



# POLITICS OF IMMIGRATION IN THE EU

## An Analysis of the Mediterranean Case

Giovanni Campostrini | A Europa e o Mar no Espaço e no Tempo | 10/12/18



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## ABSTRACT

One of the most crucial events which afflicted EU stability in the last years has been the migration crisis. From 2013, Southern European States experienced thousands of new arrivals, coming mainly by sea from Libyan and Turkish coasts. This paper analyzes the EU laws and regulations circa the process of asylum application, to better understand the main concerns and critics regarding the welcoming system in Europe. Moreover, migration crisis' main data are analyzed to show the tragedy that overturn European public opinion.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the main concerns of the European authorities and of the public opinion in the last decade has been the immigration crisis and European late and partial answer to limit the damages and to control and manage the situation. One of the main critics expressed by countries more afflicted has been directed to the European Union (EU) immigration policy for asylum seekers. In the present form, it does not consider a process of relocation of refugees, who must ask for asylum in the European country where they first entered, neither to the ones who are seeking to reconcile with relatives in other European member States. Most of these migrants escape from wars, persecutions, and many other harsh conditions that could not let them live further in their motherlands. Since 2013, thousands of persons started an exodus through the Mediterranean to seek for fortune in Europe, finding instead closeness, abuses, and even death. In this paper, the main immigration policies and laws are presented, together with an analysis of the numbers and of the main facts that occurred since 2013 during the migration crisis. The paper is developed in five chapters.

In the first two chapters, the EU immigration and asylum policies are taken into consideration, presented, analyzed, and criticized. The recent historic juridical process in EU immigration policies is presented in the first chapter, followed in the second one by the EU authorities' responses in order to change the obsolete policies, with a special focus on the Dublin Agreements, showing the difficulties on finding a common agreement throughout the member States regarding this sensitive subject. The literature taken into consideration for these chapters comes from the EU official documents, and politicians' statements, as well as those from experts involved in the decisional processes.

The third and fourth chapter analyze the maritime immigration crisis: the main events and the numbers of arrivals and casualties. The main documents and declaration of the UNCHR and of the IOM are crucial for these sections.

In the last chapter is presented the position about the structural problem of the immigration policies of the involved member States of the Italian historian Lorenzo Kamel.

# 1. THE EU IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM POLICY

In order to understand the EU policy circa immigration and asylum, it is fundamental to understand the terminology, above all, the different meanings of words such as migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

A migrant is someone who leaves its motherland seeking for a new life in another region or country. Everyone who crosses a border is part of this category, both those ones who are authorized by governs and own a visa or a work permit and those who does not, namely irregular migrants or migrants without documents (Open Society Initiative for Europe, 2018). Thanks to the Schengen Agreements, into effect since March 1995, all the citizens of the European Union are free to move inside the EU and along the European Economic Area; these persons are defined as “privileged migrants”, since they do not need any permits by authorities.

A refugee, instead, is a person who escapes from war, persecution, or natural disasters. International law defines the status of refugee. States are obliged to protect refugees and cannot send them to any place, in which there could be the risk of being persecuted or where their safety could be in danger. The State is the first responsible for the protection of the refugees. The United Nations calculated that, at the end of 2015, refugees worldwide amounted to 21.3 million of people (Open Society Initiative for Europe, 2018).

The “Convention determining the State responsible for examining applications for asylum lodged in one of the Member States of the European Communities” (EU Heads of States, 1997), better known as the Dublin Convention, establishes how member states should welcome refugees and asylum seekers. Today, the third version of the treaty is into force, after the regulation of the first two held in the Irish capital in 1997 and 2003. The definition of Asylum Seeker is taken from the Article 1 of the Convention of Genève of 1951, the “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees”, redact by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 1951). The Convention of Genève is grounded in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 which “recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries<sup>1</sup>.” The Convention entered into force on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1954, and it is the centerpiece of international refugee protection also today. Article 31 of the above-mentioned Convention prohibits to the Contracting States to impose penalties to asylum seekers and refugees, “coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of Article 1,” present on their soil, even if they entered illegally in their territory without authorization. Throughout Europe, North

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<sup>1</sup> To read the full text: United Nations. 2015. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. United Nations. [http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr\\_booklet\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf)

America, and Australia, despite this provision, asylum seekers are placed in detention facilities, due to their illegal entry and presence (Goodwin-Gill, 2001). According to the Convention of Dublin an asylum seeker is a foreigner who presented an application for asylum to which a final decision has not yet been taken. An application for asylum is how an alien request the status of refugee to a State member of the Geneva Convention as stated in article 1 (EU Heads of State, 2003). Moreover, an asylum seeker must produce the application for asylum in the State where him or her entered first. This key principle is stressed in article 13, where it is established that when a migrant ask for asylum in a State member of the EU, this State is the competent for the examination of the request of international protection, even if it is ascertained that the seeker entered inside the State territory illegally (Zatterin, 2015). The Regulation (EU) No 604/2013, of June 26, 2013, adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council, establishes and regulates “the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person” (Parliament and Council of the EU, 2013). This has been the consequence of the Dublin Agreements II of 2003, in order to reorganize the migration system after the financial crisis and the boom of migration of the previous years. One of the fundamental objectives of the EU is to institute progressively a space of freedom, security, and justice to anyone who, pushed by the circumstances, seeks for a legitime protection inside the Union.

