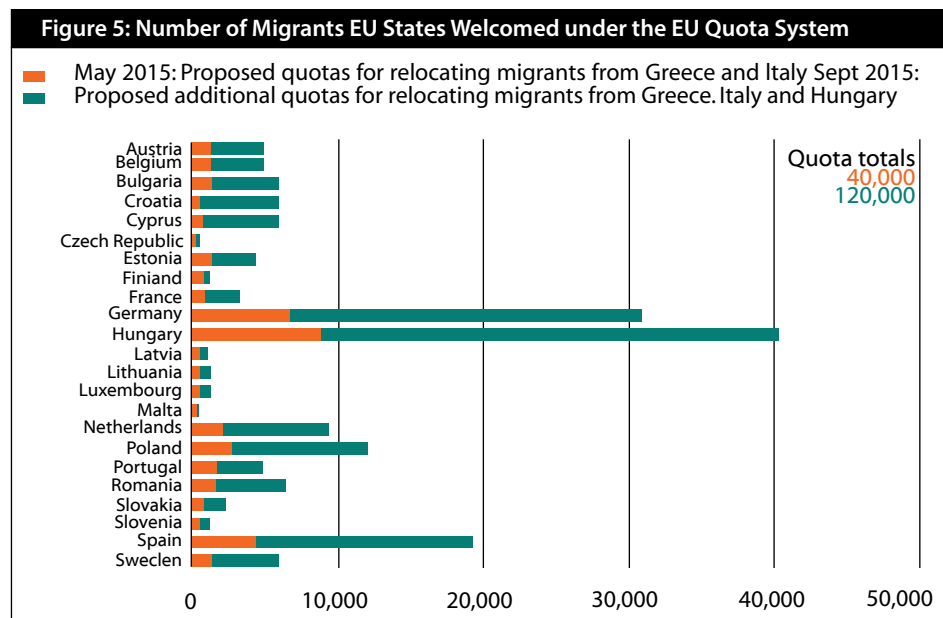
Revisiting the migrant quota system could be a viable option to find out short-term solution to this long-standing problem. In September 2015, EU ministers agreed to resettle 120,000 migrants from Greece and Italy in 23 member states despite vocal objections of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. It is to mention that Greece and Italy will not be required to resettle more migrants. Again, Denmark, Ireland and the UK have exemption from EU asylum policies under the provisions laid out in the 2009 Lisbon Treaty.⁵² This agreement is based on a previous voluntary quota system that called on member states to resettle 40,000 migrants from Greece and Italy over a two-year period.⁵³ But there is an apprehension that free movement inside the Schengen zone might nullify the national resettlement quotas. Besides taking in larger numbers of asylum seekers, the EU and global powers must provide more aid to Middle-eastern countries like Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, which have taken the primary responsibility for Syrian refugees. The influx has altered the demographics and economies of these host nations who are now struggling to provide basic foods, shelter and other necessary services to these people due to funding shortages. Thus,

⁵¹ "The Migrant Crisis in Europe: Readers Questions Answered", *The New York Times*, 27 September 2015.

⁵² "Q&A, The Lisbon Treaty", *BBC News*, 17 January 2011.

⁵³ "EU Leaders Agree to Relocate 40,000 Migrants", *BBC News, Europe*, 26 June 2015.

the EU countries should come forward to provide more aid to these countries. At the same time, though global powerhouses outside Europe (e.g., China, Japan) are not being affected by the crisis, they also need to support UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations in better managing the situation because remaining self-sufficient does not guarantee sufficiency to these countries and every problem has spillover effects which the EU is currently facing.



Source: European Commission, 2015.

Undoubtedly, Turkey has been more hospitable than most other countries. But it is still not a place where Syrians can settle for long as it does not grant work permits for Syrians, except in special circumstances. Therefore, Syrians lack the right of employment, though the right is preserved by the 1951 Refugee Convention.⁵⁴ Giving Syrians more of a long-term future in Turkey, the country that houses most Syrian refugees may persuade some of them to stay there. Another idea is building more asylum centres in North Africa and the Middle-east to primarily handle the situation and confine the outcome of the conflicts within the region. In this regard, European Council President Donald Tusk called for building asylum centres in the two places to enable asylum seekers in order to apply for asylum without undertaking risky journeys across the Mediterranean as well as cutting down the number of irregular migrants arriving on European shores. Nonetheless, there is a concern that the uncontrolled number of applicants expected at such 'hotspots' could further destabilise the already fragile states.

