



EU Migration and Refugee Crisis – Current Political Concepts and Solutions

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Brussels, 04/11/2016

2015 Capacity Building Workshop



Introduction

- Migrants and refugees streaming into Europe from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia → greatest challenge since the debt crisis
- International Organization for Migration: Mediterranean the world's most dangerous border crossing
- Escalating human toll: Thousand of dead refugees in 2013 - 2015
- Problem: Nationalist parties ascendant in many member states
- Concerns about Islamic terrorism looming
- Unclear if the EU or its member states are capable of implementing lasting asylum and immigration reforms



Introduction

- IOM estimates that more than 464,000 migrants have crossed into Europe by sea for the first nine months of 2015
- Syrians: 39 %); Afghans: 11%; Eritreans: 7%
- Deteriorating security and poverty in Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan have also contributed to the migrant influx
- Number of first time asylum applicants increased by 85 % in the second quarter of 2015 compared with the same quarter of the previous year and 15 % compared to the first quarter of 2015
- Germany continues to be the most popular destination
- It has received the highest total number of new asylum applications, with almost 222,000 by the end of August 2015
- Hungary has moved into second place, 96.350 applications by the end of July



What's the difference between a migrant and refugee?

- Groups are entitled to different levels of assistance and protection under international law.
- **Asylum seeker** is defined as a person fleeing persecution or conflict, and therefore seeking international protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention on the Status on the State of Refugees
- **Refugee** is an asylum seeker whose claim has been approved
- UN considers migrants fleeing war or persecution to be refugees, even before they officially receive asylum
- Syrian and Eritrean nationals: *prima facie* refugee status
- **Economic migrant:** Person whose primary motivation for leaving his or her home country is economic gain. The term "migrant" is seen as an umbrella term for all three groups
- All refugees are migrants, but not all migrants are refugees
- Mixed-migration-phenomenon



Countries of Origin

Where Asylum Applicants Are From ...

Largest source countries in 2015 (as of August)

Country	Number	Share of all applications
Syria	121,535	20.2%
Kosovo	66,045	11.0
Afghanistan	63,380	10.6
Albania	43,915	7.3
Iraq	33,825	5.6
Eritrea	26,765	4.5
Serbia	22,470	3.7
Pakistan	20,370	3.4
Somalia	13,205	2.2
Ukraine	13,065	2.2

... and Where They Want to Go

Countries receiving the most asylum applications in 2015 (as of August)