In 2007, the EU redacted the Treaty of Lisbon<sup>2</sup>, which entered into force in December 2009. This treaty established a common system comprising a uniform status and uniform procedures circa the measures of asylum. The common system includes:

- A uniform status of asylum;
- A uniform status of subsidiary protection;
- A common system of temporary protection;
- Common procedures for the granting and withdrawing of uniform asylum or subsidiary protection status;
- Criteria and mechanisms for determining which Member State is responsible for considering an application;
- Standards concerning reception conditions;
- Partnership and cooperation with third countries (European Parliament, 2018).

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<sup>2</sup> To read the full text: EU Head of States. 2007. Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community. Official Journal of the European Union. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:FULL:EN:PDF>

The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM<sup>3</sup>) was adopted by the EU Commission in 2011 and states the general framework of the EU about the relation with third countries on migration. In the Approach, the human rights of migrants are a cross-cutting issue. Its four pillars are:

1. regular immigration and mobility;
2. irregular immigration and trafficking in human beings;
3. international protection and asylum policy;
4. maximizing the impact of migration and mobility on development (Schmid-Drüner, 2018).

Among the main measures promoted by the EU on the adaptation of the migration phenomenon, only the recast of the Qualification Directive entered into force without any delay in January 2012. All the other recast legislative acts, namely the Eurodac Regulation, the Dublin III Regulation, the Reception Conditions Directive, and the Asylum Procedures Directive, only entered into force in July 2013. Their delayed transposition on mid-July 2015 felt exactly during the migration crisis' peak. In June 2014, the European Council stated the strategic guidelines for legislative and operational planning within the area of freedom, security and justice, according to the Article 68 of the TEFU. These are based on the Commission Communication of March 2014, in order to progress after the achievement of the Stockholm Program of 2009. They stressed how the implementation of the CEAS<sup>4</sup>, the Common European Asylum System, is an absolute priority (European Parliament, 2018).

Finally, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, the European Agenda on Migration was drawn and published by the Commission. It was created in order to handle the migration crisis occurring in the Mediterranean. It established not only immediate measures, but also those ones which has to be taken over during the following years. The Agenda stressed four policy areas to be taken as a guideline on the medium-long term:

1. Reducing incentives for irregular immigration;
2. Border management saving lives and securing external borders;
3. Developing a stronger common asylum policy;
4. Establishing a new policy on regular immigration, modernizing and revising the blue card system, setting priorities for integration policies, optimizing the benefits of migration policy (Schmid-Drüner, 2018).

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<sup>3</sup> Source: European Commission. November 18, 2011. *Global Approach to Migration and Mobility*. European Commission. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0743:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>4</sup> Source: European Commission. 2014. *A Common European Asylum System*. Luxembourg: Publications of the European Union. [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/docs/ceas-fact-sheets/ceas\\_factsheet\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/docs/ceas-fact-sheets/ceas_factsheet_en.pdf)

## 2. EU WILL TO REFORM THE DUBLIN AGREEMENTS

When the Dublin Agreements were redacted nobody could have imagined the migration boom of 2015, which will be analyzed in the next chapter. Since, according to the Agreements, the asylum seeker must request the asylum permission on the State member where he enters, the countries on the Mediterranean facing African costs were penalized during the migration crisis, because they and they only must welcome all the maritime migrants. The Italian and the Greek governments, and not only them, strongly criticized the Dublin Agreements, seeking for a renewal of the EU immigration policy.

Thanks to these critics, the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs approved an overview of progress on the implementation of earlier Council conclusions provided by the Presidency of the Council and signed by the Council<sup>5</sup>. The text should not have been passed to the European Parliament, but 88 MEPs, most of them delegates of Eastern Europe against the reform, asked to vote for it. This reform should regulate the Dublin rules, and it passed at the European Parliament on November 16 with 390 positive votes, 175 against, and 44 abstentions. The reform was presented by the liberal MEP Cecilia Wikström, and the victory was the result of a long negotiation which reconcile left-wing parties, socialists, greens, liberals, and conservatives. Mainly only the represents of countries of Eastern Europe were against it. Between the relators of the reform there was Elly Schlein, a MEP of the Possible group, who stated that the regulation was a “strong sign to governs and citizens. At least one of the European bodies wants a turn on the European asylum policies. It was a sign of solidarity and equal sharing of responsibilities.” The reform would have changed the policy of the first State of admission, substituting it with a permanent and automatic mechanism of outplacement based on an allowance system, to which all the member States should participate. Even if this was the first time that an European body found an agreement about a not restrictive common system of asylum, as stated by the expert in European normative of asylum Gianfranco Schiavone (Camilli, 2017), the resolution did not pass when discussed by the other bodies. Moreover, the resolution provided for the first time the familiar relationship that an asylum seeker could have had in the EU (Camilli, 2017).

