

# EUROPE'S MIGRATION/REFUGEE CRISIS: GLOBALIZATION AT RISK

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## Abstract

The paper examines the EU's challenges in the field of migration, and suggests how Brussels and EU governments might promote its own form of order, and suggestions on how to reframe current approaches to facilitate a more effective and appropriate response.

For more than 20 years, Europe was encouraged to see the migration as a synopsis of globalization, victory of global economy over territorial order. Today, we are facing a geopolitical competition. States all over around the world, especially in Europe, are not trying only to return the control of its borders, but also to benefit from the migration crisis for geopolitical gains.

The paper aims to answer several important questions: is geography today more important than the trade? How Europe can cope with the competition of promoting alternative measures and new forms of power? Why are there alliances between EU member-states regarding the migration crisis and what is their purpose?

**Key words:** globalization, migration, refugees, European Union

## INTRODUCTION

The migration and asylum in EU positively increased in the last 25 years. First, in 1992 EU restarted the common labour market; in 1995 created the Schengen area; in 1999 established the Area of Freedom, Justice and Security (immigration, border control, asylum policy); in 2005 adopted the Global Approach on Migration; in 2009 these commitments continued towards internationalization. Despite the permanent critic indications regarding the Europe as a fortress, EU member-states showed maturity for political bravery and liberalization. Their progress could be summarized in a series of five-year term strategies on migration and mobility – Tampere 1999, Hague 2004, Stockholm 2009 and post-Stockholm 2014 – all adopted on highest political level by the European Council and focused on free movement through the Schengen area, the right of EU citizens to work in other member-states, the labour migration and the asylum. But regardless the previous documents, the latest 2014 strategy remain nameless. Having in mind that all previous strategies were named by the city of adoption, the latest strategy bears the name of its predecessor, because some member-states fought with domestic limitations; lack of interest by EU institutions; and lack of discussion in member-states where the immigration issues are source of tension.

But, EU has its own justification, indicating the reforms according which all EU summits are now held in Brussels, thus the common practice of naming the legislation according the city of adoption became unnecessary. It means that every future strategy shall be known as the Brussels Strategy, thus creating some confusion. Many consider that this might be the last time that EU member-states attempt to openly and proactively face with the migration. All this is far from the 1990s and the first EU programme on migration and home affairs. Here is a simple illustration of political fall of in EU: 15 years ago in Tampere, EU member-states bound themselves with ambitious goal. They committed on treating the migrants from outside the EU as EU citizens working in their states. Or, put in other words, they would expand general economic and political rights for third-country citizens on same level as migrants according the EU law. So far, EU member-states focused their efforts in attempts to liberate EU workers from the term “migrant”. In Tampere, EU went a step forward – it attempted to apply this liberal terminology on immigrants entering the EU.

15 years later, opposite is the rule: EU citizens are now treated as workers from outside the bloc and facing with hostility and protectionism. This raises serious concerns regarding whether the European democracy may function under these circumstances. In 1990s Europe raised the challenge in maintaining democratic control over their increased globalized economy. Today, however, EU and its member-states found themselves increasingly reactive on international changes and fell useless by their past rules and procedures.

Then, how EU approached the issue of migration? With serious security crisis, EU must go further than simple exceed of the status-quo. But EU is not able to consider strategically without answering the basic question: what is the current situation it faces today? “Unprecedented” is the word often used describing the situation in which EU is today and setting free the migration and refugee

crisis to an extent EU, more or less, forgot it. Today, in 2015-16, migration is ranked as a source for serious tensions among states and as such it appears that the world is turning back to the order before 1990, with globalization decreasing and replaced with geopolitics.

### **EUROPEAN UNION MIGRATION *VIS-À-VIS* GLOBALIZATION**

The idea of migration geopolitics sounds strange for most of the EU member-states. For over 25 years, member-states were encouraged to see on globalization as a fact of globalization, including individuals in search for better life. Migration was considered as a triumph of economic interdependence over the territorial order. Therefore, the EU considers the problem of flow of refugees and migrants as a simple prolongation of this process. To be convinced that this is not anarchy but migration geopolitics, we need to consider the evidence of a wider scheme.