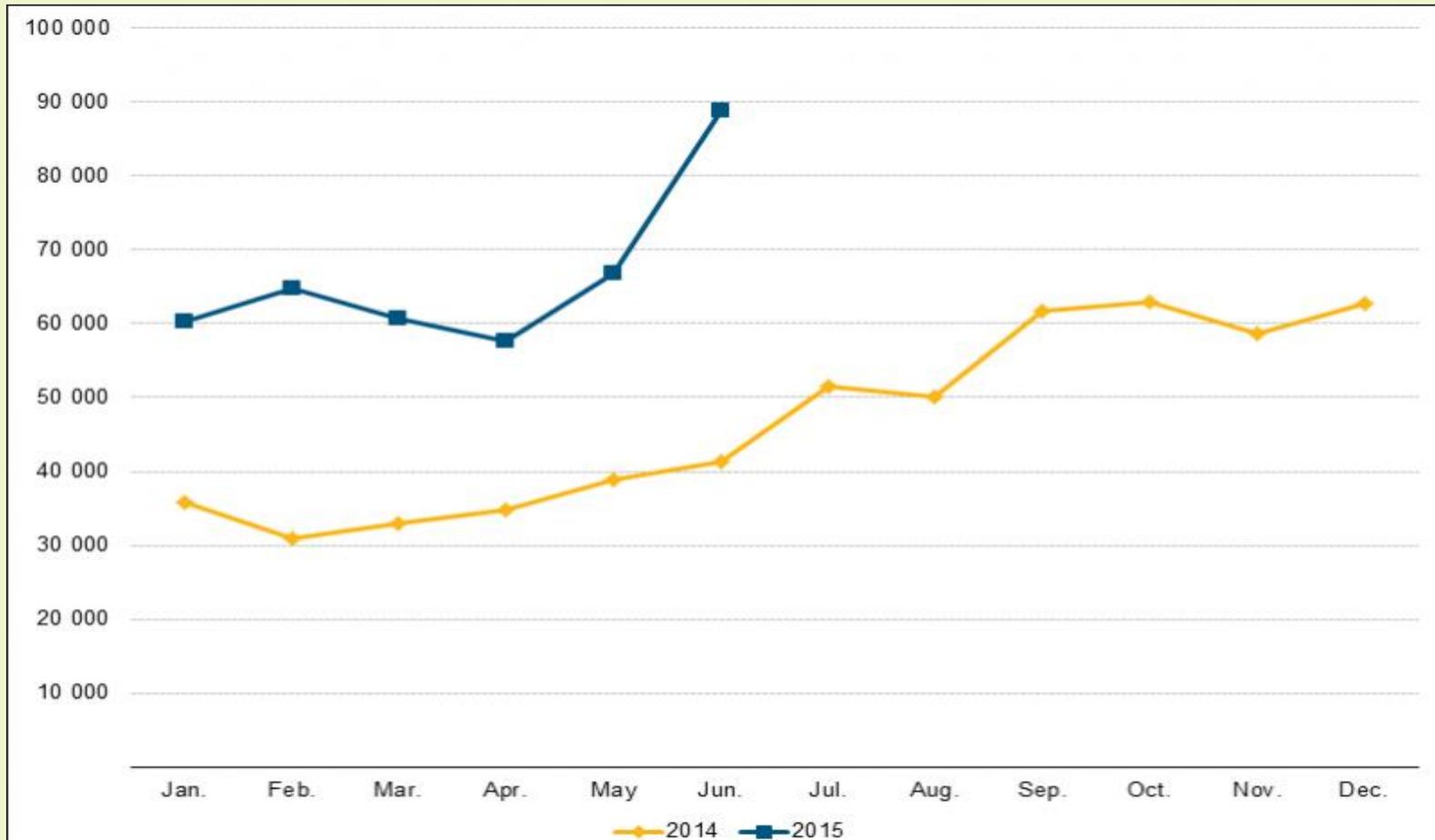
Country	Number	Share of all applications
Germany	245,675	40.9%
Hungary	98,070	16.3
Sweden	48,725	8.1
France	32,155	5.4
Italy	30,535	5.1
Austria	28,310	4.7
Belgium	20,870	3.5
Switzerland	19,620	3.3
United Kingdom	14,990	2.5
Netherlands	9,735	1.6

Source: Eurostat. Accessed Sept. 25, 2015

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First time asylum applicants, EU-28, January 2014 – June 2015



