
The EU's International Relations and Migration Diplomacy at Times of Crisis: Key Challenges and Priorities

Frank DÜVELL*

Abstract

This contribution explores the key challenges of contemporary EU policies that shape and can contribute to explaining the EU's foreign policy and diplomacy in the fields of neighbourhood policy and accession as well as migration policies, and, notably, its responses to the 2015/2016 migration and refugee crisis. It analyses how social unrest, uprisings and wars in the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe, the rise of terrorism and Jihadism, the refugee crisis as well as inequality within the EU fuelled the rise of illiberal, anti-EU and anti-immigrant sentiments, resulting in a security crisis, ruptures between EU member states and subsequently a crisis of the European project and thus the post-war European peace project. It argues that stabilising and protecting the EU overrides all other policy considerations. This priority subsequently also informs EU foreign policy vis-à-vis Turkey.

Key Words

EU External Relations, Migration Diplomacy, EU-Turkey Relations, Refugee Crisis, Security Crisis.

Introduction

This paper explores the key challenges of contemporary EU policies that shape and can contribute to explaining the EU's foreign policy and diplomacy in the field of migration, and notably its international policies in response to the 2015/2016 migration and refugee crisis. These key challenges, I suggest, are the record displacement of around 22 million people in the wider neighbourhood, the underlying manifold ruptures, conflicts ranging from revolutions and counter-revolutions to sectarian conflicts as well as dictatorial governments or other similar problems in the wider neighbourhood of the EU, the threats from Islamist terrorism in the EU and many of its partner countries, the resurgence of nationalism, anti-EU sentiments and extreme politics in the EU, the deepening inequality within and between member states which fuels these radical trends, and finally some international isolation and lack of responsibility sharing with respect to the refugee crisis. This complex set of external and internal challenges

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., University of Oxford, Senior Researcher, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), United Kingdom.
E-mail: franck.duvell@compas.ox.ac.uk

has merged into a crisis of values, unleashed forces of self-destruction, undermined the internal cohesion and subsequently also the external power of the EU, and even affected the post-war European peace order, all of which have subsequently informed its foreign policy.

Complex set of external and internal challenges has merged into a crisis of values, unleashed forces of self-destruction, undermined the internal cohesion and subsequently also the external power of the EU.

The article is based on research, dissemination and subsequent discussions of the ESRC-funded project MedMiG - Unravelling the Mediterranean Migration Crisis, conducted from September 2015 to September 2016.¹ Whilst the actual research focussed on the dynamics of the migrations in 2015 much of the subsequent interests like conference invitations and media queries focussed on the increasingly hostile responses by some parts of the European constituencies and several governments and the EU's struggles to come to terms with and develop an adequate response to the crisis that would be in line with her values.

The Refugee and Migration Crisis and International Relations

By 2015, a record number of people in the neighbourhood of the EU, around 22 million, were displaced; this is around a third of the total number of displaced persons globally, around 65.3 million, and as many as by the end of the Second World War. Of this number, 12.4 million were newly displaced in 2015.² Until late 2017, the submission date of this article, this number has remained stable. Around two thirds of the displaced persons are internally displaced within their own countries whilst a third, about seven million, fled to other countries, like Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Russia. A small proportion, six percent of those in the EU neighbourhood, fled to the EU. In total, around 1 million people, mostly refugees, arrived by sea in 2015. In addition, in 2015, around 300,000 arrived overland, mostly from the Balkan countries, or by plane. This continued at a lower level in 2016, when by June another 300,000 arrived, and in 2017 by October with the arrival of around 150,000.³ From 2011 to the summer of 2017, the total number of asylum applications in the EU had reached around 4.7 million.⁴ It is important to note that 11.7 million displaced persons are Syrians and another approximately 2.5 million are

Ukrainians, in sum 22 %. In this sense, Russia, by supporting Syria's President Assad and armed separatists in Eastern Ukraine and by intervening and sending troops into fighting, is both directly and indirectly responsible for generating large-scale displacement.

By 2015, a record number of people in the neighbourhood of the EU, around 22 million, were displaced.

However, apart from the facts and in order to move on, the analysis and debate often involve some convenient conceptualisations which need to be critically interrogated. For instance, whilst conventionally we talk about the primary root causes of displacement and migration referring to determinants like violence, persecution or economic hardship in the countries of origin, like Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea or Ukraine, we find in our project a significant proportion of people from these countries who had already fled to Iran, Turkey, Sudan or Libya, resided there for considerable periods of time but felt compelled to move on. In some cases, people have been even living in two or more different countries, like Iran and Turkey or Burkina Faso and Libya before moving on. The drivers of this type of secondary or - in the

case that people had already resided in a second country- even tertiary movements are conceptualised as secondary root causes. These are described by our respondents as lack of a stable status, lack of access to asylum, lack of economic opportunities and generally unviable living conditions, discrimination or crime. Because these conditions determine migration to Turkey, the EU or other destination countries, they are as powerful as the primary root causes. This in return may complicate foreign and international aid policy with respect to addressing forced displacement: it is no longer sufficient to address only the primary root causes. Instead, the EU recognises that addressing policy deficiencies and sending more aid to the main first countries of reception, such as Turkey, Iran and other countries, are important in order to diminish the various drivers of migration.