There is a strong connection between the migration/refugee crisis and geopolitics through the layers of EU's migration regime. These layers are: internal EU's regime on free movement; politics regarding external borders, including immigration and asylum; migration cooperation with neighbours; and the role of EU in regulation of migration. Governments and political bodies are using the migration in order to influence in the changes of the international order. If we look at some of the EU member-states, France and UK are using the migration to change the EU's political geography; Germany and southern member-states are using the migration for achieving zero-sum of political gain; in the neighbourhood, migration is used for competition of civilization violence, while at the global level, migration is used as a bipolar completion of skilful.

First, the free movement influence on migration creates possibilities to change the Europe's political geography. Alliances among European states are being created in order to prevent the consequences of mass-migration. UK and Switzerland are giving efforts for reformation and loosen up of free movement rules. Hungary opposes the free movement based on the consideration that the current regime does not impose short-term mobility through EU, but leads toward permanent mass-migration. For Denmark, if the migration is in need of reforms, it means that it might scratch the surface of national identity: refusing the idea that the four freedoms are package, may confirm that EU faces with the fundamental choice between free trade and free movement. France put efforts in deepening the labour market in the Eurozone and the free movement rules in cases when crisis emerges in one member-state to allow workers to cross borders and reach healthier economies.

Second, regarding EU borders, member-states are influencing the geography for achieving political gain. On one side, EU's asylum system is divided in two geographic parts. Germany and other northern states are under impact by immigration issues of Italy and Greece, although it is all about principles of solidarity and mutual responsibility. In this context, geography has its role, because southern states complain about being understood as buffer states and therefore have the right to rely on geography in their benefit. On other side, EU's border regime is divided on three sides: Western Europe secures the EU's airports and seaports; Eastern Europe main land borders; Southern Europe main sea border. Each of these borders is exposed on different set of problems and Frontex just begun to discern these differences. Further, according the new EU rules, there is a possibility for suspension of Schengen members because of poor border control. Italy and Greece may suspend itself from the Schengen zone since geographically are too exposed on flow of migrants, meaning they are in the first line of defence of labour market, thus shifting the external borders and flow of migrants towards northern states. Such consideration has its background in the burden member-states undertake and mostly calculated through the number of population, meaning that Malta may seriously be in danger and therefore enjoys some political weight. In this game-play, Germany stands alone, considering that EU might be a platform for attracting foreign workers and confirms the need of offering legal means as part of efforts for fighting against illegal immigration.

Third, in EU region, migration is used for civilization competition. For EU candidate-states, such as Macedonia, early approach to Schengen area is given in order of conducting domestic reforms and possibility for Western Balkans states to define the free movement regime on common ground. However, the enlargement is frozen for the next 5 years and may lead to a situation where most of the Western Balkans states turn their eyes on East. In this contest, Turkey may lift its border and trigger mass-migration in order to gain political use, angry because of EU's failure to lift up the visa restrictions for Turkish citizens, disappointed by its own visa regime and obliged by international law to recognize only European refugees. Further, EU faces with new form of mixed migration, making confusion regarding the distinction between forced and voluntary migration. At the moment, new kind of migration is creating, comprised of terrorists and radicals.

Fourth and finally, simply put, West is marginalized by the rest. Demilitarization of border control is key characteristic of EU's model in conflict prevention. However, progress has been made in order to allow international trade and migration to unroll undisturbed and free of military threat. In current conditions, borders are remilitarized, in some soft variation, with the re-emergence of border disputes and increased military presence in EU's border control tasks. Further, the refugee regime is based on ideological assumption that all Western states are moving towards liberal democracy. As the spread of liberal democracy shrinks and political multi-polarity deepens, this assumption is questionable, as the refugee regime may become a playground for ideological battles and regional divergences. This global trend towards regionalization of flow of migrants might be in EU's interest and to establish new regional layer of cooperation leading to strengthening of global governance. Still, such free movement regime may trigger a competition among other regions that are promoting free movement. By that, EU risks a fragmentation in global migration regime. The global migration regime for long time reflected the western perception of migration, focusing on flows and seeing migrants as poor and helpless people. This frustrates the states of origin which are concerned about losing its elite due to low qualified jobs. However, the real differences between developed and developing states seem to disappear: West and North are no longer the only poles, but global flows make way for inter-regional mechanisms. States which are considered as states of immigration are becoming states of migration and their workers move toward states that once were considered as poor ones. Therefore, the West versus the Rest is unnecessary battle of titles versus challenges.