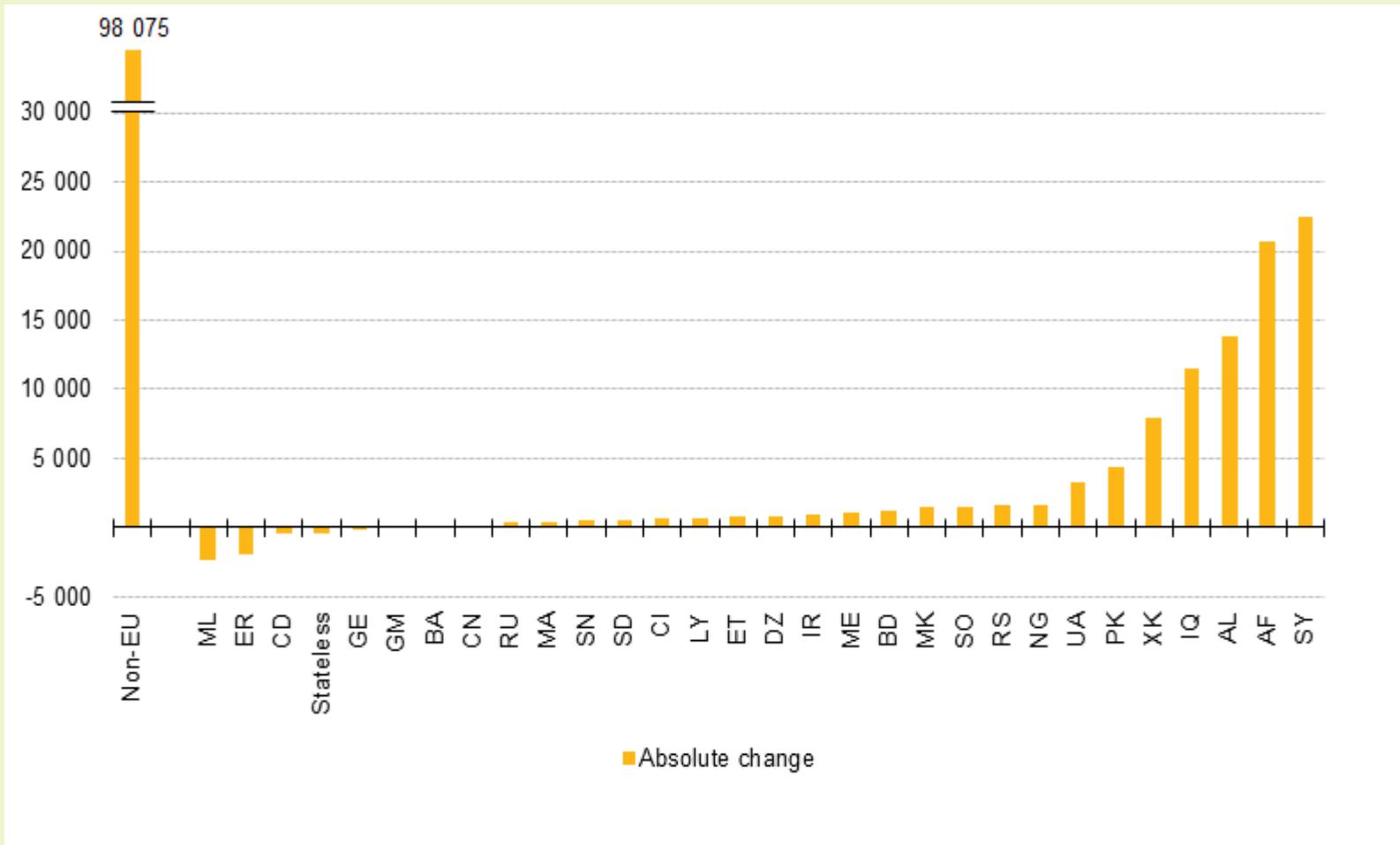


First time asylum applicants, EU-28, January 2014 – June 2015

- Citizens of 141 countries sought asylum for the first time in the EU
- Syrians, Afghanis and Albanians were the top 3 citizenships of asylum seekers
- Asylum applicants from Iraq (nearly 6 times more) recorded the most substantial relative increase in the EU in the second quarter of 2015 compared to the same quarter of 2014, followed by Kosovans (nearly 5 times more), Albanians and Afghanis (more than 4 times) and by applicants from Montenegro (more than 3 times)