The 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2018, the Ministers of the Internal Affairs of the EU joined a plenary session in Luxemburg to discuss the resolution reforming the Dublin Agreements. Bulgaria, which presides the European Council, presented a draft widely considered worse than both the Commission and the Parliament ones. The Bulgarian proposal did

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21620/19-euco-final-conclusions-en.pdf>



not present obligatory repartition quotas and implied instead that States can refuse to welcome refugees giving a monetary sustain to those ones who do it. The Italian interior minister, Matteo Salvini, who criticized both the Dublin Agreements and the Bulgarian proposal, did not participate to the meeting of preparation of the European vertex of June 28-29 because he was at the Italian Parliament to give the trust to the up to born government. However, the ambassador Maurizio Massari and the prefect Gerarda Pantaleone brought his position to the Council. The majority of the member States refused the reform, among them: Germany, Austria, Balkans' and Visegrád's countries. United Kingdom abstained. Anyhow, many countries against the Bulgarian request were opened to a possible negotiation. Between them, stand out Greece, Malta, and Cyprus, which were some of the countries mostly affected by maritime migrations. Salvini's statements regarding his attachment with the positions of Viktor Orbán are crucial. The Hungarian prime minister declared to be against the repartition system of the refugees throughout quotas, a position opposite to the progresses already made by the European Parliament regarding the reform of the Dublin Agreements, against the previous will of the Mediterranean countries (Camilli, 2018) and of the first Salvini.

EU member States were willing to reform the Dublin Agreements since 2016, but the recent developments seemed to have made the process even more complicated. A possible final resolution seemed to be distant if not impossible, with Salvini's took of distance, his will to split Europe, and his refusal to negotiate supporting the states members of the Visegrád group. Moreover, the Bulgarian proposal seemed to be miles away from the Parliament resolution. It was something that incredibly was rejected by almost all the countries interested. In this peculiar case, the Europe system seemed obsolete to function in front of improvise crises, with little space of maneuver. The European governments seemed to look more towards their sovereignty rather than international solidarity.



### 3. ANALYSIS OF THE MARITIME IMMIGRATION BOOM AND THE CURRENT SITUATION

During the last years, Europe saw an incrementation on the number of migrants and asylum seekers, mostly coming from northern African costs. The peak culminated in 2015, reaching an incommensurable and unpredictable number of migrants escaping from harsh conditions seeking to live in a safest place: the European Union.

One of the most peculiar cases is the Libyan human trafficking. A study made by the NGO “Save the Children” (2014), before the maritime migration boom of 2015, studied, as paradigmatic, the case of Eritreans seeking to move to Italy, their former colonizer. Libya is a transit country for different African populations who foster to come to Europe to find fortune. This country is fragile and instable, and this made the uncontrolled immigration from Libya to Europe common as uncontrolled. Eritrean migrants who arrived to the Italian costs mostly passing from the Maghreb country, usually after having passed months imprisoned in detention centers, where they suffered violence, abuses, and in some cases tortures. Before arriving to Libya, they were forced to pass through Sudan, rather alone or in the worst cases sold by Sudanese human traffickers to the Libyan ones. They were let free only after a payment or after working under a state of forced labor. After that, they have to face the see, risking once again their lives packed with hundreds of people in fragile boats. Libya never ratified the Geneva Convention, and Libyan law about illegal immigration provides an indeterminate period of detention waiting for expulsion, also for those ones who deserve international protection.

The immigration boom started in 2013, and after the peak of 2015 the number of maritime migrants is decreasing (Fig. 1). In the map (Fig. 2) it is possible to see the main routes of migrants from North Africa and Turkey seeking to arrive to Italian and Greek costs, so far, the most desired arrivals due to their geographic proximity, but also to French and Spanish ones. The total number of migrant arrivals to the European costs in the Mediterranean region was 216,054 in 2014. In 2015, it was 4.7 times more, since more than a million of people decided to challenge the death to try this journey, precisely 1,015,078. Since then, the number of arrivals started to decrease, reaching 362,753 arrivals in 2016 and 172,301 in 2017<sup>6</sup> (Fig. 2). Up to the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, this year the total of arrivals to the European Mediterranean region arrived to 117,540 people, 110,947 of them are the refugees and migrants arriving by sea to Italy, Greece, Spain and Cyprus (Fig. 3).