The European response was to some extent based on partly orchestrated misperceptions which nevertheless generated a threat perception.

Second, we need to interrogate the scope of the phenomenon of refugee arrivals in the EU. On the one hand,

the EU has received almost 5 million refugees, adding to the several million refugees accepted in previous years and decades and adding to its immigrant population of 54.4 million. This demonstrates that the EU hosts a significant proportion of the global refugee population and suggests that some perceptions held in Turkey with regard to burden-sharing need to be put in perspective. In absolute terms the magnitude of displacements, the large number of arrivals in 2015/16 appears huge and the images of tattered masses arriving at small ports and beaches or sometimes overrunning border controls looked literally overwhelming and this was the perception generated by the media. However, here lies a problem and we need to put things into perspective. The absolute level of displacement is similar to the situation after WWII, however, Europe's population was significantly smaller then, also then Europe lay in ruins whereas now it is the most affluent region of the world. Likewise, there are fewer arrivals than during some previous migrations, such as that of ethnic Germans to Germany (over four million) or resettlement from Indochina (2.5 million), and it is not dissimilar to the refugee influx from the Yugoslavian conflict to Germany (700,000-800,000). Indeed, the actual number of refugee arrivals in 2015/16 is equivalent to only 0.3 % of the EU population. Our research findings also

suggest that the arrivals are not tattered masses but rather well-educated urban middle-classes. Up to two thirds of our sample of 500 interviews who took the Aegean route belonged to urban middle-classes. This implies that the European response was to some extent based on partly orchestrated misperceptions which nevertheless generated a threat perception.

Finally, migration not only relates countries to one another but therefore also frequently compels states to talk to one another over migration issues.⁵ Thus, in the case of migration, it is peoples' determination, or in sociological terms human agency, which determines international relations. Migration thereby also impacts on and partly determines the power relations between states.⁶ For instance, in the case of the Mediterranean refugee crisis, one supranational state, the EU, becomes more vulnerable and more dependent on collaboration with other states - in this case Turkey and to a lesser extent Libya but also Macedonia - and thus weaker counterparts, like Turkey and Libya, potentially gain some leverage and thus relative power. Previously, Turkey-EU relations were almost solely shaped by the accession process, which meant that Turkey had to comply with EU standards- though this was also inspired by national interests with respect to reforming legislations and institutions. Meanwhile, the refugee

crisis added another element to the list of determinants of the power-balance between Turkey and the EU and subsequently reconfigured relations. This became most apparent over the revival of the EU-Turkey Action Plan in October 2015 and the institutionalist EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016, trading effective controls of sea borders, return of irregular immigrants and organised resettlement to the benefit of the EU for funding and visa liberalisation to the benefit of Turkish citizens.⁷ Further to this, the role of Russia as a country that contributes to large-scale displacement and the subsequent impact this has on the stability of other countries merits more attention than the issue currently receives.

However, so far the EU-Turkey Statement or 'deal' as often denoted has not been implemented as agreed. Neither has visa liberalisation been granted, mostly for reasons related to the EU's usual conditions, nor were refugees in any significant numbers returned or resettled. Only the all-important control of migration was intensified, which stopped the flow.⁸ However, in the meantime, the EU and its member states won valuable time, set up a reception and detention system in Greece, closed the Balkan route that served as a main attraction for people in Turkey, and increased border control capacities in the Aegean Sea.

The Terrorist Threat and Security Crisis

Almost simultaneously to the refugee crisis, we witnessed the emergence of the so-called Islamic State (IS) or Daesh in the Middle East and later North Africa, a series of terrorist attacks in Turkey, France and Belgium, as well as some large-scale crimes in Germany which added to the partly real, partly perceived threats to the people of Europe. Notably, the atrocities of IS/Daesh, like the beheading of captives from 2014 and the strategic use of 'visual imagery and visual media in contemporary warfare'⁹ and the enslavement and sexual exploitation of Yazidi women, caught the imaginations of and horrified the European people and generally the international community.¹⁰ Such atrocities and the offensives of IS/Daesh in Mosul in 2014, Ramadi in spring 2015 and in summer 2015 in the region east of Aleppo¹¹ were important factors contributing to the displacement of people and thereby fuelling the European refugee crisis. Finally, a significant number of

Almost simultaneously to the refugee crisis, we witnessed the emergence of the so-called Islamic State (IS) or Daesh in the Middle East and later North Africa.

foreign jihadi fighters including many from European countries and the dangers associated with their potential return rang the alarm bells.¹² The subsequent terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, repeatedly in Ankara and İstanbul and later in Brussels in March 2016, and in Berlin in December 2016 not only extended IS/Daesh terror towards Europe but they were considered ‘an evil attack against us all’.¹³ Some sources including the European Council also related these atrocities to large-scale irregular and largely unrecorded and uncontrolled immigration and suggested security implications.¹⁴ This migration–security nexus was further accelerated by a wave of theft and sexual crimes committed on 2016 New Year’s Eve in Cologne, Hamburg and elsewhere.¹⁵

However, these threat perceptions too need to be put into perspective. It is well documented that i) the number of terrorists is actually extremely small, and ii) that until late 2015 terrorists were usually either EU residents and/or EU-born.¹⁶ This implied that these terrorists had not been radicalised abroad importing their ideas but they were radicalised in the EU. Thus, this type of terrorism, even though it has a transnational dimension because it takes its inspiration and ideology from abroad, still largely is a domestic European problem. However, the November 2015 and December 2016

terrorist attacks also included several attackers who were radicalised and had been trained abroad, and then entered the EU disguised as refugees to commit such attacks.¹⁷ Other similar radicals were arrested in Germany. This added a type of ‘imported’ terrorist threat to the EU. As a consequence, domestic security became another major challenge for the EU.