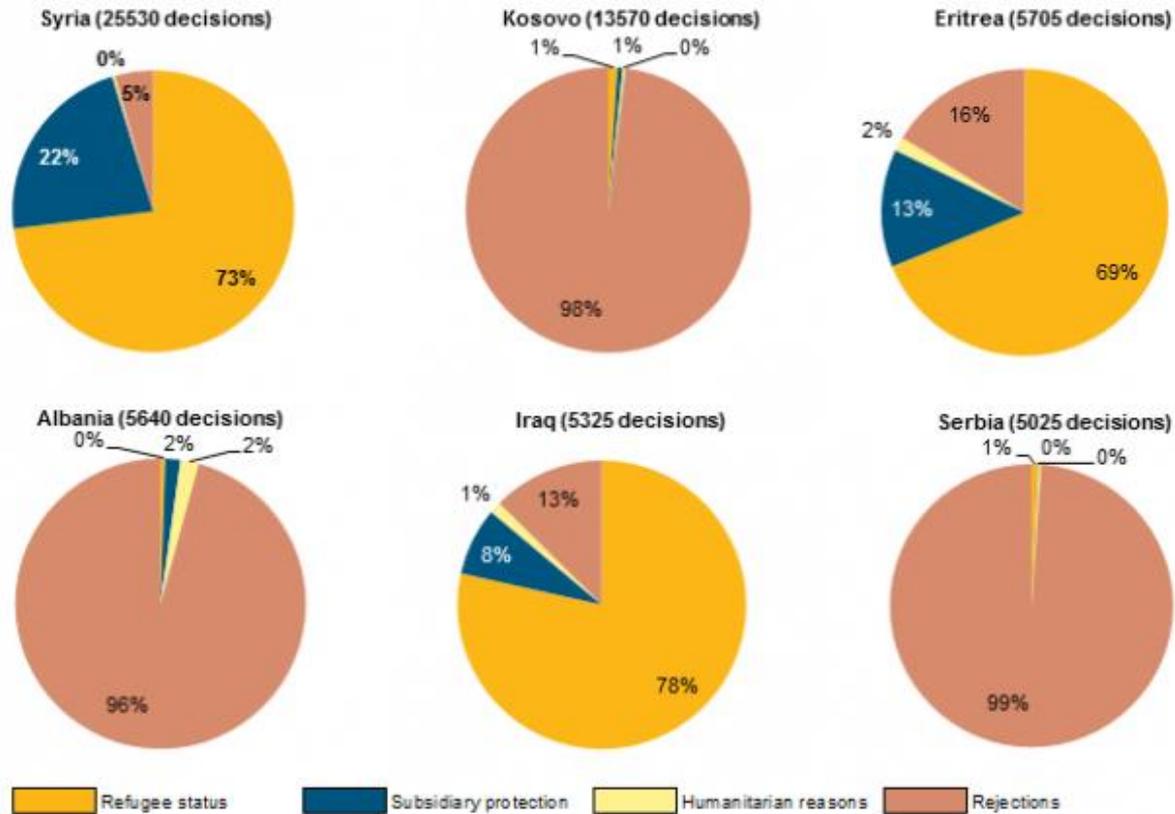


First time asylum applicants by citizenship, EU-28, absolute change between Q2 2014 and Q2 2015





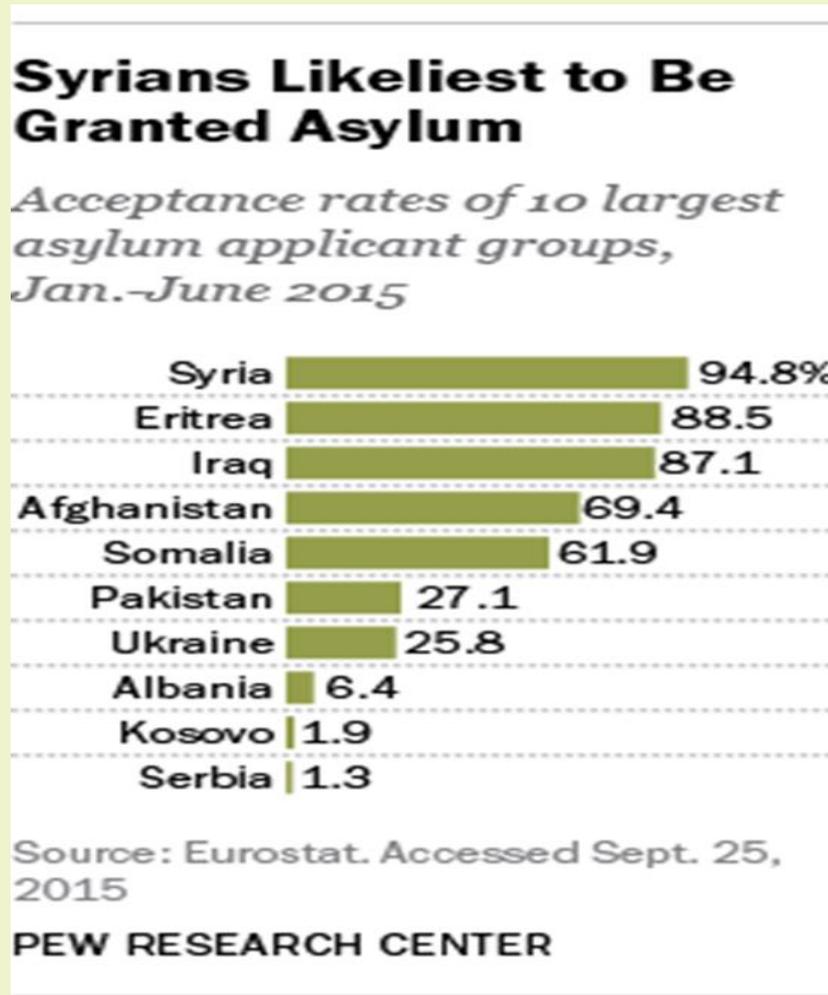
First instance decisions in the EU-28 by outcome, selected citizenships, 2nd quarter 2015



Citizenships selected here are those for which the highest number of first instance decisions was issued during Q2 2015
Data for Austria are not available



Acceptance rates





Which EU member states are on the frontlines?

- EU member states hardest hit by the economic crisis
- Greece and Italy: Main points of entry for migrants and refugees due to their proximity to the Mediterranean Basin
- Shifting migratory patterns over the past year have also exposed countries like Hungary, situated on the EU's eastern border, to a sharp uptick in irregular migration
- Budgets for migration and asylum issues in many of these entry-point states hardest hit by the economic crisis have not kept up with growing demands and needs
- In August 2015, the European Commission approved a 2.4 billion Euro emergency aid package, with 560 million euros earmarked for Italy and 473 million euros for Greece to subsidize their migrant-rescue efforts for the next six years



What is the Dublin Regulation?