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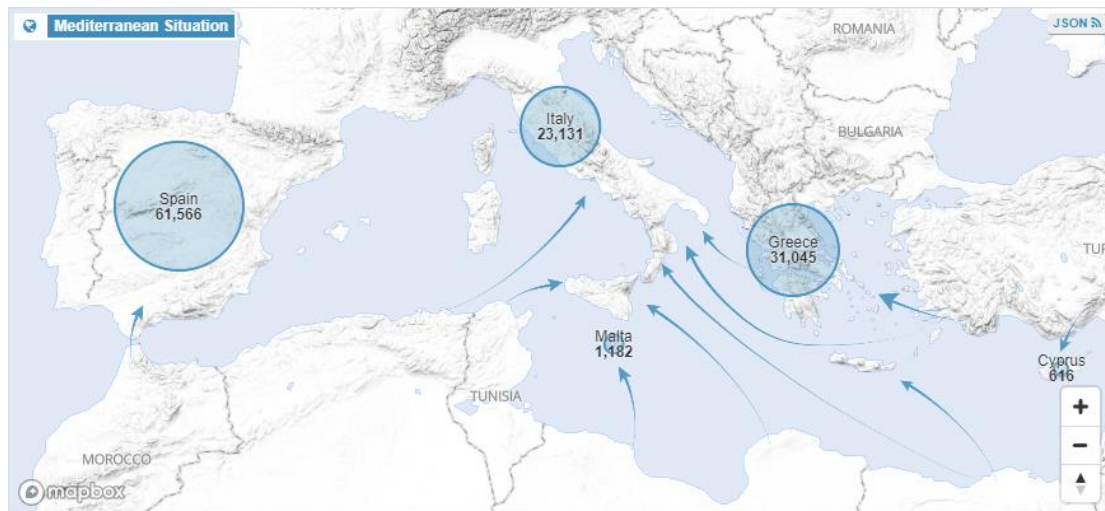
<sup>6</sup> All the data about migrants is taken by the UNCHR. Data are estimations given by the number of asylum seekers. Source: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>



*Fig 2: The graphs represents the number of maritime migrants and asylum seekers arrivals to the EU divided by month since January 2015. It is possible to see that the peak occurred in October 2015 and from then on the number of arrivals went decreasing.*



*Fig. 1: Map representing the main routes of migrants seeking to come to the EU. The map considers the most trafficked routes and it represents both the land routes in Africa, Turkey and Greece and the maritime ones in the Mediterranean. Source: BBC. September 15, 2014. Mapping Mediterranean migration. BBC World News.*



*Fig. 3: Map showing the number of migrants and asylum seekers arrivals to the principal European Mediterranean hosting countries in 2018. Source: UNCHR. December 18, 2018. Mediterranean Situation. Operational Portal: Refugee Situation. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>*

Analyzing the main events occurred on the fatidic year 2015, the UNCHR stressed eight main fundamental passages in order to understand the immigration boom. Meanwhile in the previous years the main route was from Libya to Italy, the main and dangerous focus in 2015 was the passage from Turkey to Greece, principally made by Syrians escaping from war. The most dangerous passage was from the Anatolian costs to the Greek island of Lesbo. The tragedy of the phenomenon and the weight of the numbers put it on the center of the EU agenda for months. As already mentioned above, in 2015 more than a million refugees and migrants reached European coasts. More than 3,700 of them lost their lives during the journey, as further analyzed later on. Among all the migrants during the immigration boom, more than the 75% percent of them were escaping from war, clashes, and persecutions occurring in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq (Alto Commissariato delle Nazioni Unite per i Rifugiati, 2015). As shown in Fig.4, nowadays situation regarding the nationality of the migrants did not change much. In Fig. 5 is shown, instead, the different status given to the migrants coming from these three countries in 2017.

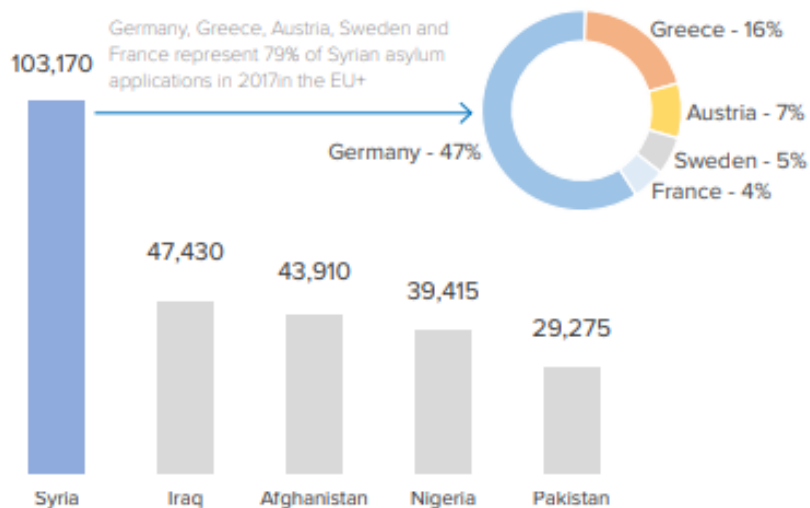


Fig. 4: Most common nationalities of asylum applications in 2017. In 2015 Syrian, Iraqi, and Afghani immigrants covered more than the 75% of the total. In 2017 they were still the three principal nationalities of the migrants. Source: UNCHR. 2017. EUROPE KEYDATA – 2017 Arrivals in Europe. UNCHR: Key Data 2017. [https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62326?fbclid=IwARiULOfraOXEBOXz\\_sCPzmca6oOthYrs8EyqJ1NiG\\_EnipQKNqmKbvaETG8](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62326?fbclid=IwARiULOfraOXEBOXz_sCPzmca6oOthYrs8EyqJ1NiG_EnipQKNqmKbvaETG8)