The European Council, in its 2014 conclusions, declared one of its key priorities as ‘guarantee[ing] a genuine area of security for European citizens [and] putting into force an effective EU counter terrorism policy’.

All of these developments gave rise to perceptions of some loss of control, insecurity and threats related to international migration. This then resulted in exceptional politics such as detaining families and children in closed camps where they were left malnourished, leading to conditions last seen in the 1940s, the erection of fences last seen during the Cold War, and deploying the army and navy against refugees. Exceptional politics are considered a key criterion by securitisation theory;¹⁸ therefore, these politics can be interpreted as

further securitisation of international migration. On the policy level, the European Council, in its 2014 conclusions, declared one of its key priorities as 'guarantee[ing] a genuine area of security for European citizens [and] putting into force an effective EU counter terrorism policy'. And because the security of EU citizens is the key priority, this also informs its international relations and diplomacy in the field of migration.¹⁹ Indeed, from the very beginning of common EU home affairs, policies of security and migration have been thought of in conjunction, as demonstrated by the 1976 Trevi group.²⁰

A Neighbourhood in Flames

The refugee crisis as well as the terrorism threat are related to a wider crisis of stability and security. It appears that half the neighbourhood of the EU is in trouble whilst some of the other half fuels or causes trouble. In 2010/11, initially largely pro-democratic revolts coined as the 'Arab spring' hit countries in Northern Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region. These had very different results²¹ and either led nowhere, as in Bahrain and Kuwait, resulted in some concessions, as in Algeria and Morocco, forced regime change and some democratisation, as in Tunisia, led to regime change but a

It appears that half the neighbourhood of the EU is in trouble whilst some of the other half fuels or causes trouble.

fall back to authoritarian ruling as in Egypt, or ended in violent conflict as in Syria where the government's backlash turned into civil war²² and in Libya where the collapse of the old regime gave rise to inter-factional violence.²³ It also led to a deepening of the sectarian Sunni-Shi'a divide across the entire region.²⁴ From 2013 onwards, the so-called Islamic State (IS) launched large-scale attacks in Iraq and later also expanded its operations into Syria and even to Libya in 2014/2015.²⁵ Several of these developments were further aggravated by the influx of radical Muslims or Jihadists from Europe to other parts of the world.²⁶ Furthermore, the role of the Transatlantic countries is rather critically discussed as with respect to intervention in Libya and lack of intervention in Syria.²⁷ In 2014, we witnessed the EuroMaidan revolt in Ukraine that swept away the old regime, did not result in solid reforms but triggered a counter-revolution and subsequently Russian military intervention.²⁸ And in April 2016, we briefly saw the frozen Armenia/Azerbaijan conflict turning hot again.

Apart from this, violent conflicts continue in Somalia, Mali and Nigeria, and political oppression is reported from Eritrea, Gambia (which ended in 2016), and elsewhere.²⁹ In addition, ethnic minorities and refugees are discriminated or specifically targeted, like Palestinians in Lebanon, Yezidis by IS/Daesh in Iraq, Tatars in Crimea, Christians in Pakistan, Afghan refugees in Iran and Eritrean refugees in Israel. In Syria, the West decided not to intervene, not to enforce a no-fly zone or send troops, hoping that the conflict would burn out as suggested by the US foreign policy expert Richard Haass.³⁰

Meanwhile, Russia pushed itself onto the international arena once again, fuelling rather than easing troubles. Russia has long backed the Assad regime and when the global north did not intervene in the civil war, Russia seized the emerging opportunity and directly engaged militarily,³¹ thereby re-establishing Russia as a key regional player thanks to 'diplomacy on Syria' and thus taking on the Transatlantic allies.³² In Ukraine too Russia took advantage of the weakening of the Ukrainian state and pro-Russian insurgents, and annexed Crimea, backed militias and deployed its arms and (mostly unmarked) troops in two Eastern provinces. It has occasionally been claimed, by NATO representatives for example, that Russia's diplomacy in support of Assad also aims at creating

refugee flows that would then destabilise the EU.³³ Indeed, whilst it is 'the West' which is conventionally blamed for its interventions, Russia must also be criticized due to her interventions in Afghanistan, Moldova, Chechnya, Georgia, and more recently in Ukraine and Syria, as this is indeed directly or indirectly causing or even contributing significantly to contemporary global displacements. It is further claimed that Russia also intervenes in EU affairs, appeases Greece, threatens the Baltic countries, supports pro-Russian politics in Moldova and Bulgaria, provokes the UK, Sweden and others by violations of airspaces, and funds extreme right and/or Euro-sceptic political parties.³⁴

Russia has long backed the Assad regime and when the global north did not intervene in the civil war, Russia seized the emerging opportunity and directly engaged militarily.

