



Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi

Special Report

on

Migrant Crisis in Europe: Causes, Responses and Complexities

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Introduction

The influx of migrants from the restive regions of the world, particularly from West Asian, African and South Asian countries, has been posing serious challenges to the European governments and society. Despite the call for humanitarian treatment and fulfilling international obligations, security apprehensions, concerns of social-cultural disturbances and economic implications have been increasing in the European Union (EU) member states, consequently, the EU stands politically divided over measures to effectively deal with ‘unprecedented’ migrant crisis. The European asylum policy was considered to be formulated to address the small number of migrants, particularly coming from Eastern Europe.¹ It has failed to generate the much desired policy coordination and synergies in response from the EU member states. European institutions have not emerged efficient enough to manage huge pressure. Open discontent emerged among the EU member states and internal political discourse in the EU countries is also divided. Support for far right parties has increased in the recent elections. Central and Eastern European countries, namely, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia are finding it difficult or reluctantly agreed to implement the quota system for the settlement of refugees, and Slovakia argued that it would only accept Christian refugees². After the terror attacks in Paris in November 2015, the incidents of sexual abuses in Cologne on New Year eve have further raised the security concerns. The death of Syrian toddler, Aylan Kurdi, shook the consciousness of the world,³ and the countries were ready to take more refugees from Syria. But the threats of terror attacks and incidents of sexual crimes and thefts again changed people’s attitude

towards migrants. Consequently, security has become a major issue in policy discourse on refugees and the EU member states have tightened border control to contain the inflow of migrants.

Apart from complex internal dynamics, European external approach to address the destabilizing factors that cause political instability, economic deprivation and displacement seems to be inadequate and ineffective. Political, social and economic conditions in the major areas of origin of current migrants to Europe do not seem to be improving. Political efforts have been intensified to form a global coalition against the Islamic State after terror attacks in Paris in November 2015. Diplomatic efforts have been continuing to find a viable solution of Syrian crisis. However, political and social stability is unlikely to return in Syria in the immediate future. The crisis in Iran-Saudi relations over execution of shia cleric, Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, would have implications on the Syrian crisis. European countries expressed their concern over growing hostilities between two Middle East countries. German Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier stated that Iran-Saudi Arabia tensions have resulted in strengthening the terrorists in the region⁴ and urged to act for resolving the military conflicts in the region.⁵ Economic deprivation and political suppression will continue to push people out of the African countries. Eritrea, South Sudan and Sudan remain highly violent; and poverty, draught and other natural calamities in Ethiopia, Kenya and other countries have exacerbated the humanitarian crises. After almost one and half decades of international engagement, peace and stability remain the major concerns in Afghanistan. The migrant crisis, therefore, has put internal as well as external challenges for the EU.

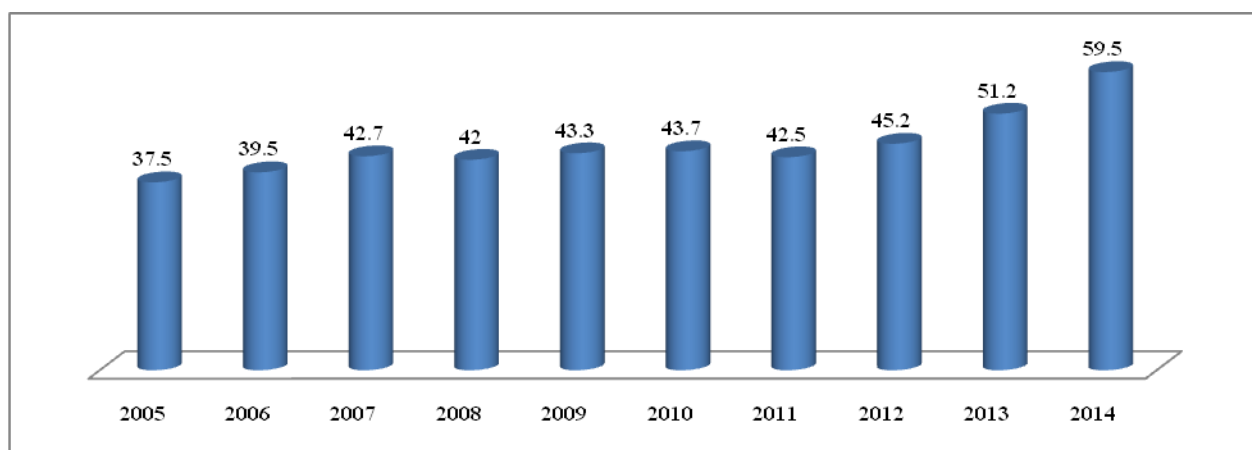
According to the UNHCR, people of both categories – migrants and refugees⁶ – are coming to Europe. As per the definition of refugees, they are persons, who are fleeing armed conflict or persecution. The rights and protection of a refugee is defined in the international laws and conventions. Therefore, they cannot be expelled or returned to a situation where they may face persecution and threat to their lives. Migrants are persons, who choose to move. However, they do not face direct threat of persecution or death; or they may be moving in the quest for better life through work or education or family reunion, etc. Migrants may also move out of conflict and political and socially unstable areas. However, they may safely return home and do not have fear of persecution. Unlike the refugees, migrants will get protection of their government.⁷ An asylum-seeker is a person, who claims refugee status,

but the claim is yet to be evaluated.⁸ Thus, asylum seekers may be classified in between a refugee and a migrant. In such a context, the paper aims to analyze the origin and causes of current migrant and refugee crisis in Europe. Since refugee protection is considered to be at the ‘junction of domestic politics and international relations’,⁹ the paper discusses the internal and external aspects of crisis. While examining the European response, both internal and external, the paper also examines the emerging complexities in European asylum policy and current socio-political discourse in Europe.

The Genesis of Current Migrant and Refugee Crisis

The recent trends in the inflow of the migrants and refugees into Europe reflect a combination of several factors such as political instability, social unrest, violence, emerging geo-strategic dynamics in West Asian region, quest for better political and socio-economic conditions, social security system, etc. Global trends point out that the number of displaced people has been rising. The UNHCR Annual Global Trends Report, *World at War*, noted that worldwide displacement was at the “highest level ever recorded”.¹⁰ Figure 1 shows that the number of displaced people has reached around 60 million, which is the highest after World War II.¹¹

Fig 1: Number of Displaced People Worldwide (in millions)



Source: UNHCR 2015

War, violence, persecution, and economic and social deprivation remain the major factors in pushing people out of their countries. The UNHCR report observes that almost 15 conflicts have occurred in Africa, Asia, Middle East and Europe in the last five years. Most conflicts – eight – have ignited in Africa, namely Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, north-eastern Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and

Burundi; Middle East and South and Central Asia witnessed three each in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen; Kyrgyzstan, and in several areas of Myanmar and Pakistan. The annexation of Crimea by Russia and persisting tension in Ukraine has transformed the geopolitical environment in the Eastern European region.¹² The Syrian crisis has become ‘the world’s single-largest driver of displacement’ since early 2011. At the same time, persisting instability and conflict in Afghanistan, Somalia and other parts of the world are keeping millions of people displaced.¹³