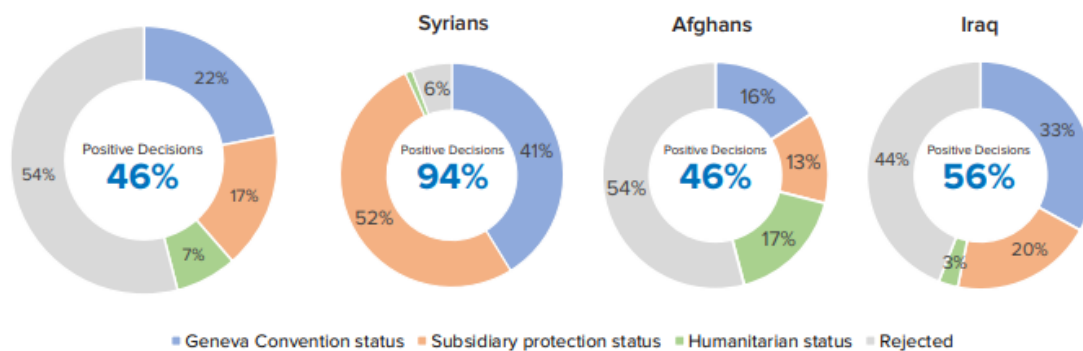


Fig. 5: A graph showing the overall EU+ first instance decisions and the top nationalities of EU+ first instance decisions in 2017. Source: UNCHR. 2017. EUROPE KEYDATA – 2017 Arrivals in Europe. UNCHR: Key Data 2017. [https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62326?fbclid=IwARiULOfraOXEBOXz\\_sCPzmca6oOthYrs8EyqJ1NiG\\_EnipQKNqmKbvaETG8](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62326?fbclid=IwARiULOfraOXEBOXz_sCPzmca6oOthYrs8EyqJ1NiG_EnipQKNqmKbvaETG8)

Just before midnight on April 18, 2015, more than 600 persons died drowning in the Mediterranean when their boat flipped over in Libyan waters, at 180 kilometers of distance from the Italian Island of Lampedusa. Italy and Malta succored the victims, saving 50 of the 700 persons estimated on board. The UN High Commissioner for the refugees, António Guterres, was shocked by this tragedy and called for immediate help to the EU countries (Alto Commissariato delle Nazioni Unite per i Rifugiati, 2015). According to the 1979 Convention, adopted after the Hamburg Conference, aimed to develop the Search and Rescue (SAR) plan<sup>7</sup>, the rescue of a person in distress at sea must be coordinated by a SAR organization. When necessary, as in this case, the rescue should be made by a coordinated bilateral action between neighboring SAR organization (IMO, 2018).

The 28<sup>th</sup> of August, Austrian authorities found 71 refugees and migrants in an abandoned ice-truck next to the Hungarian border. According to the Austrian police, the truck was coming from Hungary and the victims have died two days earlier. This sad news, as underlined by Melissa Fleming, Head of Communications & Chief Spokesperson for the UNHCR, shows “the desperation of those people seeking for protection or a new life in Europe.” A system of cooperation between European polices, intelligences, and international organization is needed, “in order to develop the control upon human trafficking and implement measures to protect the victims.”

The image of Aylan Kurdi, represented in the paint of the Bosnian painter Safet Zec in the cover image of this paper, was a harsh and strong symbolic sign explaining the tragedy of the situation. Aylan was a Syrian kid who died trying to reach Greece by sea. His dead body was dragged on a Turkish beach. António Guterres stressed how the EU was passing through a “decisive moment”, illustrating the guide lines to sustain every attempt made to resolve the European immigration crisis. Aylan died in September, when more than 300 thousand people already risked their lives trying to reach Europe. More than 2,600 of them already died that year, trying to achieve this purpose.

The other five key events of 2015 analyzed by the UNCHR regard the Hungarian strict nationalist migration policy and relocations. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, more than a thousand refugees moved walking from Budapest towards the Austrian border to protest against the Hungarian government, which refused to provide trains for Austria and Germany. Finally, the Hungarian decision has been revoked and the government

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<sup>7</sup> The SAR is the search for and provision of for the ones who are in distress or imminent danger. Every State provides its own SAR. The SAR all around the globe rely on ships to assist who is in danger in the sea. Nowadays, signals of help request can be transmitted rapidly thanks to the satellite and land technics of communication, the authorities in charged of search and rescue, surrounding boats, and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). Rescue operations could be rapid and coordinated (International Training Centre of the ILO, 2015).

provided some buses to bring outside the border the exhausted refugees. There, they found the Austrian Red Cross and the Austrian Malta Order, with welcoming signs, clothes, water, and food. The UNCHR congratulated Austria and Germany and the civil society for leaving their boundaries opened.

Therefore, the Hungarian government continued with its xenophobic campaign against migration. The 15<sup>th</sup> of September, Hungary completed the steel curtain on the border with Serbia. After two decades of a Europe without boundaries, EU States started to regain control of their borders. UNCHR stressed how the different measures taken from State to State could let refugees in a state of “legal limbo”, underlying the urgency to establish a concentrated European answer, which, as we saw, it is not yet to come.