Other international actors, like Saudi Arabia and Iran, brought themselves into play by exploiting the Sunni-Shia divide and backing opposing forces in Syria and Yemen, which increased geopolitical tensions in the region. From an EU perspective, developments in Turkey have been another cause

for concern, like the erosion of human rights and democracy, and the resurgence of violence in South East Anatolia.³⁵ In particular, the backlash to the July 2016 military *coup* attempt, the subsequent state of emergency and the purge of public civilian and military structure caused significant consternation on the side of the EU.³⁶

Within a few years, the short and relatively unstable- as it now turns out- post-Cold War order fell apart and gave way to a rather volatile constellation of a multipolar order, violent modes of interaction and the rise of non-state actors.³⁷ Addressing and containing such external threats not only represents an extensive agenda but is also of utmost importance to the EU. As stated in the Council of EU, ‘...the neighbourhood is a strategic priority and a *fundamental interest* for the EU... to develop an area of shared *stability, security and prosperity*’.³⁸ This clearly points out that the EU’s migration diplomacy must be analysed from the perspective of these principal aims.

The Resurgence of Nationalism and Right-Wing Extremism

As a response to refugee flows, the initially welcoming response in several countries was successively side-lined by

a more hostile backlash and extreme politics. Denmark and Sweden, and later Austria, Germany and France reintroduced border controls.³⁹ Bulgaria, Hungary, and Macedonia set up fences and barbed wire.⁴⁰ Various governments sent their armies, NATO vessels were deployed,⁴¹ Macedonia positioned tanks at the border and rubber bullets and tear gas were shot at refugees. In Greece, right-wing mobs attacked refugees, like on Chios, and burned down facilities of humanitarian NGOs whilst occasionally anonymous armed and masked thugs attacked refugee boats out at sea. In Germany, PEGIDA, the movement of patriots against the Islamisation of Europe, mustered cohorts of supporters whilst hundreds of arson attacks on refugee centres were committed. And finally, in Poland a nationalist government was voted into power, as previously in Hungary, in Denmark and Slovakia, support for extreme right-wing political parties gained momentum. Over the past years, in 12 out of 20 European countries the extreme right has made significant gains (Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, and UK) whilst in five they lost votes (Italy, Belgium, Greece, Netherlands, and Romania).⁴² Indeed, by May 2015, 46 percent of Europeans expressed a lack of trust in the EU whilst 40 percent voiced trust.

As a response to refugee flows, the initially welcoming response in several countries was successively side-lined by a more hostile backlash and extreme politics.

Moreover, 38 percent said immigration is the main concern for Europe, up from 24 percent in 2014 (Germany 55%, Denmark 50%, Sweden 58%, Czech Republic 44%, Italy 43%, Austria 37% and Greece only 27%); this is still a minority, though this was before the refugee crisis.⁴³ Meanwhile, 56 percent were (very) negative about immigration from outside the EU (Czech Republic 81%, Greece 78%, Slovakia 77%, Italy and Hungary 70%, Austria 60%, France 58%, Poland 53%). This proportion is highest amongst people identifying themselves as 'working class' (60%) and lowest but still high amongst middle and higher classes.⁴⁴ About a quarter to a third of the population tends to hold authoritarian views,⁴⁵ these are more likely to be male (notably in the middle aged group) and workers lacking secondary education, as analysis in, for instance, Austria shows.⁴⁶ Even conventional social democrat or Christian conservative governments, like in France, Germany, Austria and elsewhere chose to compromise and moved right. All in all, we saw the

rise of xenophobe and anti-European, inhumane, protectionist and nationalist policies. Freedom House summarises developments as a 'rise of illiberal nationalism in Europe', notably in Eastern Europe.⁴⁷ These processes contain elements that have powers of self-destruction.⁴⁸ Therefore, containing these forces is another key objective for the EU and achieving this will demand compromise on all fronts.

We saw the rise of xenophobe and anti-European, inhumane, protectionist and nationalist policies. Freedom House summarises developments as a 'rise of illiberal nationalism in Europe', notably in Eastern Europe.

The Rise of Inequality

Finally, deepening inequality in Europe underpins the rise of protectionism, nationalism and extremism. Indeed, the EU is a hugely unequal union. In Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Latvia, Poland and Hungary, the Actual Individual Consumption per capita (AIC) is only half the level of Germany. Seventeen member states rank below the average AIC, including all southern

and eastern member states. Significant social inequality is also found within the member states and since the 1970s this has massively increased. The richest ten percent of the households hold 50 percent of all wealth; this gap is widest in southern and eastern countries.⁴⁹ A quarter to a third of the people are stuck in precarious, low-paid jobs mostly in the service sector.⁵⁰ 25 % of the EU population is worried about the economy (40% Greece, 37% Spain, 36% Sweden, 26% Hungary, 20% Poland), 24 % about unemployment (Italy, Spain and Greece 32%, Sweden 27%, Belgium, Denmark and Slovenia 26%) and nine percent about inflation (Croatia 15%, Poland 14%).⁵¹ Media footage implies that the call for migration restrictions or anti-EU rhetoric is often justified with concerns over job security and pressure on the welfare state.⁵² Meanwhile, voting behaviour analysis often finds lower educated middle-aged working men are supposedly affected by precarity, and are holding extreme views.⁵³ Fear for and actually decreasing living standards and thus rising inequality all diminish enthusiasm for and thus loyalty with conventional political parties as well as the European integration project. Meanwhile, conventional social democrat or conservative governments do little to address these root causes. And whilst migration is blamed for the deterioration of peoples' living