### **EUROPEAN UNION MIGRATION CRISIS *VIS-À-VIS* DE-GLOBALIZATION**

If the migration crisis is not an example of anarchy caused by globalization, then there is another possibility pointing that this is an example of de-globalization, a sign of re-emergence of national barriers and state prerogatives. The global migration as a form of mobility factor showed especially heavy for regulation by classic nation-states and puts the question in front whether this gives the EU an impulse for de-globalization.

Most of the geopolitics tensions might be seen from the manner trade and capital are forcibly de-globalized. Simply, western states are no longer dependent on other state regarding labour force. Still, economic de-globalization effects are felt in numerous progressive EU's migration policies. One example is the principle of encouraging migrants in adopting multiple identities. Such approach is guided by EU as part of the effort to obscure the identity policy standing on the way of economic gain. Workers from other parts of the EU were described as "European citizens", while workers from outside the EU as citizens of Europe and their domestic state. EU governments in attempt to eradicate the double citizenship at the end of the 1980s as a threat to the national order suddenly tried to put the issue on international level: as the economic inter-dependence grew and the threat of conflict decrease, national devotees seemed less relevant. As the threat conflict re-emerges on the international stage, the post-nationalism in EU is considered to be a source of instability within the international order. EU member-states are now unwilling to share its population and instead they lead aggressive national citizenship policy.

The ongoing debate on refugee crisis is another example, although it illustrates a more different dynamic – EU aggressively defends its post-national policies it leads to a geopolitical gain. European states are those moving the de-globalization process. EU tired of request for globalization of migration, might be just happy to lift the bridge and went for a long nap. And while other states – mostly Russia and Turkey – are prepared to exploit this weakness and to compete with Europe about conceptualization and the control of migration, exactly the EU's fragility is in the heart of this competition. EU opened itself for larger flow of migrants and now is incapable of confronting with the situation. EU's attempts of accepting the global migration without liberalization of their citizenship legislations or modernisation of welfare rules has lift up the nationalism and encouraged the international policy on zero-sum.

Europeans failed to confront with this global political economy of migration. They are now criticised for turning around their absolute advantage in international negotiations in negative direction. They mismanaged the connection between trade and migration, undertaking more migrants than needed, antagonising the sending-states and leading to a shape of transnational mobile population which shows no loyalty for the existing territorial order. Worst of all, Europeans broke the common bond between globalisation and liberal democracy: as classic nation-states, EU fights for the incorporation of migrants. Europeans accepted the migration without acknowledging the challenge of

representative democracy and with no concerns regarding changes in citizenship laws or modernisation of welfare systems.

EU's attempt to cope with immigration without giving the immigrants access to representative democracy gives a zero-sum in international relations. The sending-states are the first to lose. They come round the idea of gaining citizenship for their nationals. On the other side, sending-states recognize that they are not losing national when they gain citizenship in other states, but reverse is the fact. If migrants have secure status in the receiving-state, then it is easier for them to get a job, to come and go, and return in their states of origin for longer period without losing the re-entry right. This creates mutual gains for migrants and their sending and receiving states: mobile workers may acquire knowledge and capital and invest in their own states. The receiving state also loses if the migrants have no right to vote. This is because the political parties have no intention to get closer to immigrants, leading to political dead-end. But, not just the immigrants lose. Immigration creates political facts also for the domestic population. It aggravates the situation in national cohesion and between genders, generations, classes and rural and urban population. Therefore, immigrants are ideological vector that can change and deepen the tensions among left-wing and right-wing parties in European economies. The effect is to create larger distance between governments and voters. Still, the real difficulty might be the opposite: the danger when migrants seek no right of vote. When migrants are crossing states, it is an act of self-empowerment outside the borders of representative democracy. EU's general failure to incorporate migrants simply legitimise the existence of international grouping which have little attachment whether to domestic states or sending states.

### **GLOBALIZATION OF MIGRATION AND EUROPEAN UNION'S CHOICE**

Based on the abovementioned, the fundamental question is: why the EU accepted the globalization at first place? Above all, globalization imposed the global economy liberalization along with the representative democracy. The obvious answer is that there was no choice: the economic forces unleashed after the Cold War overpowered the EU and today those forces underline that the bloc may reconsider its own model. But this assumption of economic determination inevitably ignores the importance of political choice. Globalization in its form today may be seen not more than a politically constructed geo-spatial order.

