

The EU and the burden of Refugee Resettlement

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According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugee Handbook, there are three options for durable solutions when it comes to large movements of people or migration generally. They include: Resettlement, Local Integration and Voluntary Repatriation or Return.

Local integration can include refugees into the host community through legislation giving them access to - education, the labour market, freedom of movement, access to public services including health care, purchase and disposing of properties and the capacity to travel with valid documentation (Low, 2006: 65). Refugee resettlement is the planned movement of people through state or international control from their country or temporary place of stay to a different country entirely (Dessalegn, 2003: 67). Voluntary repatriation or return on the other hand has to do with 'voluntariness', a free decision made by a refugee to return to his or her country based on accurate and objective information that has been provided, premised on the principle of non refoulement (UNHCR Handbook).

Managing the challenges of migration caused by the surge of displacements in the Middle East and the horn of Africa has not been an easy task for EU policy makers

and the governments of EU member states. Temporary and subsidiary protection has not been adequate to guarantee the rights of refugees according to the international benchmark for refugee protection.

European leaders have persistently struggled to deal with the rhetoric of policy failure from experts, think tanks, nongovernmental organizations and at the same time contend with the rising nationalist and populist idealism which tends to compound migration governance. Decision-makers will have to tackle the asymmetrical nature of the root causes with evidence-based solutions even though they will not disappear in the short-term - especially if leaders disagree or support nationalist or populist ideology. They also will not vanish if the emphasis is on migration control rather than on humanitarian grounds.

The recent Bratislava Summit ought to have brought more hope to the people of Europe who have expressed their concerns over the looming social and economic welfare issues of migration, terrorism and insecurity as well as the solemn decision of the UK to leave the Union. However, the divergence in opinions and negative reactions to common policies by leaders of the EU continued with the Council's meeting in Bratislava. The

meeting in the Slovak capital on Friday, the 16th of September, 2016 discussed the EU's future in the wake of Britain's vote to leave the bloc, wrapping up the summit by issuing a roadmap for tackling problems such as migration, security and the faltering economy. The then Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi posited that 'Italy will not continue to pretend that all is well with Europe'. The Prime Minister insisted that leaders always echoed same thing over and over and that Italy was not going to 'serve as a fig leaf for others'.

The Summit brought to fore the differences that exist across Europe with social welfare structures and how each country manages its affairs. For instance, Germany pays social welfare because the upper class does not want to see poor people on the streets, the UK only keeps your name in the list for welfare benefits for six months before it is struck off, France, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, all have differences from each other in their social welfare structures and this is what translates into the difficulties in finding a common solution, because in reality each member state thinks of how to protect their own interests. Donnelly (2000) posits that the state's interest provides the spring of action and success is the ultimate test of policy; success is defined as preserving and strengthening the state.

With its proximity to North Africa across the Mediterranean, Italy, at the receiving end of the high influx of migrants, had proposed a solution for the EU to reach international agreements with African States to help close migrant routes to Europe and also take back some of those arriving via Libya in exchange for increased aid and investment. A migration containment strategy which worked between the EU and Libya, as shown in the data of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, before Colonel Gaddafi was

deposed in 2011. This proposal was never mentioned in the EU Summit. Other leaders also decided to choose austerity policies over more investment in the economy. Hence, Renzi refused to take part in the closing press conference with the German Chancellor or the French President.

The Telegraph reported that disagreements were not only confined to Europe's north-south divide over austerity but also erupted over the East-West split on immigration with the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán condemning the EU's migration policy as 'self-destructive and naïve'. Orbán rejects mandatory relocation quotas set by the EU with regard to refugees. Hans Joachim Morgenthau in 'Politics among Nations' (1948) affirmed international relations are guided by objective and universal laws. States in the international arena defend their own interests and reason why the interests must be defined in terms of power. Realists such as Hobbes, Machiavelli, and Morgenthau assume that humankind is selfish and competitive by nature. Outright display of this magnitude of intolerance between the leaders of the Union over policy divides and preferences cannot solve the present problems of Europe; however, they help us understand the dynamic and complex nature of foreign policy involving state and non-state actors.

However, while European leaders clash, statistics shows that the number of people requiring resettlement has increased tremendously. Data from EURO Stats recorded that the number of asylum applicants increased by 40% in the second quarter of 2016 when compared with the same quarter of 2015. The number of persons currently seeking asylum from non EU countries during the second quarter of 2016 reached 305, 700. This was 88, 100 more than in the same quarter of 2015. So

far only 1, 614 have been successfully resettled and 10, 695 out of 22, 504 who agreed to be relocated in 2015 have been successfully relocated.

As resettlement is usually done in collaboration with international partners, nongovernmental organizations and governments of countries, it is imperative that nongovernmental organizations working in these areas are supported financially to boost the key role they play in identification, pre departure and the post resettlement integration process. The post resettlement integration process can be a herculean task for the resettled refugee if governments do not keep to their commitments and can lead to further secondary movement. Hence, all actors should ensure that there is no backlog of post resettlement issues, especially regarding promises already made and their fulfillment thereafter. New countries should learn from those with lots of experience, for instance, the Canadian model in which some provinces sort out their own resettlement needs.

To sum up, the EU must view resettlement as an ongoing activity rather than as an emergency response mechanism directed by government to ease a particular situation or as a political instrument to cut deals with weaker countries in return for economic benefits which might cause more harm than good in the long run or to portray that we have moral values afterwards. Furthermore, there needs to be a clear recognition of the role external economic factors play in creating the conditions which leads to refugee flows and steps proposed to address them. Sanctions on EU members

supporting practices antithetical to the values it represents, continued collaboration with humanitarian actors' in actions like the Sant'Egidio corridor and strengthening Blue card measures in times of economic weakness, still remain largely credible ways to ease the flow of migration from third countries and to reduce the burden of resettlement.

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