Deepening inequality in Europe underpins the rise of protectionism, nationalism and extremism.

conditions, it is rather national governments and their result of neo-liberal agendas which create these. In any case, a World Economic Forum publication illustrates that current levels of inequality are nearing the levels of the 1910s and 1930s - which were times of political extremism - and warns that 'inequality is one of the key challenges of our time'.⁵⁴ Notably the recent rise of right-wing Europhobic political parties (*Front National* in France, *AfD* in Germany, and *Law and Justice* in Poland) turned policies addressing inequalities into another key policy goal;⁵⁵ for instance, only from September 2015 onwards, a 'European Pillar of Social Right' was invented.

A Discreet Crisis of Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

Finally, another discreet crisis of foreign policy has emerged. The EU-Russia partnership is ruined for the foreseeable future, the European Neighbourhood Policy's (ENP) goal to create a 'ring of friends' partly failed, Russia never did actually join 'this ring

of friends'. Instead, Russia suggested a kind of alternative model, a 'Greater Europe' from Brest to Vladivostok, which challenged and in effect would have broken up the historical US-Europe axis.⁵⁶ Even the relations of the EU with the candidate country Turkey turned sour⁵⁷ and other countries largely abandoned the region and contributed little to relieve the refugee crisis.⁵⁸

The international community, with the US leading the way, did not accept much responsibility for the refugee situation, apart from the usual and usually insufficient contributions to the UNHCR. The main exceptions were Brazil, which issued 8,000 humanitarian visa to Syrians by May 2016,⁵⁹ Canada which, from 2015, when a new government was voted into power, began resettling 25,000 only Syrian refugees, and Malaysia which, from the end of 2015 began accepting 3,000.⁶⁰ But apart from this Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Germany and the EU were *de facto* abandoned by the international community, but it seems also fair to say that the EU did not make sufficient efforts to bring this topic to the attention of the international community. The 2016 UN refugee summit came years too late and did not bring about any concrete agreement for burden sharing.⁶¹ As a consequence, the refugee crisis, even though of historical proportions, had become a regional and European

problem but the EU was overwhelmed and under this stress subsequently got entrenched in internal controversies.

The international community, with the US leading the way, did not accept much responsibility for the refugee situation, apart from the usual and usually insufficient contributions to the UNHCR.

Within the EU, old alliances weakened and new coalitions emerged, often with a distinct illiberal agenda. Most notably, in 2015, Merkel attempted to build a coalition of the willing to address the refugee crisis in a better managed and also more humane fashion. When this initiative stalled, Germany aimed at setting a precedence case by announcing it would not enforce the Dublin II Convention on sending back refugees to the first safe EU country but instead to accept large numbers of refugees, hoping that other member states would follow.⁶² In parallel, the EU commission designed a fairly comprehensive mix of liberal and repressive measures, ranging from addressing root causes, sending support to Turkey to address secondary root causes, deploying NATO and Frontex to improve border controls, establishing

so-called 'Hotspots' to better regulate the influx, and arranging resettlement and relocation to counter irregular movements. However, the change of government in Poland, a key partner in this effort, and the decision of France - in the light of Front National gains - not to accept any significant number of refugees contributed significantly to the failure of both these initiatives. Also the change of government in Denmark under participation of the extreme Danish Peoples Party and then the decision of Sweden to abandon its open border policy further contributed to this. Here, domestic politics changed well-established international relations. German-French and German-Polish relations broke up. Instead, new alliances emerged, Germany and Greece became partners again over the refugee crisis, the Visegrad group resurfaced and an Austrian-led Balkan group emerged. Indeed, small states which would conventionally be considered powerless turned out to have significant power to determine EU policy; this challenges older assumptions held in the International Relations literature.⁶³ Smaller states turned previous power relations upside down so that it was them, not the big states, who dictated policy. Finally, the EU Council under President Tusk in 2016 side-lined the EU Commission and gained initiative in pushing through a tough response to the refugee influx. Generally, these new

coalitions were rather coalitions of the unwilling, consolidating a Euro-sceptic, nationalist and illiberal bloc. This also impacted the shape of EU foreign policy with respect to international migration and refugee policy as well as policy towards Turkey.