- Revision in 2013: EU law stipulates that asylum seekers must remain in the first European country they enter and that country is solely responsible for examining migrants' asylum applications
- Entry-point states bear unilateral responsibility for migrants under the Dublin Regulation
- Migrants who travel to other EU states face deportation back to the EU country they originally entered
- Reform of the Dublin Regulation is an important step to establishing a Common European Asylum Policy.



Ten point action plan on migration

April 2015: Joint meeting of Foreign and Interior Ministers, chaired by High Representative / Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Avramopoulos (Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship) presented a 10 point plan of the immediate actions:

1. Reinforce the Joint Operations in the Mediterranean, namely Triton and Poseidon, by increasing the financial resources and the number of assets
2. A systematic effort to capture and destroy vessels used by the smugglers
3. EUROPOL, FRONTEX, EASO and EUROJUST will meet regularly and work closely to gather information on smugglers modus operandi, to trace their funds and to assist in their investigation



Ten point action plan on migration

4. EASO to deploy teams in Italy and Greece for joint processing of asylum applications
5. Member States to ensure fingerprinting of all migrants
6. Consider options for an emergency relocation mechanism
7. An EU wide voluntary pilot project on resettlement
8. Establish a new return programme for rapid return of irregular migrants coordinated by Frontex from frontline Member States
9. Engagement with countries surrounding Libya through a joined effort between the Commission and the EEAS; initiatives in Niger have to be stepped up
10. Deploy Immigration Liaison Officers (ILO) in key third countries, to gather intelligence on migratory flows and strengthen the role of the EU Delegations



What are the main proposals for managing the crisis?

- In September 2015, EU ministers agreed to resettle 120.000 refugees (Syrians, Eritreans) from Greece and Italy across twenty-three member states
- Denmark, Ireland, and the UK are exempt from EU asylum policies under provisions laid out in the 2009 Lisbon Treaty
- This plan was approved despite the vocal objections of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia.
- This agreement builds upon a previous voluntary quota system that called on member states to resettle 40.000 migrants from Greece and Italy over a two-year period



What are the main proposals for managing the crisis?

- EU and global powers must also provide more aid to Middle Eastern countries like Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, which have borne the primary responsibility for Syrian refugees
- Overwhelming influx of Syrian and other refugees into Turkey is impacting the country and host communities. **With over 2 million refugees in the country, Turkey is now the largest host of refugees in the world**
- **Over 85% of Syrian refugees remain in urban and rural areas instead of refugee camps**, so are often unaccounted for.
- **The European Commission is supporting vulnerable refugees in Turkey who have fled violence** in both Syria and Iraq, in particular refugees living outside of camps.



Draft Action plan with Turkey

- European Commission President Juncker handed over a Draft Action Plan on support of refugees and migration management to President Erdoğan during the latter's visit to Brussels (5 October 2015)
- Draft Action Plan identifies a series of actions to be implemented as a matter of urgency by the EU and Turkey. The objective is to assist Turkey in managing the situation of a very large influx of refugees and preventing irregular migratory flows from Turkey to the EU
- The Draft Action Plan tries to address the current crisis situation in two ways: by supporting the refugees and their host communities in Turkey (Part I) and by strengthening cooperation to prevent irregular migration flows to the EU (Part II)



The EU side intends to:

- Mobilise up to €1 billion euros for the period 2015-16
- Priority should be given to actions providing immediate humanitarian assistance; provision of legal, administrative and psychological support to refugees; support for community centres; the enhancement of self-sufficiency and employability of refugees and their social inclusion Turkey could benefit from a fair share of the substantial increase of the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis announced at the 23 September European Council
- Continue to provide immediate and principled humanitarian assistance via humanitarian organisations programmes aimed at addressing the needs created by the protracted refugee crisis.



The EU side intends to:

- Continue providing assistance to Syrian refugees hosted in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, as well as to Syrians displaced within Syria with the aim to contribute
- Over € 4.2 billion Euros of total budget already mobilised by the Commission and Member States collectively in humanitarian, development, economic and stabilisation assistance to Syrians in their country and to refugees and their host communities in neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt
- Support existing Member State and EU resettlement schemes and programmes, which could enable refugees in Turkey to enter the EU in an orderly manner.



Thank you very much!

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