⁵⁴ Article 17 (Wage Earning Employment) of *The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, convened under General Assembly resolution 429 (V) of 14 December 1950.

It is to note that many Arab countries like to keep themselves mum in responding to the crisis. Some are very keen not to allow the entry of migrants, particularly the Syrians. However, some Arab countries have reasonable excuses for that. For example, Lebanon's refugee population is already a quarter of the country's total populace.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Qatar have also justifications in this regard but these are yet to be globally accepted. Rather, their support for various sides in the Syrian war seems to be one of the reasons for protracting the conflict. If Europe has a moral duty to help Syrians, then Gulf nations should do something at least for their own interest, considering that every crisis has spillover effects.

If repression and extremism cannot be ended in the origin countries, then they are likely to keep producing more refugees. For example, even if Libya was brought under the control and the Syrian war ended, many people who are fleeing to other countries would remain in the origin countries. Hence, measures like eradicating poverty and ending repression in the origin countries need to be undertaken. Uninterrupted economic investment in the countries of origin could be a sustainable response to the migration crisis. In addition, it is necessary to follow immigrant integration policies if voluntary repatriation is denied. Different policies may be followed to integrate and mainstream this huge influx. These include employment policy, education policy, social cohesion policy, housing policy, etc.⁵⁶ Furthermore, reviewing the Dublin Regulation might be an important step to establish a common European asylum policy.⁵⁷ Under the current system, the burden of responsibility falls disproportionately on entry-point states with open borders. It is important to mention here that many of the bordering countries in practice have already stopped enforcing Dublin Regulation and are allowing migrants to pass through to secondary destinations in the north or west Europe.⁵⁸

6. Conclusion

Migration is an age-old phenomenon that helps bring different ideas, people and culture together. Globalisation plays a part in changing the patterns of migration by facilitating and encouraging migrants from almost anywhere in the world.⁵⁹ As the global situation is changing day by day, different drivers of global migration have transformed as well due to expanding global labour markets, booming Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and transport system, trade and economic

⁵⁵ Mary Creagh, "Syrian Refugee Crisis: Lebanon Steps up while Britain Fails to Engage", *The Guardian*, 08 September 2015.

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Collett and Milica Petrovic, *The Future of Immigrant Integration in Europe: Mainstreaming Approaches for Inclusion*, Washington DC, USA: Migration Policy Institute, March 2014.

⁵⁷ European Commission, *Common European Asylum System*, 23 June 2015.

⁵⁸ "Germany, the EU Country which Takes the Most Asylum Seekers, is Straining", *The Economist*, 21 August 2015.

⁵⁹ Christopher Langton, 2010, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

activities. Migration helps create opportunities to enhance human development, promote decent work and strengthen collaboration. Simultaneously, it poses some challenges pertinent to economic and social security that, for example, Europe is currently facing. The migration crisis that is the spillover effect of present unrest in the Middle-east and North Africa does not only shock Europe but also gives a warning to the global community to rethink the fact - why and how conflicts are detrimental to human civilisation.

Different interventions may help EU member states better manage the crisis but these steps alone cannot stem the tide of migrants. Global leaders must address root causes of irregular migration and act accordingly that includes bringing an end to the Syrian civil war, restoring stability to different regions worldwide that are going through instability, increasing aid and development measures especially to the Sub-Saharan African countries, reducing global income inequality, etc. It is important to mention that without finding a political solution to the crisis, Europe will continue to struggle with migrant inflows. There is an apprehension that lack of a coordinated and proportional EU response in the near-to-mid-term could continue to fuel the crisis, pushing individual countries to emphasise on national security over international protection that could in turn result in closed borders, barbed-wire fencing and maritime pushback. Such practices will not just jeopardise the conditions of migrants and refugees but will also impede the values EU promotes like protecting human life and the right to asylum. Thus, a coordinated and comprehensive approach should be followed as well as maximum number of stakeholders at national, regional and global levels need to be engaged actively to manage and resolve the crisis.

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