Migrant and Refugee Influx in Europe

The EU has been witnessing unprecedented challenges due to the inflow of migrants. The number of migrants and refugees is constantly increasing. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) counted that the number of irregular migrants and refugees to the EU had crossed one million in 2015 on 21 December.¹⁴ According to Eurostat statistics, the number of first time asylum applicants exponentially increased by more than 150 per cent in the third quarter of 2015 compared to the same quarter in 2014. Around 413800 people have applied for asylum from non-EU countries in the EU during the third quarter of 2015. Out of the 430600 total asylum applicants including repeat applicants, 413800, which account for 96 per cent, were first time applicants.¹⁵

Table 1 shows that Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq are the top three countries from where people were moving towards Europe. Syrians constitute 98000 more applicants compared to the third quarter of 2014. They added the most to the overall increase in first time asylum applicants in absolute terms. The number of Syrian asylum seekers is followed by Afghan asylum seekers. The number of migrants and refugees from Afghanistan was around 46700. Asylum seekers from Iraq are at the third place. They were counted as 40400 in 2015.¹⁶ Outside the West Asia and South Asia, Albania is the source of major asylum seekers in Europe.

Table 1: Top Ten First Time Asylum Applicants in the EU-28 (Q3 2014-Q3 2015)

Rank	Country	Total
1	Syria	251665
2	Afghanistan	110655
3	Iraq	71570
4	Albania	56795
5	Pakistan	41155
6	Eritrea	31055
7	Nigeria	27275
8	Bangladesh	16875
9	Somalia	17990
10	Russia	15930

Source: Eurostat¹⁷

The concentration of asylum applications in a few countries have been noticed, for instance, Germany and Hungary have received the most of first time asylum applications in the third quarter of 2015. Both Germany and Hungary received around 108000 applications each. These account for 26 per cent each of total applicants in the EU Member States. Germany and Hungary are followed by Sweden, where 42500 asylum applications have been filed, which account for 10 per cent of total applications. Italy has received around 28400 asylum applications and Austria received around 27600 applications. Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Italy and Austria together account for more than 75 per cent of all first time applicants in the EU. In comparison to year 2014, 13 times more applicants have applied for asylum in Hungary. Finland has recorded 15 times more applications from asylum seekers. Germany remains the most desired country for refugees and continues to receive increasing number of asylum applications.¹⁸

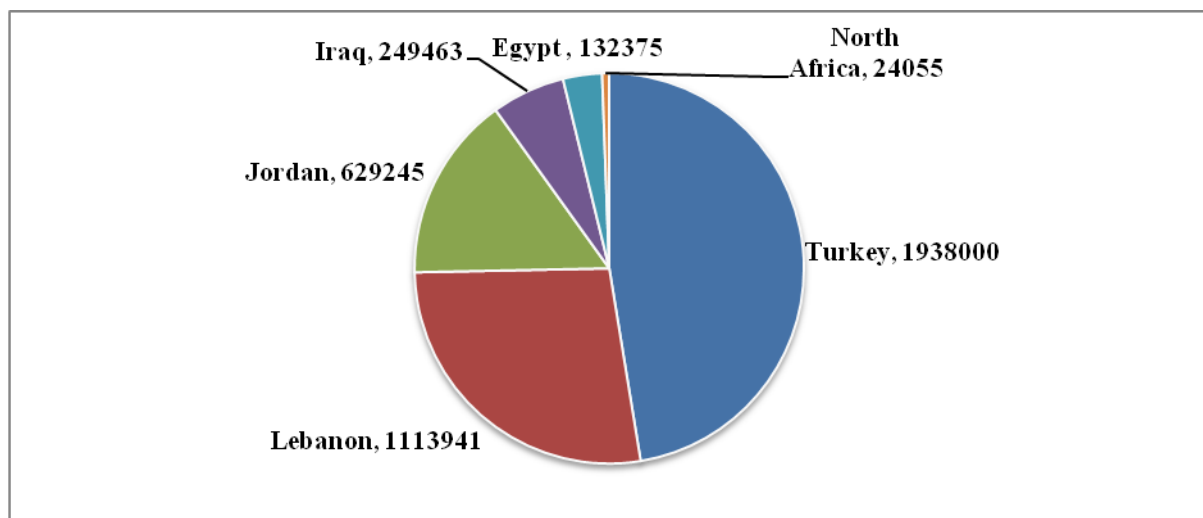
What Caused Citizens from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan to Move towards Europe

As explained, most of the people coming to Europe are from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Politically Speaking, Syria and Iraq are in a state of turmoil. What began as a pro-reform and democracy movement, the crisis in Syria has taken a global dimension. Bashar al-Assad government adopted repressive methods to suppress people's discontent, who called for reforms and, subsequently, the resignation of the President. Violence escalated; consequently, the country plunged into a civil war. Fighting reached to the capital Damascus and Aleppo. The UN said that 250000 people had been killed in the Syrian conflict. The conflict is now more than just a battle between President Assad and the rebel groups. The conflict has taken a sectarian colour with Sunni majority fighting against the President's Shia Alawite sect, a regional outlook by drawing in neighbouring countries; and a global outlook by involving world powers. The Syrian government argues that it is the target of a concerted strategy of Israel and Western and pro-Western Arab states.¹⁹

As a consequence of more than five years of war, more than four million people have fled Syria since the start of the conflict, most of them being women and children. *Syria: Confronting Fragmentation! Impact of Syrian Crisis*, a report from Syrian Center for Policy Research, noted that the economy of Syria has 'shattered and fragmented'; it is 'dominated by the fighting subjugating powers.'²⁰ It further notes, ".....systematic collapse and destruction of its economic foundations: infrastructure and institutions, human and

physical capital, and the wealth of the nation have almost all been obliterated.”²¹ The UNDP report, ‘Syria Alienation and Violence: Impact of Syrian Crisis Report,’ notes that armed-conflict, economic disintegration and social fragmentation have transformed the human geography of Syria. This resulted in hollowing of population as it fell from 20.87 million persons in 2010 to just 17.65 million people by the end of 2014. Over half the population, around 52.8 per cent, were dislodged as they left their homes looking for safer places to live or better living conditions elsewhere. Some 6.80 million persons forming this population-in-movement (58 per cent) continue to live in Syria as internally displaced persons (IDPs), with many being displaced numerous times.²² Neighbouring countries have borne the brunt of the refugee crisis, with Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey struggling to accommodate the flood of new arrivals. These countries have taken most of the Syrian refugees.²³ A further 7.6 million Syrians have been internally displaced within the country, bringing the total number of those forced to flee their homes to more than 11 million – half the country’s pre-crisis population. Overall, an estimated 12.2 million are in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, including 5.6 million children.²⁴

Chart 1: Syrian Refugees in Neighbouring Countries (as on 31 August 2015)