The Key Challenge for EU Diplomacy

As a result, we now face a toxic mix of a refugee crisis, the resurgence of tensions between the EU, NATO and Russia, deepening inequality, and rising political extremism. These developments triggered conflicting ideas within and between member states, and between the EU Commission, the EU Parliament (or at least some factions) and the EU Council, on how to best address these challenges, such as over open borders versus fences or over resettlement versus containing the problem in the region. Key values of the EU came under pressure, such as liberalism, human rights, asylum, internal solidarity, international responsibility and joint policies. This subsequently divided the EU member states into more or less liberal camps. Finally, the historical heritage, moral grounding, and with this even the political foundations of the EU were jeopardised. By the end of 2015, the individual crisis of refugees, reception and borders had merged and all

culminated into a crisis of the stability of the EU.⁶⁴ For instance, Roettgen, a senior German foreign policy maker (CDU member and chairman of the Bundestag's Committee on Foreign Affairs), argued that the refugee crisis "has shaken Europe to its foundations" and thus threatens its integrity. He went on to suggest that "either we unite as European, or Europe will be irrelevant on the world stage" expressing concerns over the future of the EU's power in international relations.⁶⁵ Commissioner Avramopoulos suggested that Schengen, "the backbone [of] what we are as a European Union", has been threatened but must be "save[d]".⁶⁶ And the EU Commission President Juncker also stated 'when crisis came, it put our very foundation to the test', the refugee crisis, like others, was 'a threat that was systemic' and he argued that this 'situation demands bold measures'.⁶⁷

We now face a toxic mix of a refugee crisis, the resurgence of tensions between the EU, NATO and Russia, deepening inequality, and rising political extremism.

As one key conclusion of this article, it seems that this perception of urgency and crisis shaped the subsequent EU

The crisis of the EU shifted the priorities of policy and diplomacy within and beyond the EU.

policy response. In a liberalist fashion the configuration of interest groups within member states shaped national preferences, which were negotiated in an institutionalist fashion between member states, which brought about the joined EU policy responses.⁶⁸ My second key conclusion is that the crisis of the EU shifted the priorities of policy and diplomacy within and beyond the EU. The 'bold measures', as Juncker calls them- closure of borders, sending refugees back to Turkey, containing refugees in the region, delaying visa free travel and thus preventing potentially more migration from Turkey- were all justified with the higher interest of securing the 'foundations' of the EU. The prime concerns are thus no longer human rights or democracy or good relations with Turkey but maintaining the EU's integrity, power, and even the European peace order. Refugees are not resettled or relocated for the benefit of the respective individuals or other countries against the will of member states to avoid their further alienation, as this would only further undermine the union. Likewise, visa liberalisation for, and thus more mobility or migration from, Turkey

is not pushed through as it would further alienate certain electorates and member states; this is not possible to be implemented against the will of some hostile governments since this might further divide the union. Thus, realist thinking concerned with the survival of the supra-national state prevails over

Refugees are not resettled or relocated for the benefit of the respective individuals or other countries against the will of member states to avoid their further alienation, as this would only further undermine the union.

economic considerations, international relations or other goals.

Due to the structure of the EU as a union of sovereign states, the opposition, even if a minority of states, has the power to determine the politics of the EU as a whole⁶⁹ and in a defensive realist fashion, other states do not impose their will on these.⁷⁰ It seems that all policies aimed at addressing the individual crisis turned into means to this end and that diplomacy towards Turkey was undertaken in light of this overarching challenge. In any case, I argue that the EU as a whole cannot be blamed for this policy but rather the individual member states and the respective political parties and electorates.

Endnotes

- 1 Partners are Coventry University (Heaven Crawley, PI), University of Oxford (Franck Düvell), University of Birmingham (Nando Sigona) and international partners are Yaşar University/Turkey, ELIAMEP/Greece, FIERI/Italy and People for Change/Malta, <http://www.medmig.info/> (last visited 17 November 2016).
- 2 “Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015”, at <http://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.pdf> (last visited 25 September 2016).
- 3 UNHCR, “Refugee/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean”, Geneva, UNHCR, 31 December 2015; UNHCR, “Mediterranean situation”, Geneva, UNHCR, at <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean?page=1&view=grid&Country%255B%255D=83> (last visited 31 October 2017).
- 4 Eurostat, “Asylum statistics”, at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics#Further_Eurostat_information (last visited 31 October 2017).
- 5 See Franck Düvell, “International Relations and Migration Management: The Case of Turkey”, *Insight Turkey* Vol.16, No.1 (2014), pp. 35- 44.
- 6 Myron Weiner, “On International Migration and International Relations”, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1985), pp.441- 455.
- 7 European Commission: EU-Turkey Agreement: Questions and Answers, Fact Sheet, Brussels, 19 March 2016.
- 8 See European Commission, “Commission Calls for Renewed Efforts in Implementing Solidarity Measures under the European Agenda on Migration”, at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-348_en.htm (last visited 31 October 2017).
- 9 Simone Molin Friis, “Beyond Anything we have Ever Seen’: Beheading Videos and the Visibility of Violence in the War Against ISIS”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (2015), p. 726.
- 10 Amnesty International, “Iraq: Yezidi Women and Girls Face Harrowing Sexual Violence”, at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/12/iraq-yezidi-women-and-girls-face-harrowing-sexual-violence/> (last visited 26 May 2016).
- 11 BBC News, “Islamic State Group: Crisis in Seven Charts”, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034> (last visited 26 May 2016).
- 12 Ibid., also see BBC News, “Powers to stop British Jihadists rReturning to UK – PM”, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-30041923> (last visited 26 May 2016).
- 13 European Council: Statement of the EU heads and EU institutions on attacks in Paris (14/11/2015, Statements and remarks 825/1, Justice, Home Affairs, Foreign affairs & international relations).