However, something seemed to move: during October 9, 19 asylum seekers moved from Italy to Sweden thanks to a relocation scheme. This program plans to move 160,000 refugees from Italy and Greece and could be a fundamental system, which could stabilize the European refugee crisis. The plan consists in a collaborative operation supported by the European agencies, the UNCHR, international organizations, and other partners. The 4<sup>th</sup> of November, 30 asylum seekers moved from Greece to Luxemburg. Finally, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December, started a plan of the resettlement in Canada of Syrian refugees. The plan seeks to relocate in Canada 25,000 Syrian refugees, and started with a group of 163 people who arrived to Toronto (Alto Commissariato delle Nazioni Unite per i Rifugiati, 2015). Thanks to these plans and many others, up to the end of 2017, 33,700 refugees were relocated from Italy and Greece, 11,900 from the “Bel Paese” and 21,700 from the last one<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: UNCHR. 2017. EUROPE KEYDATA – 2017 Arrivals in Europe. UNCHR: Key Data 2017.  
[https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62326?fbclid=IwARiULOfraOXEBOXz\\_sCPzmca6oOthYrs8EyqJ1NiG\\_EnipQKN9mKbvaETG8](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62326?fbclid=IwARiULOfraOXEBOXz_sCPzmca6oOthYrs8EyqJ1NiG_EnipQKN9mKbvaETG8)



## 4. MIGRATIONS' FATALITIES AND DISAPPEARANCES

Welcoming was not the only problem of the immigrations through the Mediterranean. The most striking aspect is the elevated number of casualties. If in 2014 and 2015 Europe experienced the highest number of arrivals, it is impressive how the number of deaths, in percentage, has increased in the last two years. 2014 counted 3,538 casualties on maritime routes, 3,771 in 2015, 5,096 in 2016 and 3,139 in 2017<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 6).

Between all the routes that a migrant could or have to pass by to arrive to a European coast, the Mediterranean one seems to be the deadliest. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) confirmed with a global report of late 2017 the tragic, incomplete, countability of the Mediterranean casualties: 15 thousand in less than three years. The research tries to answer to a crucial question: who are the migrants, where do they come from and how do they die migrating? (Confortin, 2017).

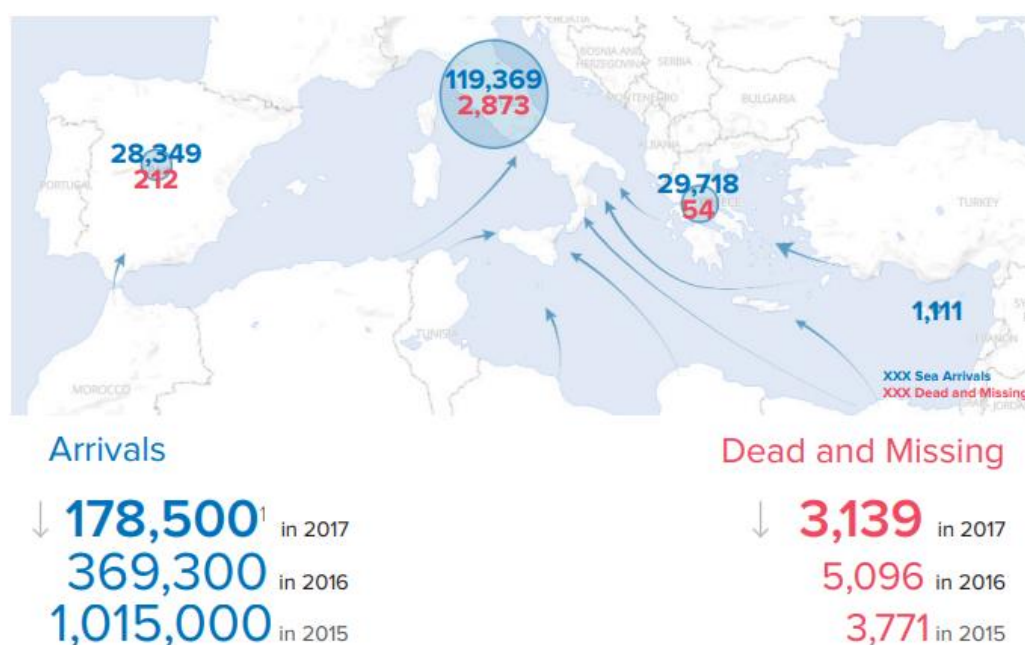


Fig. 6: Map showing the arrivals to Spanish, Italian, Cyprus and Greek coasts in 2017 with the estimations of deaths in the waters in these States. Below, a comparison of the arrivals and of the estimations of casualties and missing persons in the last three years. Source: UNCHR. 2017. EUROPE KEYDATA – 2017 Arrivals in Europe. UNCHR: Key Data 2017. [https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62326?fbclid=IwARiULOfraOXEBOXz\\_sC\\_Pzmca6oOthYrs8EyqJ1NiG\\_EnipQKN9mKbvaETG8](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62326?fbclid=IwARiULOfraOXEBOXz_sC_Pzmca6oOthYrs8EyqJ1NiG_EnipQKN9mKbvaETG8)