Source: UNHCR, 2015

The US-led invasion ousted President Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003. He was executed in 2006. Iraq was under economic sanctions after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Economic sanctions of the United Nations had severe implications for Iraqi economy and society. Thousands of Iraqis left the country in a search of living and a better life. The end of the rule of Saddam Hussein could not bring peace and stability in the country. The progress in the nation-building process and growth in employment opportunities were noted to be

slow.²⁵ Anthony H Cordesman noted, “the problems in nation building increasingly led the United States and its allies to act as occupier rather than liberators.”²⁶ The country is witnessing deadly violence. Islamic State has captured a large part of the country and has unleashed terror after capturing Mosul, which is the second largest city of Iraq. The UN says that Iraqi people continue to suffer from this vicious circle of violence.²⁷ The total number of civilian casualties – both killed and injured – in the entire 2015 was 22370. It was reported that 7515 people were killed and 14855 are injured.²⁸ Political scenario does not seem to be clear in Iraq and Syria. The Western countries believed that the Assad government may not survive long. With the support of Russia, the Assad government keeps fighting the Islamic State. Crisis in Syria has also implications for the geo-political dynamics in the region, particularly for Iraq.²⁹

After more than a decade long international engagement, the security situation in Afghanistan is far from satisfying. President Ashraf Ghani has become the President with an agreement with his political rival in the Presidential elections, Abdullah Abdullah. The international forces have handed over the command of security to Afghan security forces. Afghanistan has signed Bilateral Security Agreement with the US and the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with NATO to keep the international forces in the country beyond 2014. Reconciliation, which is considered to be crucial in shaping the political and security processes in the country, is in the evolving stage. President Ghani prioritises the reconciliation process with Taliban. But the country faces serious security challenges from insurgents. Insecurity, poverty, lack of opportunities, etc. that cause migration from Afghanistan.

Why are Refugees from Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan Moving towards Europe?

Syrian migrants, who have taken shelter in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, are moving towards Europe due to deteriorating conditions in the camps, in quest for stability and prospects for better social and economic opportunities.³⁰ The situation in all the three countries is not appearing conducive for refugees. Turkey does not give Syrian refugees the legal right to work because the country already has an unemployment rate of almost 10 per cent.³¹ There is growing tension among local communities in Turkey. The Syrian refugees are working at lower wages, which is not going well with local employment seekers. Considering the political and social conditions in the country, Turkey government may not like to keep borders open for the refugees. In addition to socio-economic pressure, it is also

perceived that Turkey may be the target of Islamic State as Ankara has joined the US to airstrike against the Islamic State. It has suffered a number of terrorist attacks in the recent past. Islamic State is blamed for most of the deadly attacks.³²

The conditions for Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon are also not satisfactory. Some are now considering returning to their war-ravaged homeland rather than suffering from poverty, hunger and a sense of insecure future. Humanitarian agencies are painting a grim picture of the state of refugees. It is feared that some would try to return to their ruined and war ravaged country.³³ International Labour Organization's (ILO) study on *Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market* shows that there are pressures on the labour market, particularly on low skilled jobs. The ILO notes that there is a general sign of increase in the unemployment rate of Jordanians from 14.5 to 22.1 per cent between 2011 and 2014; particularly an increase from 19 to 35 per cent in unemployment among the age group of 15-24 years, pointing out that it has become more difficult for young and new Jordanian workers to enter the labour market.³⁴ In similar finding, the ILO states about the socio-economic impact in Lebanon. Due to the impact of Syrian refugee crisis on Lebanon, an estimated 170,000 Lebanese had fallen into poverty; unemployment had doubled to around 20 per cent and economic losses of some US\$7.5 billion had been incurred by 2015. It is noted that only around half of Syrian refugees are economically active and one-third have access to informal and low-skilled employment.³⁵ Thus, implications may be much higher when more refugees would seek employment. The deterioration of conditions in three main hosting nations – Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan is considered to be pushing refugee and migrants to move towards Europe.³⁶ To substantiate the ILO study on the socio-economic conditions of the refugee, the United Nations World Food Programme was forced to cut food assistance by up to fifty per cent due to funding shortage.³⁷

African Migrants and Refugees

The number of migrants in Europe from Eritrea has increased sharply. The number of asylum-seekers in Europe from Eritrea has nearly tripled in 2014.³⁸ Earlier, these Eritrean refugees were living in Sudan and Ethiopia. Now these refugees are frustrated with the humanitarian situation in refugee camps and 'self-reliance' opportunities. Violence has erupted in South Sudan; natural calamities – heavy rainfall and flooding in Ethiopia, Djibouti and South Sudan have further worsened the condition. Security and political situation remain fragile in Somalia. It is expected that violence and conflict may continue in

the future.³⁹ Table 1 shows that 31055 first time asylum applications have been filed from Eritrea in 2015. The EU received 27275 and 17990 first time asylum applications from Nigeria and Somalia, respectively.

European Response to the Migrant and Refugee Crisis

In order to deal with the current migrant and refugee crisis, the EU and European member states are taking a number of steps. The European Commission states, “The European Agenda on Migration is based on a simple principle: help migrants in need of international protection and return migrants that have no right to stay on EU territory.”⁴⁰ They devised a plan to relocate them. The EU proposed to set up an agency for controlling external borders. It has stepped up its political initiatives to control the migrants before entering the European borders. They signed a deal with Turkey to control the inflow of migrants. European response to the current migrant crisis can primarily be analyzed at two levels. The internal and external measures taken by the EU to accept migrants and provide them conditions to settle down in the region, and taking preventive measures to stop the heavy inflow of migrants to the European borders and resolve the crisis in the Middle East.

European Rules and Regulations

All Member States of the EU signed and ratified the *1951 Geneva Convention on the Protection of Refugees*. The European countries are also signatories of 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, other human rights conventions, such as the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As per the 1951 convention, asylum is the fundamental right of people facing ‘persecution’ and ‘serious harm’ in their home country.

The asylum and migration policy states that the provisions of the Geneva Convention are implemented through the national legislation of each member state. Although the EU has taken attempts to harmonize the national refugee and asylum laws, its member states have ‘a large degree of sovereignty’ in providing refuge to the asylum seekers and refugees. Therefore, the conditions and benefits to asylum seekers and refugees in the EU member states may differ⁴¹ and the Common European Asylum System is yet to completely evolve as it is still in process. The EU has been taking measures to harmonize the asylum and migration policy among the member states. The EU has adopted several

legislative measures for harmonizing common minimum standards for asylum between 1999 and 2005. The most important aspects, which have improved, were strengthening of financial solidarity with the establishment of the European Refugee Fund. The Temporary Protection Directive will be allowed for a common EU response in case of mass influx of displaced persons, who are unable to return to their country of origin. The EU family reunification directive is also applicable to the refugees.⁴² In order to bring more coherence and facilitate practical cooperation, the EU is aligning the standards of protection in the EU Member States' asylum legislation. Apart from the member states, the EU also supports cooperation among its member states and non-EU countries.⁴³

The *Dublin Regulation* sets out the process of asylum applications and transfers the asylum applicants to the responsible states. The regulation also states that the first entry country will be responsible for processing asylum applications.⁴⁴ Table 2 shows that majority of migrants are entering Europe via sea routes. The International Organization for Migration Report noted that most of the migrants entered Greece. Migrants are entering through the sea routes of Italy and other sea facing countries. Table 3 explains that three routes – Western, Eastern and Central Mediterranean – are used by the migrants. The Table also explains that Eastern and Western Mediterranean routes are commonly taken by migrants from the Middle East, who are living in Turkey, than those living in the West Asian countries. People from North African countries' come through the Central Mediterranean route.