EU authorities accepted the idea that the migration is determined by the laws of global economy more than the political choice. But this is hard to be seen. Let's take a closer look at the migration issue between the West and the East. For example, if Polish workers are to be transformed from political subjects to ordinary economic subjects in UK, it is not because of economic forces, it is politics. In this case, Poland and UK failed to foresee this. They assume that the EU's free movement regime may lead to massive and permanent migration. The big picture looks like this: UK accepts the migrants from Poland, having in mind their low wages and skills. Therefore, UK sees no sense in investing in language training and skills, because these migrants are assumable capable for only low wage jobs. In the meantime, Poland only sees the prospect of significant loss of population as workers leave the country for better paid jobs. As a result, the government in Poland does not prepare its citizens living in other states and instead of turning back home, their workers end employed in low paid jobs in UK, leading towards sense of estrangement by its own government. So, it is really about politics, not global economic determination and the EU's decision-making failed to cope with political choices. Since 1989 EU failed in spatial politics: globalization is just another spatial order, combining space and time under specific set of preferences, reflecting certain norms and exceptions from USA.

Migration is not completely global in its logic and tends to be guided by parochial regions, cultural and kinship relations regarding the trade. The flow of people among states also generates changes in classic forms of democracy, equalization of hierarchies and decentralization of powers, as well as significant supranational cooperation.

In order to push the mobility in more liable form, the international cooperation concept rests on some suspicious assumptions. This can be shown in a selective manner that migration is coupled with trade in the global system. Specifically, on one side, migration is presented as equivalent of trade as it establishes global territorial scale, but on the other side, migration is presented as inferior towards trade in moments when there is a threat for undermining the chosen unit for governing that territory.

### **CAN EUROPEAN UNION OFFER SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE?**

The European Migration Agenda was published in May 2015 uniting different steps from which EU should build coherent and comprehensive approach on migration. The Agenda indicates that

“the immediate imperative is the duty to protect those in need”, but continues to estimate the migration crisis through the eyes of security in EU. Besides the endorsement of the Agenda, European governments continue to be agglomerated by the scale and speed of flow of migrants and refugees. Following the European Commission’s efforts for division of asylum seekers, refugees are automatically divided when the state is confronting with rapid flow of migrants. However, member-states are slow in executing the plan and numbers are still not coordinated.

The Agenda certainly opened new directions, but so far with short use. It proposes relocation of migrants (for those already in EU) and resettlement (for those outside the EU) according to established criteria. Share of responsibilities and fair division is necessary and should be compulsory for all EU member-states, having in mind the different parameters, such as the size of the country, population, GDP, unemployment and political situation. This will avoid situations where some member-states in first line, along with those receiving large part of migrants bear the burden of migrants flow. Other side of the Agenda is the return of illegal migrants and the rejected asylum seekers. The return is conditional in third states with re-admission agreements and by respecting its commitments, they should be offered with more motivated and better conditions for fulfilling their obligations. With no possibilities for brighter future, those returned will use all means to return to Europe. The debate should decide what to do with those not qualified for asylum, but not able to return to their countries.

If EU accepted a global order that did not suit it, it can only blame itself. At the end of the 1980s there was a speculation that this would be Europe’s time: at the top of US influence, most of the responsibilities would be transferred on world regions and that the EU is the one to step forward. Today, the first part of this prediction seems to be realizing – the world order made way for multipolarity. The second part more or less: instead of securing appropriate means for governing the regional tensions, EU’s impulse is put on deepening the transatlantic relations and shifting the leadership on USA. From Brussels perspective, EU has no choice, since organizations as NATO are established to make firm the US supremacy in Europe and US cannot use it for deterring the European states. So, can EU at least have the basis to offer something constructive?

From today’s perspective, if EU stood on its ground – applying regionalism and constitutionalism – it could have been on the top of the global trends. Along with the decrease of US influence in globalization as a spatial order and the obvious shift towards multipolarity, the world is opened for new and innovative EU governing models. Regionalism represents a potential form of cooperation between national and global levels. Besides this, other regions look upon EU for directions as how this regionalism might look if they want to be part of building supranationality. EU undertook multipolarity as bases for overturning its traditional inter-regionalization in favour of deeper supranational building and equal relation with regional power-states.