<sup>9</sup> Source: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>

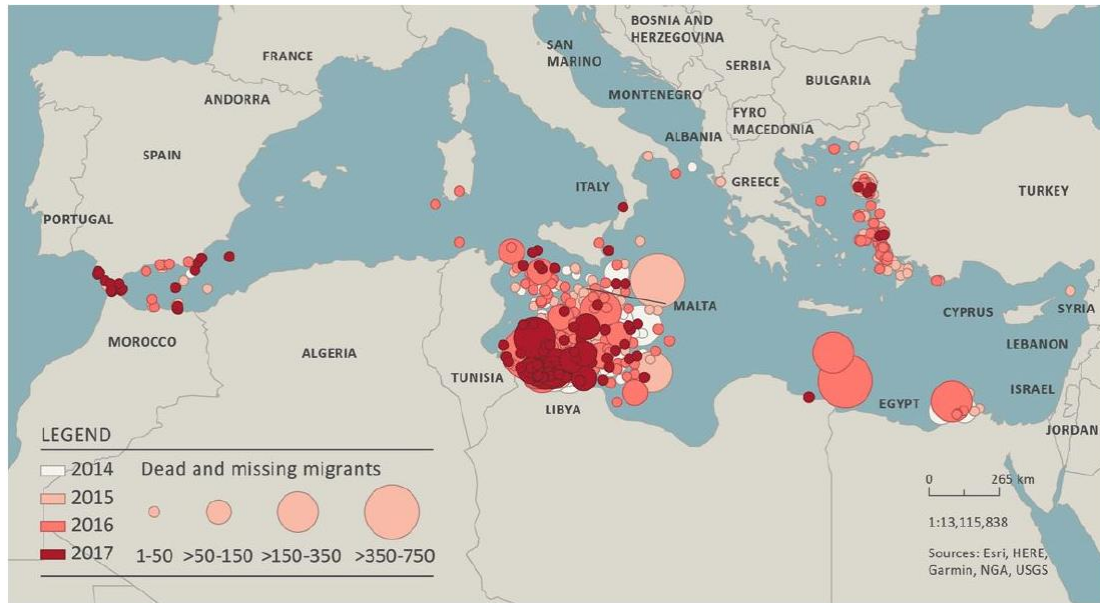


According to “Fatal Journeys”, estimations show how, between January 2014 and June 2017, 22,500 migrants disappeared or died around the globe. Since the New Millennium, the number counts 60 thousand *desaparecidos*<sup>10</sup> (Fig. 7). With the 15,000 casualties since October 2013, the Mediterranean is the most dangerous place for migrants. Since 2000, 25% of the migrants who disappeared or died were in the Mediterranean, 66% from January 2014 (Fig. 8, Table 1). As William Lacy Swing, the president of the IOM, stressed, “the real number of the victims is unknown,” since not all the casualties and disappearing are exposed but the authorities of the transit countries and “many bodies could have been never recognized or found.”



Fig. 7: Global migrant fatalities and disappearances worldwide in the first six months of 2017. Source: IOM’s Missing Migrant Project. 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Source: IOM’s World Migration Report. Most recent version of 2018: [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en.pdf)



*Fig. 8: Location and number of migrant fatalities and disappearances in the Mediterranean sea between January 2014 and June 2017 divided per year. Source: IOM's Missing Migrant Project. 2017.*

Year	Incidents recorded	Total migrant fatalities recorded	Average number of fatalities per incident
<b>2014</b>	20	703	35.15
<b>2015</b>	25	1,764	70.56
<b>2016</b>	45	2,484	55.20
<b>2017</b>	118	2,158	18.29

*Table 1: Average number of fatalities per incident recorded in the Central Mediterranean from January 2014 up to June 2017. Source: adapted from the IOM's Missing Migrant Project. 2017.*

According to the analysis of 2017 of the IOM's Global Migration Data Centre, the main cause of death is drowning, followed by hunger and dehydration. In Table 2, the number of incidents, the total fatalities, and the average number of fatalities per incident recorded in the Central Mediterranean is reported.

Considering the period January 2014-October 2017, the 40.91% of the people who died or disappeared during their migration has never been recognized. They create a new motherland of the migrants: the unknowns. The main fault of this tragedy can be attributed to the local authorities, especially in those most remote and dangerous areas, such as the seas, where only a minimum part of the castaways is recuperated. Among the identified migrants all around the world, the majority of them came from the Americas (36.03%), followed by Africans (32.71%), Asians (10.31%), and the Middle-East (7.06%). The European incidence is just above zero.