Table 2: Migrant Arrival in Europe

Country	Sea	Land	Total
Greece	816752	4256	821008
Bulgaria	29959	-	29959
Italy	150317		150317
Spain	3845		3845
Malta	106		106
Cyprus	269		269
Total	971289	34215	1005504

Source: International Organization for Migration, 2015

Migrants from unspecified countries came through the Western Balkan route. As per the Dublin Regulations, the first country where migrants enter has to process the application of asylum. Table 3 shows that there would be extra pressure on peripheral countries.

Table 3: Main Migratory Routes into the EU/Land and Sea (as on 14 Jan 2016)

Route	Number of Illegal Border Crossings	Top Three Nationalities	
Western African route	660 (Jan-Nov 2015)	Guinea	260
		Cote d'Ivoire	94
		Gambia	55
Western Mediterranean route	12516 (Jan-Oct 2015)	Syria	6125
		Guinea	1479
		Algeria	1142
Central Mediterranean route	144300 (Jan-Nov 2015)	Eritrea	36342
		Nigeria	19456
		Unspecified Sub-Saharan Nationals	12703
Apulia and Calabria route	Included Central Mediterranean route		
Circular route from Albania to Greece	7866 (Jan-Oct 2015)	Albania	7816
		Macedonia	13
		Georgia	11
Western Balkan route	667150 (Jan-Nov 2015)	Not Specified	459655
		Syrian	90061
		Afghanistan	53233
Eastern Mediterranean route	726274 (Jan-Nov 2015)	Syria	430714
		Afghanistan	171104
		Iraq	59907
Eastern Borders route	1660 (Jan-Oct 2015)	Afghanistan	409
		Vietnam	397
		Syria	130

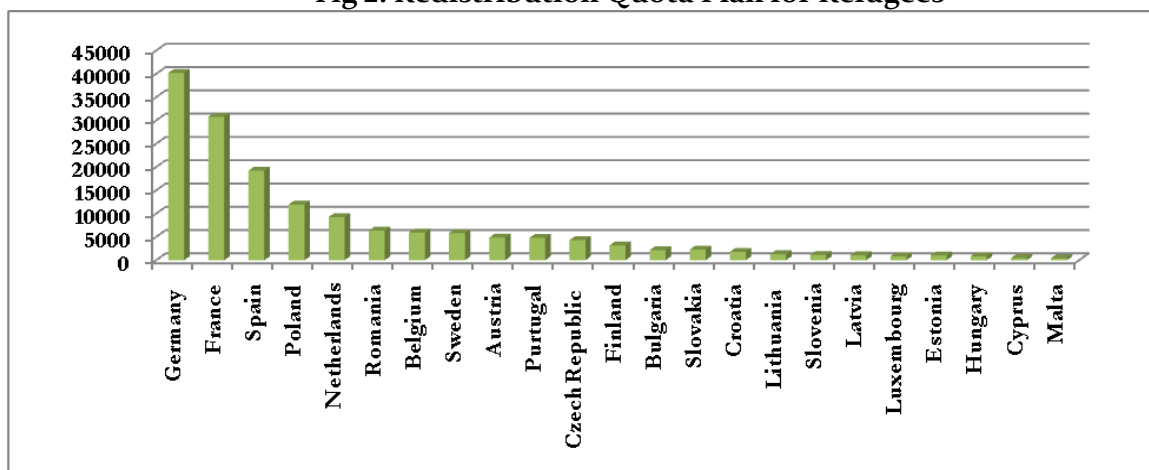
Source: Collected by Author from Frontex⁴⁵

European Plan for the Relocation of Refugees

Despite opposition from the Eastern European countries, the EU Interior Ministers have approved the plan for distributing 120,000 migrants among the EU member states. The plan was devised on the basis of 40 per cent of the size of population, 40 per cent of the GDP, 10 per cent of the average number of past asylum applications and 10 per cent of the unemployment rate.⁴⁶ The relocation plan of migrant agreement was decided by voting and majority of member states voted in favour of the plan. Therefore, 120,000 migrants will be located across the EU. Although majority of member states led by Germany are ready to take more migrants, Eastern European countries, namely, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary opposed the compulsory quota system. These countries voted against the proposal, while Finland abstained. Germany, France, Britain and other countries have agreed to take more migrants.

The European Council meeting was held on 18-19 February 2016. European leaders were more concerned about the UK demand for reforms in the EU. The migration and geo-political dynamics were high on the agenda of the meeting. It was decided to improve the identification, registration and fingerprinting and security checks. The European Council aims for 100 per cent identification and security checks against the European databases and collection of information needs to be finalised. As migrants and refugees wish to concentrate in a few European countries, the EU calls for distribution of burden among the member states. Therefore, the conclusion of the meeting is that the asylum seekers do not have the right to choose the country where they would seek asylum. The refugee distribution has not been successful so far. The EU leaders have called for the implementation of relocation of refugees in the EU.⁴⁷

Fig 2: Redistribution Quota Plan for Refugees



Source: European Commission 2015

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker stated that addressing the refugee crisis is the first priority.⁴⁸ He noted, “Europeans should remember well that Europe is a continent where nearly everyone has at one time been a refugee. Our common history is marked by millions of Europeans fleeing from religious or political persecution, from war, dictatorship, or oppression.”⁴⁹ He appealed to member states to accept the refugees. He noted that the refugees still constitute a very small number as they represent only 0.11 per cent of the total EU population. In Lebanon, the refugees represent 25 per cent of the population.⁵⁰

The EU admitted that its plan for relocation of refugees is not working. The EU’s Migration and Home Affairs Commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos noted that just 272 refugees have been relocated from Italy and Greece. Dimitris Avramopoulos argued that the member states are “prisoners of their domestic agenda”, therefore, the scheme of relocation of the refugees would fail. He warned that the high volume of influx of refugees continues in Europe and the EU would face more complicated challenges in the future. Many member states are introducing border controls in EU.⁵¹

Table 4: Foreign Nationals in EU Member States (as on 1 January 2014)

Country	Foreign-National		Foreign-Born		Total Number
	Number	% of Total Population	Number	% of Total Population	
Belgium	1264427	11.3%	1773148	15.8%	11203992
Bulgaria	54422	0.8%	109239	1.5%	7245677
Czech Republic	434581	4.1%	396156	3.8%	10512419
Denmark	397221	7.1%	569596	10.1%	5627235
Germany	7011811	8.7%	981799 4	12.2%	8076746 3
Estonia	194917	14.8%	265363	20.2%	1315819
Ireland	545512	11.8%	741260	16.1%	4605501
Greece	836901	7.7%	124647 4	11.4%	1090370 4