- 14 European Council: Conclusions of the Council of the EU and of the Member States meeting within the Council on Counter-Terrorism (20/11/2015, Press release 848/15, Security & defence, Justice, Home Affairs, Foreign affairs & international relations).
- 15 “Übergriffe in Köln, Frankfurt und Stuttgart: Frauen Überfallen – Was Bisher Bekannt Ist”, *Die Tagesschau*, at <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/uebergriffe-koeln-103.html> (last visited 26 May 2017).
- 16 BBC News, “Paris Attacks – who were the Attackers”, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34832512> (last visited 18 November 2016).
- 17 BBC News, “Paris Attacks – Who were the Attackers”
- 18 Ole Waever, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup and Pierre Lemaitre, *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1993.
- 19 European Council: Conclusions (Brussels, 27 June 2014, EUCO 79/14); also see European Council: Response to foreign terrorist fighters and recent terrorist attacks in Europe, at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/fight-against-terrorism/foreign-fighters/> (last visited 26 May 2016).
- 20 Tony Bunyan, “Trevi, Europol and the European State”, in Statewatch, *Statewatching the new Europe*, London, Statewatch, 1993, pp.7-39
- 21 See, for instance, Sheri Berman, “The Promise of the Arab Spring”, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2013, at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2012-12-03/promise-arab-spring> (last visited 24 May 2016).
- 22 Leila Vignal, “Syria: Anatomy of a Revolution”, Books & Ideas, at http://www.booksandideas.net/IMG/pdf/201209syria_vignalen.pdf (last visited 10 May 2016).
- 23 For instance, Chris Stephens, “Libya’s Arab Spring: The Revolution that Ate its Children”, *The Guardian*, 16 February 2015; for an alternative interpretation also see Vijay Prashad, “Arab Spring, Libyan Winter”, Oakland, AK Press, 2012.
- 24 Council on Foreign Relations, “The Sunni-Shia Divide”, at https://www.cfr.org/interactives/sunni-shia-divide?cid=otr-marketing_url-sunni_shia_infoguide#!/sunni-shia-divide?cid=otr-marketing_url-sunni_shia_infoguide (last visited 31 October 2017).
- 25 Charlie Winter, “Libya: The Strategic Gateway for the Islamic State”, at <https://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/libya-the-strategic-gateway-for-the-is.pdf> (last visited 24 May 2016).
- 26 See, for instance, Soufan Group, “Foreign Fighters in Syria”, at <http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/TSG-Foreign-Fighters-in-Syria.pdf> (last visited 5 May 2016).

- 27 Shadi Hamid, “Islamism, the Arab Spring, and the Failure of America’s Do-Nothing Policy in the Middle East”, *The Atlantic*, 9 October 2015; Moulay Hicham Ben Abdallah, “Gone with the Wind? Four Years after the Arab Spring”, MENA inaugural conference, Evanston, Northwest University, October 2015.
- 28 Mikhail Minakov, “A Decisive Turn? Risks for Ukrainian Democracy After the Euromaidan”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, at <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/02/03/decisive-turn-risks-for-ukrainian-democracy-after-euromaidan/itf4> (last visited 25 May 2016).
- 29 See Council on Foreign Relations, “Global Conflict Tracker”, at <http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#/> (last visited 25 May 2016); Freedom House, “Freedom in the world 2016”, at <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world> (last visited 25 May 2016).
- 30 Richard Haass, “American Foreign Policy in a Turbulent World”, Warden’s special lecture, Oxford, St Antony’s College, 28 April 2015.
- 31 Yury Barmin, “Why does Russia continue to protect Assad in Syria?”, *Russia Direct*, 20 April 2016.
- 32 Randa Slim, “Putin’s Master Plan for Syria”, *Foreign Affairs*, 18 March 2016.
- 33 Lizzy Dearden, “Russia and Syria ‘Weaponising’ Refugee Crisis to Destabilise Europe, NATO Commander Claims”, *The Independent*, 3 March 2016.
- 34 Peter Foster and Matthew Holehouse, “Russia Accused of Clandestine Funding of European Parties as US Conducts Major Review of Vladimir Putin’s Strategy. Exclusive: UK Warns of ‘New Cold War’ as Kremlin Seeks to Divide and Rule in Europe”, *The Telegraph*, 16 January 2016.
- 35 For the purpose of this paper, it is not relevant whether or not this is substantiated, all what matters is peoples’ perceptions as it is these which drive politics.
- 36 See European Commission, “Turkey 2016 Report. Communication on EU Enlargement Policy (COM(2016) 715 final)”, 9 November 2016, (last visited 18 November 2016).
- 37 Richard Haass, “American Foreign Policy in a Turbulent World”.
- 38 Council of the European Union: Council conclusions on the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (20/04/2015, Press release 188/15, Foreign affairs & international relations) (italics added by Düvell).
- 39 European Commission, “Temporary reintroduction of border controls”, at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/reintroduction-border-control/index_en.htm (last visited 17 November 2016).
- 40 Reuters, “Police, migrants clash on Macedonia border; soldiers build fence”, at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-europe-migrants-macedonia-idUKKBN0TH07H20151128> (last visited 17 November 2016).