But in reality, this supranationality – accepting the movement of globalization and the representative democracy – gain only part of the EU’s answer for world order after 1989. EU today is more than a classic nation-state. In today’s global economy, EU expanded itself outwards from its own circle – European internal market border policy, neighbourhood and world policy. This was more or less, in search of own approach to govern globalization, approach in 2000 introduced in the Lisbon Strategy. Such approach is aimed to introduce EU as an economy based on knowledge which embraces the new communication forms, as well as new economic forces and democratic practices, and by that and by that confirming the traditional social model and capability of establishing norms.

In order to understand how this complicated and multilayer model emerged, it is necessary to understand internal EU’s spatial politics. Instead of introducing regional order *per se*, EU found itself in the middle of at least three competing visions, with each having its role in the migration policy. These are: France’s idea of EU as Euro-Mediterranean Empire (European integration emphasizing the European social model); Germany’s idea of EU as a Union of European states (based on state-building elements) and UK’s idea of EU as a Western bloc (accepting global economic trends). As globalization disintegrates as a spatial order with completion present to replace it, these three visions continue to secure the outlines of EU’s answer.

These three competing visions not only explain the EU’s attempt to combine representative democracy and globalism, but also the existing tensions regarding migration. In the internal market, France attempts to put the EU along political and geographic lines of its own Euro-Mediterranean Empire, exploiting the UK’s battle for alleviation of US supremacy in economic globalization. In border regime there is the Germany’s attempt to impose its Union of European states through the enlargement process and expanding the Schengen area in order to help the reunification of Europe in a set of common norms and rules. There is also a civilization battle in the Eastern and Southern

neighbourhood regarding Germany's hegemonic re-bordering of Europe and the interaction with France's ideology. On global level, EU found itself accompanied in the unnecessary confrontation of the West versus the Rest.

The situation looks serious, but gives a sign of conciliation in EU's power: the emergence of migration geopolitics may be classified according the four layers of EU's order and to discover the old forms of European power. This suggests that EU keeps some global influence, although mostly expressed in negative manner and thanks to its major member-states. What needs to be seen is the influence outside EU's internal regulation, besides that what EU has already undertook. But the attacks in Paris and Brussels show the migration's dark side. And as the EU's capability of adopting convictional vision disappears, traditional partners are increasingly re-question old political and lost battles. It is clear the EU should consider what kind of spatial order wants to impose and how it wishes to mobilize the necessary resources.

In this context, these three visions for mixing time and space may usefully be scaled for the age of multipolarity. At the moment, EU is locked in three competitive geographies: partly in Germans regional geography, partly in French Mediterranean geography and partly in UK's transatlantic geography. In contrast, if EU wishes to establish a set of guiding principles, both internationally and among the population, it needs to put these three agendas in single common geography: applying French universalism regarding global governance; applying Germans cosmopolitanism for regional relations in the EU; and applying the UK's view regarding the EU's external affairs.

### **INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION: EUROPE AT "WAR"**

The paper elaborates the obvious return of geopolitical tensions in the world. That is one way for seeing at things. But it is necessary to go back at the beginning, because it puts the migration at the heart of the international system, guided by simple tension – between the human capacity for mobility and the collective need for order. The human mobility is guided by economy and insecurity. And in each phase of human history, the range of that mobility spread the existing territorial order, forcing the society to evolve. But migrants did not have everything what it takes, and the territorial order was again re-arranged in old or new forms, through economic efficiency, violence, ideology and religion.

It seems that globalization solves this problem. By liberalizing the cross-border traffic of goods, resources, capital and services it is supposed to ease the migration pressure, and by that the globalization will serve for strengthening the most successful form of territorial order the world so far created – national representative democracy. And it is not only the US influence, but also the growing European influence is being criticized: world expansion of nation-state; representative democracy and trade are seen as a response for the local European dilemma – the permanent settlement of large and poor population.

For US the un-knitting of globalization mainly took the form of trade wars with China. Both states have needs of resources and have similar ways of securing and delivering them to its citizens. But these trade wars may be seen as a sign of deeper tension regarding the way globalization arranges human mobility with the false promise of equal delivery of resources to the world national population. In states around the EU, such tension occurs differently. The traditional mobile population feels cut from the resources because of the artificial territorial order. In the meantime, rich states in the neighbourhood are using its trade to avoid democratization and therefore their population feels trapped. Although the flow of migration is still open, classic forms of representative democracy in EU still exist. Europe must pull out from these migration wars.

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