Spain	4677059	10.1%	5958308	12.8%	46512199
France	4157478	6.3%	7661658	11.6%	65835579
Croatia	31704	0.7%	568678	13.4%	4246809
Italy	4922085	8.1%	5737213	9.4%	60782668
Cyprus	159336	18.6%	191587	22.3%	858000
Latvia	304835	15.2%	271126	13.5%	2001468
Lithuania	21577	0.7%	137417	4.7%	2943472
Luxembourg	248914	45.3%	237848	43.3%	549680
Hungary	140301	1.4%	447029	4.5%	9877365
Malta	24980	5.9%	40157	9.4%	425384
Netherlands	735354	4.4%	1953436	11.6%	16829289
Austria	1056782	12.4%	1410894	16.6%	8506889
Poland	101204	0.3%	620308	1.6%	38017856
Portugal	401320	3.8%	859065	8.2%	10427301
Romania	73434	0.4%	211210	1.1%	19947311
Slovenia	96608	4.7%	235310	11.4%	2061085
Slovakia	59151	1.1%	174908	3.2%	5415949
Finland	206651	3.8%	297812	5.5%	5451270
Sweden	687192	7.1%	1532563	15.9%	9644864
United Kingdom	5047653	7.8%	8035554	12.5%	64308261

Source: Eurostat, migr_popictz and migr_pop3ctb⁵²

Safe Country List

As part of the European agenda on migration, the European Commission proposed to create a common EU list of safe countries of origin. The concept of 'safe country' is designed to decrease the amount of asylum claims to be determined. If an individual came from or

passed through a 'safe country', s/he becomes liable to return to that 'safe country'. A country is presumed to be safe on consideration of several factors including human rights records and political situation.⁵³ The list initially comprises Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. These countries are considered safe according to the criteria set out in the Asylum Procedures Directive and in full compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. Generally, safe countries' list is prepared at the national level. The EU process of harmonization of safe country list would speed up application processing and discourage the arrival of economic migrants as well.⁵⁴

New European Border and Coast Guard

The European Commission has planned to replace EU's Frontex with a new European Border and Coast Guard. Currently, Frontex coordinates national border agencies and is responsible for security at the national boundaries. It has about 400 staff members at present. The strength of the new agency would be enhanced in terms of personnel, finance and power. It would have a larger number of personnel, which is expected to be around 1000. If the proposal is implemented, the agency would have more financial and security powers. It will receive 322 million euros in funds by 2020 and will have more powers, including a strong rapid reaction force. The European Commission has also proposed that the new agency would also be responsible for expelling people, who do not qualify for European asylum as per its criteria.⁵⁵ The European Commission plan is supported by Germany. However, some member states have criticized the plan and have asserted to maintain national sovereignty in external border control. In addition, the EU aims to strengthen the role of EUROPOL as an intelligence hub for dismantling criminal networks and intends to launch Common Security and Defence Policy operations in the Mediterranean to capture and dismantle boats.⁵⁶

Political and security measures have been taken to address the security concerns in the European region after the Paris attacks in November 2015. The European Commission called for the establishment of an EU-wide intelligence agency. The EU Ministers agreed to enhance border security and tighten border control. The EU Ministers agreed at the emergency talks in Brussels to tighten checks on all travellers at the borders of the Schengen zone.⁵⁷

Germany would establish a special anti-terror unit named *Beweissicherungs und Festnahmeinheit plus* (BFE+) to respond to the challenges of terrorism. Germany has taken measures to step up internal security after the Paris attacks. The new unit would have five branches, and each branch would have around 50 personnel. The Terror Unit will start working in Berlin immediately and other four branches would be deployed soon in other parts of the country. Germany already has GSG9 Special Forces, which respond to urgent security challenges and terrorist attacks. The GSG9 would keep working like before. In addition, the BFE+ would react in complex security situations and will also assist the GSG9.⁵⁸

Deporting Migrants Who Commit Crime

Germany is intended to ease the law to send back migrants, who commit crimes in the country. German Chancellor Merkel adopted the 'open door' refugee policy, but also supported the deporting of migrants, who commit crimes in the country. Pressure has risen on Chancellor Merkel as crime rate has increased in German refugee and migrant centres and sexual and robbery incidents have increased in Cologne.⁵⁹ In the debate over new measures for asylum policy, German politicians supported easier and stricter measures for deporting the migrants and refugees after committing crimes. Switzerland also held a referendum over the deportation of foreigners, who commit crimes. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) initiated the proposal to deport the foreigners, who commit lesser crimes. The proposal was rejected by Swiss voters.⁶⁰ The German government has also taken measures to step up security and bring more order in managing the security. Germany is digitalizing the information about the refugees. It is also internally distributing the refugees in different regions on the basis of tax revenues and level of population.⁶¹

The Criminal Police in Germany has registered increasing number of crimes in refugee and asylum centres. The German government wanted to keep track of crimes committed by or targeted at migrants. The Federal Criminal Police Office President, Holger Münch told that migrants commit criminal offenses. However, he said that Syrian and Iraqi immigrants are found to be less frequent in committing crimes. Dusseldorf police with the federal police and other state administrative officers conducted raids in Düsseldorf neighbourhood on 16 January 2016. The Police said that raids were targeted towards people allegedly involved in pick-pocketing, robbery and drug dealing.⁶² Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere visited Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia for seeking speedy repatriation of

unsuccessful asylum seekers returned to these countries. Germany considers declaring them as safe countries of origin would help in controlling the inflow of migrants.⁶³

The EU External Actions to Control Migrant and Refugee Inflow

The EU is taking initiatives to control the smuggling of migrants, providing economic assistance to concerned countries, working to evolve regional framework to contain heavy inflow of migrants. The EU takes preventive measures on smuggling and breaking criminal networks. The EU envisages enhanced cooperation with countries of origin and transit, reinforced intelligence sharing, investigation capacities and prosecution to clamp down on migrant smuggling networks.⁶⁴ In line with other member states' governments, the EU also plans to contain migrants through improving socio-economic conditions in origin places.⁶⁵

The crisis in Syria is yet to be completely resolved. Stabilizing Middle Eastern economies and politics, and avoiding spill-over effects for Europe have been the main considerations for the EU in dealing with the Middle East. The European Council has agreed to sustain the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Stopping the hostilities would only ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The EU expects that the end of fight would bring normalcy, which may result in reducing the migrant pressure on the continent.⁶⁶ After the Paris attacks in November 2015, the European countries have enhanced their political and military campaign against the Islamic State. Germany and the UK joined the airstrikes against the Islamic State. French President Francois Hollande visited Russia in his effort to build an alliance against the Islamic State. Russia and France have agreed to extend their defence cooperation to the fight against terrorism in Syria. Both countries would share intelligence about terrorist activities and military operations in Syria.⁶⁷

Islamic State has reportedly suffered territorial loss. President Assad's forces have retaken territory controlled by the Islamic State. In the changed geo-political scenario, Russia has partially withdrawn from Syria. Ceasefire has expanded. Russia and the West have expressed their commitments for exploring political solution for the crisis in Syria. However, how the peace process would turn up, seems uncertain. The opposition High Negotiations Committee (HNC) announced to suspend the UN brokered peace talks in Geneva. The opposition alleges that violence is escalating in northern Syria and President Assad's forces have violated the ceasefire more than 2000 times.⁶⁸ It opined, "letting the conflict stew isstill the bad option."⁶⁹

The EU-Turkey Agreement

The EU and Turkey agreed for enhancing cooperation for dealing with the inflow of migrants and refugees. As a part of measures to contain the refugee challenges in its neighbourhood, the EU tried to persuade Turkey for stepping up its actions to stop the flow of migrants. The EU has offered more than 'political support' to Ankara to manage the refugee emergency in Europe. Apart from providing financial support for enhancing institutional and procedural issues, the EU has also offered easier access to visas for Turkish citizens and speeding up membership negotiations. The EU offered financial assistance of three billion Euros. The addition is intended to enhance the asylum and documentation procedures in Turkey.⁷⁰ The EU and Turkey are concerned about the security issues on the borders and coastal areas where smugglers and human traffickers are operating to smuggle people. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has criticized the EU for not taking comprehensive measures to tackle the refugee problem, particularly of those coming from Syria. He told that Turkey has already taken a huge number of refugees. He also criticized the EU approach to membership negotiations. He argued that Brussels is not sincere about Turkey's membership in the EU.