- 41 NATO, "NATO's deployment in the Aegean Sea", at http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_05/20160519_1605-factsheet-aegean-sea.pdf (last visited 17 November 2016).
- 42 Gregor Aisch, Adam Pearce and Bryant Rousseau, "How far Is Europe swinging to the right?", *New York Times*, 22 May 2016.
- 43 European Commission, "Standard Eurobarometer 83, Spring 2015", at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_first_en.pdf (last seen 17 November 2016).
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Peter Hall, "Der Ökonomische Wandel hat die SPD ins Herz Getroffen", *Der Spiegel*, 22 May 2016.
- 46 Gerald Gartner, "Wer wen gewählt hat", *Der Standard*, 22 May 2016.
- 47 Freedom House, "Transit Nations report 2016", at https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_NIT2016_Final_FWeb.pdf (last visited 3 March 2017).
- 48 See Sonja Kaufmann, Gunter Rieck Moncayo, Lena Ringleb and Martin Thunert, "Dinner à la carte", in Monika Sus and Franziska Pfeifer (eds.), *European Union in the World 2025. Scenarios for EU Relations with its Neighbours and Strategic Partners*, Berlin, Dahrendorf Forum, 2016, pp.7-9.
- 49 OECD, "Understanding the socio-economic divide in Europe", at <https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/cope-divide-europe-2017-background-report.pdf> (last visited 31 October 2017).
- 50 Hall, "Der Ökonomische Wandel hat die SPD ins Herz Getroffen".
- 51 European Commission, "Standard Eurobarometer 83, Spring 2015".
- 52 "Migration: Needed not Wanted", *The Economist*, 1 October 2016.
- 53 Gartner, "Wer wen gewählt hat".
- 54 Amina Mohammed, "Deepening Income Inequality", World Economic Forum, at <http://reports.weforum.org/outlook-global-agenda-2015/top-10-trends-of-2015/1-deepening-income-inequality/> (last visited 17 November 2016).
- 55 European Commission, "European Pillar of Social Rights", at http://ec.europa.eu/malta/news/european-pillar-social-rights-what-progress-has-been-made-towards-its-achievement_en (last visited 18 November 2016).
- 56 See Igor Ivanov, "Russia, Turkey and the vision of Greater Europe", Russian International Affairs Council, at http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=5055#top-content (last visited 17 November 2016).

- 57 European Commission, “Turkey 2016 Report”.
- 58 See, for instance, Oxfam, “Syria Refugee Crisis: Is Your Country Doing Its Fair Share?”, at <https://www.oxfam.org/en/campaigns/rights-crisis-lebanon-jordan-crisis-syria/syria-refugee-crisis-your-country-doing-its-fair> (last visited 17 November 2016).
- 59 UNHCR, “Syrian refugee carries Olympic torch through Brasilia”, at <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/5/5728cd996/syrian-refugee-carries-olympic-torch-brasilgia.html> (last visited 24 May 2016).
- 60 BBC News, “Malaysia Accepts first 3,000 Syrian Refugees”, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-35048291> (last visited 17 November 2016); “Canada Meets Target to Resettle 25,000 Syrian Refugees”, *The Guardian*, 1 March 2016.
- 61 United Nations, “Summit for Refugees and Migrants”, at <http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/summit> (last visited 17 November 2016).
- 62 Angela Merkel, “Sommerpressekonferenz: Aktuelle Themen der Innen- und Aussenpolitik“, Berlin, Bundesregierung, at <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2015/08/2015-08-31-pk-merkel.html> (last visited 17 November 2016).
- 63 See Ben Tonra and Thomas Christiansen (eds), *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004, p.7.
- 64 E.g. Spiegel Online international, “Refugee Crisis Pushes Europe to the Brink”, at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/border-closures-spell-refugee-back-up-in-greece-a-1080643.html> (last visited 17 November 2016).
- 65 Norbert Roettgen, “Europe must Unite or Become Irrelevant”, at <http://www.dahrendorf-forum.eu/dahrendorf-symposium-europe-must-unite-or-become-irrelevant/> (last visited 28 May 2016).
- 66 Dimitris Avramopoulos, “Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos to the Committee on Federal and European Affairs of the Bavarian Parliament”, at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-1588_en.htm (last visited 5 May 2016).
- 67 Jean-Claude Juncker, “Speech by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at the 20th anniversary of the European Policy Centre – “The road to Rome: from crisis management to governing the EU””, at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-3433_en.htm (last visited 28 May 2016).
- 68 For these categorizations see Anne-Marie Slaughter, “International relations, principle theories”, in E. Wolfrum, (ed.) *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, https://www.princeton.edu/~slaughtr/Articles/722_IntlRelPrincipalTheories_Slaughter_20110509zG.pdf (last visited 30 October 2017).
- 69 Ben Tonra and Thomas Christiansen (eds), *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*.
- 70 See Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1979.