Region	Proportion of incidents containing information on age or gender	Proportion of dead/missing containing information on gender/age	Number of female deaths	Number of male deaths	Number of child deaths	Total number of deaths recorded
Central Mediterranean	36%	12%	375	826	136	12,781
Eastern Mediterranean	86%	84%	201	204	377	1,336
Europe	90%	85%	7	173	24	246
Africa	17%	8%	51	118	52	3,805
South-East Asia	59%	58%	35	285	30	1,835
US-Mexico border	80%	52%	51	544	13	1,194
Central America	52%	66%	19	179	33	431

*Table 2: Regional data on migrant deaths by age and gender from January 2014 up to June 2017. Source: adapted from the IOM's Missing Migrant Project. 2017.*

The slowness and the inefficiency of the management of the asylum seekers system offered new opportunities for criminal organizations. Many underage were stuck into detention centers under the police control due to the lack of space in the apposite structures. Procedures of disposal of asylum seekers are not only complicated but also longstanding, particularly for those ones who have to reach a relative resident in a European nation. This clumsy method led migrants in a situation of uncertainty, with few information about the imminent future and without access to primary resources such as education. Afraid of remaining stuck during the journey, thousands of underage migrants refused to present their-selves in front of the authorities or to present any form of asylum application. They used to recall to this practice at least until the arrival on the new land, avoiding the possibility to be scheduled as “not accompanied” or to end in a protection project with few ways of escaping. The anonymity will impose to these youngsters to live harsh experiences at the limit, and in many cases the only hope of arrival is in the hands of criminal organizations, experiencing additional risks (Confortin, 2017).

## 5. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS: STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS AND THEIR POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the Italian Parliament approved to send 470 soldiers and 150 vehicles to Niger in order to contrast the irregular flux of migrants and the human trafficking to Libya and, consequentially, to Europe. Similar policies have been adopted by other EU member states, such as France, Germany, and Spain.

These policies are partially sustained by the outcome of years of studies, some of them focused on the implementation of measures to distinguish the different migration fluxes, with the scope to deviate the migration phenomena instead of blocking it. Others investigated the costs and benefits of externalization politics, the EU strategy for the Sahel Security and the financial weight of the migratory crisis for the European countries. Further studies have been focused on the NGO's potentially lucrative business related to the migration waves, the role of the criminal organization on human trafficking, and the importance of showing solidarity to the victims.

Nevertheless, all these studies, as well as all these policies, seem not capable to offer long-term resolutions. Neither are they focused on a deep comprehension of the structural conditions, which is at the base of the migration fluxes. These analyses and strategies are often merely direct to the core of the public opinion and they are not able to give structural answers to present and future generations (Kamel, 2018).

At first, there are some structural problems on how Western societies increment the migration flux. An example of the carelessness of the European businesses circa the "helping them at their home," Salvini's populist fundamental slogan about how to regulate migration, could be expressed by the Opl 245. The Opl 245 is the procedure of acquisition of the biggest African oil reserve, which counts over 9 billion of barrels of crude oil in front of Nigeria's coasts. Nigeria is the most populated African country, and in 2016 it was the motherland of the biggest number of migrants who arrived to Italy by sea. European oil and gas companies invested 1.1 billion of dollars to acquire the reserve, an amount which could have covered the 80% of the entire sanitary expense of Nigeria in 2015. Nigerian citizens did not receive any advantage from this accord, from which only a limited number of corrupt functionaries and money recyclers gain benefit (Kamel, 2018). Opl 245 is not the only speculative case of Western societies in poor countries. It is not even the only case regarding oil. Almost the totality of the African natural resources is controlled by a significative number of Eastern Mediterranean countries, which send them through off-shore societies related in large scale with European and American enterprises and businesses. From the Panama Papers, it stood out how 1400

anonymous societies, working with local dictators and financial paradises, are used as instruments to drain resources from the poorest States of the world.

A possible European vision based on sustainable solutions could be actuated only opening Europe to products realized in Africa, ensuring an equal distribution of profits, and facing the structural causes which affect the development possibilities of millions of people.

One of the main questions is how the African migratory flux could influence Europe in the next decades. A partial answer could be given by Demography. Estimation shows how African population could double before 2050, from the actual 1.2 to 2.5 billion of people. On the other hand, European population could decrease (Germany from 81 to 79 billion, Italy from 60 to 55).

These numbers confirm how blocking or deviating military the migration flux could only be a failure. Only structural solutions could transform into opportunity current migration challenges.

According to Kamel (2018), from the EU perspective, structural solutions should include five principal policies:

1. Expose and sanction the current exploitation of African natural resources made by European businesses;
2. Open the European market to African products, deconstructing the illusion that we are actually “helping them at their home”;
3. Monitoring and gradually blocking the European weapon flux sold to African and Middle-East countries, especially to those ones which are actually fighting a war, such as Yemen;
4. Offer legal protection and opportunities to the climate migrants;
5. Abandon the “crisis management” approach, focusing more on prevention and regulation - governance.

Even if someone could think that these policies could be unrealistic or unpracticable in the short-term, it is important and urgent at least to dismount the image of a generous Europe involved in finding humanitarian solutions for millions of migrants: a continent constrict to handle the consequences of someone else’s problems. Medias and public opinion tend to believe that the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean struggles are something related to distant countries and populations. We must get through the dichotomy where “their” history differs from “ours”, having and humble and empathic view towards the inhabitants of these territories (Kamel, 2018), since we are the main cause of their situation.

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