Turkey arrested around 1300 migrants, who intended to go to Greece. The EU also wants to the migrants, who have already entered Europe, but do not qualify the criteria of refugee, to be returned to Turkey. Turkey has also introduced visa restrictions for Syrians coming there via air or sea. Turkey said that visa restrictions are intended to reduce the number of Syrians arriving indirectly from third countries like Lebanon or Egypt. However, it maintains that it would not ask for visas from Syrians entering the country via land border.⁷¹

After almost two months of agreement, the EU told Turkey that the number of migrant crossing European border through Turkey has not decreased. The EU Vice President Frans Timmermans stated that the goal of action plan is to control the flow to 2000 to 3000 a day. Turkey may reportedly start offering Syrian migrants work permit. Therefore, they can stay in the country.⁷² Greece also accused Turkish authority for helping smugglers. Greek President, Prokopis Pavlopoulos said, "I have a strong fear that Turkish smugglers have the support of the authorities, in particular, border authorities, who act like they have seen nothing."⁷³

Turkish role in controlling the migrant inflow was further emphasized during the meeting of European Council. The EU noted that the implementation of EU-Turkey Action Plan is the priority. The EU puts substantial onus on Turkey to reduce the migrant entry and illegal entry. It maintains that migrant inflow to Greece from Turkey remains too high. Therefore, Turkey needs to ensure speedy and effective implementation of the Action Plan.⁷⁴

The EU and Turkey agreed to reduce the irregular migration. They also decided to provide 'safe and legal route' to the EU for Syrian refugees. As per the agreement, the EU would take a Syrian refugee from Turkey in exchange of every Syrian returned to Turkey from Greek Islands. The EU would expedite the disbursement of the initially allocated €3 billion under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey and provide additional 3 billion Euros to Turkey by end of 2018, and promised short-term visa free travel to Turks and resume the negotiations on EU membership for Turkey.⁷⁵ Turkey-EU cooperation is the need of the hour. The EU needs support for effective control of inflow of migrants as well as containing smuggler networks. Turkey is worried about the persisting crisis in Syria. It is concerned about the economic implications of instability in West Asia and tension with Russia. In such a scenario, the EU appears to be a viable major economic partner for Turkey.⁷⁶

NATO Aegean Sea Mission

The NATO would provide support to assist with the refugee and migrant crisis. It will try to curtail illegal trafficking and illegal migration in the Aegean sea. The Secretary General of NATO stated that the mission aims towards contributing critical information and surveillance to help counter human trafficking and criminal networks. The NATO would cooperate with national coastguards and the EU.⁷⁷ In cooperation with Turkey, Greece and Frontex, NATO ships will work to deter the migration inflows. Rescued migrants and refugees would be sent to Turkey.⁷⁸ The EU states that all members of NATO to support NATO measures and Frontex, should closely cooperate with NATO.⁷⁹

The EU's Cooperation with African Countries

The EU has proposed some measures to tackle migration from Africa. The EU has decided to diplomatically engage in resolving the root causes of conflicts in African countries. The EU has launched an Emergency Trust Fund for addressing the causes of irregular migration and displacement of persons in Africa. This trust fund would be utilized for generating

employment opportunities and providing basic services for local population. The EU would also work to tackle trafficking and illegal migrations.⁸⁰ African countries were not satisfied with European development assistance. They maintained that 1.8 billion Euro is not enough to effectively tackle the crisis.⁸¹

Germany is negotiating with African countries to accept their nationals who do not qualify for asylum in the country. Some countries-Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia-have offered their support to the initiative. Other countries such as Benin, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan are asked to take back their nationals, who may not receive asylum in Germany.⁸² At the meeting of European Council, the EU leaders stressed that Vallenta Summit points should be implemented.⁸³

Deporting Afghan Refugees

Afghanistan remains one of the major sources of asylum seekers in Europe. A report says that Afghanistan issued more than 2,000 passports a day in Kabul last year, a six-fold increase over 2014, mostly to men and women under the age of 30.⁸⁴ SIGAR report has painted a very grim picture of security and political scenario in the country.⁸⁵ Germany has announced to expedite the process of deporting Afghan asylum seekers, who do not qualify for asylum status in Europe. German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere stated that Afghans are one of the major asylum seekers in Europe, and Germany wants them to stay in Afghanistan.⁸⁶ Germany also launched a campaign to discourage potential Afghan migrants and asylum seekers in Germany. To discourage the migrants to move towards Germany, it also started a public awareness campaign. There are billboards written in two Afghan languages, Pashto and Dari, which state, "Leaving Afghanistan? Are you sure?" and "Leaving Afghanistan? Think about it again."⁸⁷ Germany has also decided to increase the number of troops to 980. The current number of troops is around 850. The German government's decision to enhance troops' number, although it seems to be quite marginal, came as intensified Taliban attacks in Afghanistan occurred.⁸⁸ Afghan Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, Sayed Hussain Alemi Balkhi said that Afghanistan would currently focus only on voluntary returnees. Afghanistan and Germany are also discussing about providing financial assistance to the returnees.⁸⁹ 125 refugees have returned to Afghanistan. Financial support would be provided to them.⁹⁰

Complexities in European Response

The complexities, which have emerged in European response, are imbedded in their institutional set up, policy framework, persisting economic slowdown, national identity and social-religious fabric and political discourse. The EU stands divided on collective and coordinated measures to deal with the crisis. The EU has failed to find common solution to refugee crisis and its measures appear to be piecemeal⁹¹ rather than being comprehensive and long term. The “Dublin system” has been heavily criticized on various grounds, such as for causing violations of asylum seekers’ human rights; and producing inequitable distribution of asylum applications across EU member States. It provides for transfer of responsibility to countries of irregular first entry, especially to the south. The system seems to be slow, costly and experience reflects that it is also ineffectual.⁹²

Differences in the EU

The EU lacks policy synergies and collective approach to deal with the migrant crisis. The Central and Eastern European countries were opposed or are reluctant to implement the quota system devised for refugee settlement. Although majority of member states led by Germany are ready to take more migrants, Eastern European countries, namely Slovakia, Romania and Hungary opposed the compulsory quota system. These countries voted against the proposal, while Finland abstained.⁹³ Hungary and Slovakia have filed a legal case against the quota plan in the European Court of Justice.⁹⁴ Hungary also launched a media campaign against the quota scheme. After the victory of Law and Justice Party (PiS), Poland has also hardened its stand on the refugee settlement. After the Paris attacks, security concerns have increased.⁹⁵ Irked by the unresponsive attitude of East European countries, which was also criticized by the United Nations agency and human rights groups, German Interior Minister stated that EU structural funds for countries that refused to take quotas of refugees should be cut.⁹⁶ The difference between the Eastern and Western Europe is noted to be ‘clear’ and ‘persistent’.⁹⁷

Central and Eastern European countries worry about accepting the migrants. They are culturally and religiously more homogenous. Table 4 shows that Poland, Hungary and Slovakia have very small percentage to foreign nationals. Poland has the smallest number of foreign nationals in proportion to its total population. The country has only 0.3 per cent of foreign nationals in proportion of its population. Romania has 0.4 per cent foreign nationals, both Lithuania and Croatia have 0.7 per cent each, and 0.8 per cent people of

Bulgaria are foreign nationals. The number of foreign-born residents in proportion to the total population in Romania is 1.1 per cent, Bulgaria - 1.5 per cent, Poland - 1.6 per cent and Slovakia has marginally higher proportion with 3.2 per cent. Theoretically, it is argued that they are considered to be ‘cultural’ rather than ‘political units’.⁹⁸ Central and Eastern European countries are concerned about improving their economic growth and promote development. In the time of economic crisis, they want to generate more employment opportunities for their own citizens. Ukrainian people have also moved to Poland and other Central European countries after political upheavals in Ukraine. These countries have already taken refugees and migrants from Ukraine.⁹⁹

With the rise of far-right movements, and far-right parties, these countries are unlikely to accept Muslim migrants. Culturally, Western European countries are more diverse than those of Eastern Europe. Eastern European nations were under the communist rule and are socially more homogeneous. For instance, Poland is 98 percent white and 94 percent Catholic and other countries also have very little diversity.¹⁰⁰ Thus, it is focused on granting asylum to Syrian Christian.¹⁰¹ Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban declared that Christian identity would be threatened.¹⁰² A survey from Pew Research Centre’s study in 2014 illustrates that European people are not very favourable to immigrations due to economic crisis and slow recovery; they want fewer immigrants allowed in their respective countries. Such attitude is higher in severely affected countries, for instance, Greece (as high as 86 per cent) and Italy (similar as that of Greece, 80 per cent). It is also noted that far-right parties are coming to the political forefront, and parties, like Marine Le Pen’s National Front in France, are looking to play a much larger role in their countries’ political future. Table 5 shows that views on immigration differ by ideology. Right wing parties are of the view that only fewer immigrants should be allowed to move in their country. Such perception is quite strong where economic condition is not well.¹⁰³

Table 5: Views on Immigration (by Ideology)

Country	Left (%)	Moderate (%)	Right (%)	Left-Right Difference
France	40	49	73	+33
Germany	28	41	57	+29
Spain	34	49	62	+28
UK	41	56	60	+19
Italy	72	76	88	+16
Greece	81	86	93	+12
Poland	35	31	44	+9

Source: Spring 2014 Global Attitude Survey, Pew Research Center

Jef Huysmans noted, *“This raises questions about how the development of a common migration policy feeds into the wider politics of belonging, that is, the struggle over cultural, racial and socio-economic criteria for the distribution of rights and duties connected to membership of the national and European community.”*¹⁰⁴ He argued that Europeanization of migration policy fosters the ‘securitization of migration’¹⁰⁵ and radical political strategy aimed at ‘excluding particular categories of people by reifying them as a danger.’¹⁰⁶

Rise of Far-Right, Anti Immigration Parties

The rise of right wing political parties has been registered in the EU member states. Against the common European approach to global and regional challenges, these political parties fuel nationalist tendencies and attempt to generate an anti-immigrant feeling in the society. Although causes of their rising support in elections vary from country to country, these political trends are not considered to be viable for generating collective response. The Law and Justice (PiS) party won the election in Poland. It has opposed accepting the migrants in Poland. Therefore, the new Polish government has anti-immigrant sentiments and it appeared reluctant in taking migrants. Konrad Szymanski, Poland’s European Affairs Minister said that Poland would not accept relocated refugees as per the distribution plan of the EU.¹⁰⁷ He stated, “...in the face of the tragic events in Paris, we see no political possibility of implementing them.” He further argued that Poland must retain complete control of its borders, as well as its asylum and migration policy,¹⁰⁸ though Poland has voted in favour of redistribution plan of the EU.

Hungary continues to put strong opposition to inflows of migrants. Prime Minister Viktor Orban severely criticized the European policy to allow migrants in the EU. In the same line, Czech Republic President also joined and shared the stage with anti-Islam and anti-refugee fronts in the country. In his Christmas message, Czech Republic’s President, Milos Zeman, compared the refugees coming to Europe with the Trojan horse. He called the influx of migrants an ‘organized invasion’ in Europe.¹⁰⁹ Earlier, he had also warned that migrants would bring terrorism and infectious diseases to Europe. The Czech government also keeps illegal migrants in detention centres and has been accused of giving harsh treatment to them. The UN Human Rights Chief, Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein criticized the Czech government for detaining refugees for up to 90 days and strip-searching them.¹¹⁰ Since majority of Czech people are against taking in the migrants, and fear that Muslim migrants may create social

tension, therefore, the Czech leadership and politicians are giving such statements to serve the national electoral politics.

Anti-immigration and right wing ideology parties also gained momentum in Germany and France. Although German Chancellor welcomed refugees with open arms, anti-refugee sentiment is also rising in the country. The PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West – Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes) movement is gaining momentum against Islam and refugees in the country. Thousands of people are attending the rallies of anti-Islamic groups.¹¹¹ There is a trend of rise of the populist-nationalist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. The party received increased support in regional elections held in Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saxony-Anhalt in March 2016.¹¹² Complaints of sexual assaults were registered on New Year's Eve in Cologne. The number of complaints has risen to 516. In 40 per cent complaints, women reportedly said that the crimes were sexual in nature. Women also stated in their complaints that they were subjected to lewd insults and robbery. The Police said that most of the accused were from North African countries, and majority of them are either asylum seekers or are illegally living in Germany. The incidents have generated criticism of German policy to welcome refugees and migrants and have shocked the country, and several protests for better security and respect for the rights of women have been launched. These parties are making attempts to exploit such fear.¹¹³ Attacks on buildings sheltering asylum seekers and other anti-refugee incidents have increased in Germany.¹¹⁴

The migrant and refugee crisis and terror attacks had fuelled anti-immigrant sentiments in France. The National Front achieved considerable electoral gain in the recent elections. The National Front could not win in a single region in the regional elections held in December 2015.¹¹⁵ Despite the electoral loss, Le Pen's National Front is considered to be a strong political force in the country. The party maintains that the main two political parties showed that they were two sides of the same coin, thus, it offered the only real political alternative. The loss of National Front would be a great political relief for the two main political parties of France. French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said that he had 'no hesitation'¹¹⁶ in requesting people to support the opposition Republican Party in order to keep the National Front out of power.¹¹⁷

Far-right parties also gained strength in other European countries as well. The Danish People's Party got the second largest percentage of votes in the national elections held in June 2015. The anti-immigration party gained huge support, particularly in rural areas, playing on nationalist sentiments and the promise of preserving the benefits for Danish citizens.¹¹⁸ Denmark has started to take away refugee's asset in order to support their stay in the country. The Danish parliament has approved the law to take away asylum seekers' personal possessions to cover the cost of their stay in the country. The police may search refugees' assets and take the non-essential items worth more than 10,000 kroner. But the law makes the exception of articles of sentimental value, such as wedding rings, family portraits, decoration and medals. Danish Government says that the policy would treat migrants and refugees similar to the unemployed of the country, who must sell assets of a certain value before they can get benefits. The law also intends to delay family reunification of the refugees. The legal measure is mainly intended to deter the asylum seekers to move towards Denmark. The law received widespread condemnation from human rights groups. The United Nations also criticized the Danish legal measures.¹¹⁹ The Amnesty Denmark said that the law reflects that the Danish government's main priority was to deter asylum seekers from coming to the country.¹²⁰ Switzerland and southern German provinces – Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg - have similar laws, which allow taking refugees' assets. Switzerland collected a total of 210,000 Swiss francs, equivalent to US\$210,000 or 200,000 Euro, from 112 people in 2015 under the regulation.¹²¹ The Swiss government also faced criticism. But, the government argued that the policy reflects the view of Swiss voters. The authority of German provinces stated that asylum seekers must use their own resources first. They will receive aid later.¹²²

The extreme-right Sweden Democrats have steadily risen in the polls, and in one survey in August, they even ranked as Sweden's most popular party.¹²³ Austria's far-right Freedom Party came second in the regional election. The party won 30.4 per cent vote in the state of Upper Austria. The fears of migrants and refugees played a significant role in the elections.¹²⁴ The Greek Golden Dawn gained the third largest percentage of votes in the general elections. Termed as the 'neo-fascist',¹²⁵ the party came in third with seven per cent of the votes, behind the triumphant left-wing Syriza and conservative New Democracy. In April, most of its leaders were put on trial on charges of running a criminal organisation masquerading as a political force. The party stands accused of murder, armed attacks, money laundering and trafficking. The party's anti-immigration stand helped in the

elections.¹²⁶ The UKIP could not win more than a single seat in the UK general elections 2015, but the party received around 13 per cent votes. Party leader Nigel Farage also criticized taking in refugees. He wrote, “Merkel’s crazy pledge to take an unlimited number of migrants is causing a huge security and cultural risk to Europe. The mass movement of people from East to West, most of whom we do not know who they are or where they are from and what they have done or intent to do, is madness.”¹²⁷

Tightening the Border Control

The EU member states are taking steps to tighten control on their borders. Free movement of people, capital and goods and services are considered as fundamental elements of the European integration project. Amid rising migration and security concerns, passport free movement in the Schengen zone has created challenges for the EU. The UK Home Secretary noted that the Schengen system has increased irregular migration in the EU.¹²⁸ Sweden, Hungary, Finland and Austria have imposed temporary checks on the borders to control the inflow of migrants.¹²⁹ Hungary took the stringent steps to put razor wire fence and declared a state of emergency in the border areas.¹³⁰ Germany also stepped up checks at the borders with Austria. Border control assumed another dimension when the new government of Poland demanded greater national control over member states’ borders. The strain in the Schengen agreement has emerged, and there is call for suspend the Schengen zone for a period of two years also appeared.¹³¹ Some political parties such as UKIP, FN are also demanding to end or suspend the Schengen agreement. UKIP leader Nigel Farage categorically stated that Schengen is ‘dead’.¹³² Nicolas Sarkozy, UMP party, supports that EU but demands fundamental changes in travel in Schengen agreement.¹³³ Despite the pressure, member states are in favour of free-movement of their citizen and its benefits.¹³⁴

Conclusion

The inflow of migrants and refugees has posed challenges not only to European values and their international humanitarian obligations, but also to the European political fabric and institutions. Historically, Europe has made efforts in building human rights protection regime at the regional and global levels. European countries are signatories of international treaties and conventions on the refugee. However, some countries are reluctant or opposed to the redistribution of the refugees, though the magnitude of influx of migrants and refugees is unprecedented. They need to respond collectively, but, their common response is further weakening and political tensions have emerged among the

Member States. Eurozone economic recovery is 'moderate';¹³⁵ France has declared a state of economic emergency, hence, the EU member states may also be worried about the assistance to be provided to help a large number of migrants and refugees. The incidents of terror and sexual attacks have raised security and social concerns. People's perception has changed after the incidents of sexual abuses and robbery involving the refugees and migrants. Anti-refugee protests have been registered across Europe, and people participation is gradually increasing. Rise in incidents against refugees was registered in Germany. Anti-immigrants parties have registered electoral success in the elections. Contestation among the EU has been noticed in the areas of regional, financial crisis and current migrant and refugee crisis has led the dissent flourish against the EU policy at the national and local levels. Increasing political support may complicate the formulation of common efforts to solve the crises Europe is facing today. Some Central and Eastern European countries fear that migration may disturb their social homogeneity. Strains in the Schengen zone fuel the demand for suspending or ending Schengen passport travel.

The European neighbourhood remains unstable. West Asia – namely Syria and Iraq – is the main source of current migrant and refugee inflow. The prevailing geo-political environment in West Asia is not conducive for establishing stability in these countries. Instability will persist and it would be difficult to scale down the inflow of migrants and refugees in Europe. The EU should have a diplomatically more engaged and clear strategy to end the conflict in Syria.¹³⁶ The EU may work towards finding a broad-based political solution to the crisis. UN brokered peace talks are yet to produce result, but the UN sounded optimistic about the peace process. Human rights group voiced concern over the deal between Turkey and the EU for controlling the migrants' inflow, nonetheless, the EU believes in bringing more order at its borders and in the resettlement of refugees.¹³⁷

Other countries from where refugees and migrants are moving towards Europe are politically and socially unstable. Afghanistan is facing insurgency and reports suggest that Taliban control has increased in the country. The EU efforts to quell the root cause of migration are not considered to be adequate. People may be in search of opportunities for safe, secure and economically a better life. The EU primarily relies on political and developmental means. The European countries may have used diplomatic and political measures to evolve effective regional mechanisms to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan. Exogenous factors have strong footprints on security in Afghanistan. Security

is the key to the reconstruction and development of a war-torn country which is under process of reconstruction. In the absence of security and law and order, people may not find it viable to return to Afghanistan in the search of their destiny. African countries demand more efforts from the EU to address the cause for migrations. Financial assistance promised to them might not be effective to address the socio-economic factors – which push people to flee their homeland. The contemporary geo-political complexities would not settle down soon. In the given political and security scenario, migrants and refugees may try to move towards Europe in immediate future. Thus, more complexities and uncertainty in the European response may surface.

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