

Chapter 2

Demography and Foreign Policy: A European Perspective

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For Europe, 2015 and 2016 were exceptional years, marked by more than 1.5 million irregular migrants and refugees arriving at the continent's southern shores. This flow of people seeking protection and a better life triggered two completely different reactions. The first was a remarkable wave of civic engagement of volunteers and civil society at large, people who welcomed refugees and who in part were encouraged by some national and local governments—with German Chancellor Angela Merkel taking the lead.¹ The second reaction was growing criticism and a political shift of electorates to the right.² The latter strengthened nativist anti-immigrant parties, but also put asylum and irregular migration at the top of the agenda of mainstream parties. As a result, many national governments and the European Union (EU) as a whole tried to reform and speed up asylum procedures, implemented more effective border controls in cooperation with neighboring transit countries, and started to engage proactively with migrant-sending nations. The obvious shift in the focus of European foreign and development policy clearly had a demographic trigger—the sudden rise of irregular migration—and the perception that EU governments and the EU as a whole had lost control over the flow of people as well as over their external borders.

This chapter discusses how international migration and other dimensions of demographic change in Europe are affecting European foreign policies now, and how they may affect them in future, as such changes continue to unfold.

¹ Tina Hildebrandt und Bernd Ulrich, “Im Auge des Orkans,” *Die Zeit*, September 20, 2015, <http://www.zeit.de/2015/38/angela-merkel-fluechtlinge-krisenkanzlerin>.

² “Willkommenskultur lebt, aber mit Einschränkungen,” *Zeit Online*, April 7, 2017, <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2017-04/fluechtlinge-einwanderer-willkommenskultur-deutschland-studie>.

Europe's Demographic Weight

When calculating total population for today's 28 EU member states, long-term demographic change in Europe becomes apparent. In absolute terms the total number of people living in these 28 countries is growing, although at a smaller pace than in other continents. As a result, the EU and its member states are becoming demographically less relevant at a global scale.

In 1960 the total number of people living on the territory of the EU-28 was 405 million. In 2017 the European Union (EU28) had a population of 512 million.³ This represents an average increase of 1.8 million people per year. Between the baby-boom years and the early 1990s, the main driver of growth was an annual number of births significantly exceeding deaths. Since the mid-1990s, however, population growth in the EU has mainly been the result of immigration from other (non-EU) parts of Europe and the world. Indirectly this immigration also reduces the decline of births, as the large majority of those settling in an EU country are between age 20 and 35, and they tend to have children in the country of destination rather than giving birth in the country of origin and leaving the children with their grandparents.⁴

During the period 2005–2015, population growth in the EU took place in most parts of the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland, France, the Benelux countries, Denmark, northern and central Italy, and metropolitan and coastal regions of Spain, as well as in central and southern England, central and southern Sweden, and southwestern Finland. In Germany, Portugal, the Baltics, east-central, and southeastern Europe, population growth only took place in and around national capitals and a few other larger cities; population in most regions outside these areas shrank (Figure 1).

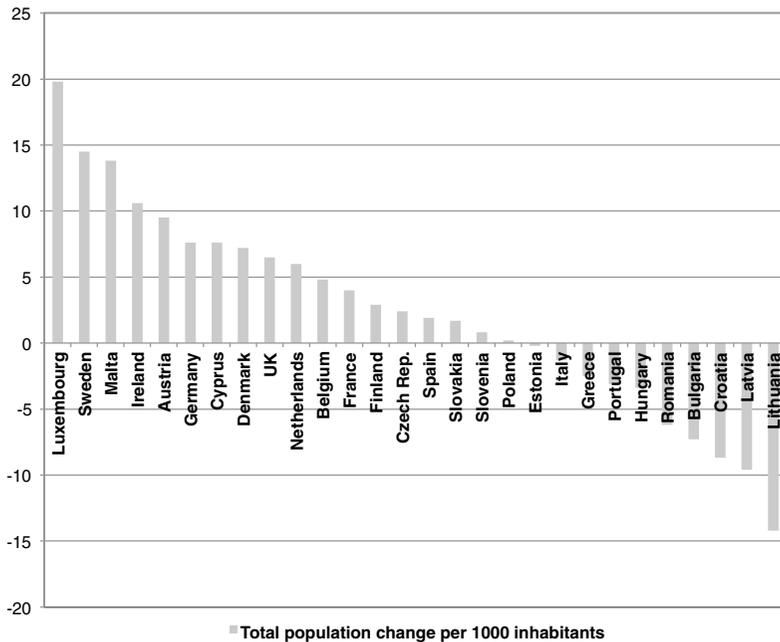
When taking a longer view, it becomes clear that the Baltic states, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania have seen a considerable demographic decline since 1990. More recently (2014–2016), Germany has experienced demographic growth due to immigration, whereas Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain—the countries most affected by the recent banking and financial crisis—have seen declining numbers of native-born inhabitants, due to high unemployment. The same is true for the Baltic states. Eco-

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/8102195/3-10072017-AP-EN.pdf/a61ce1ca-1efd-41df-86a2-bb495daabdab>.

⁴ <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6459400.pdf>.

Figure 1. The European Union: Growing in Some Places, Shrinking in Others

Population change per 1000 inhabitants, 2016, EU member states



Source: Eurostat, Regio GIS.

conomic and labor market developments pushed natives to leave for other EU countries with more favorable conditions. In southern Europe and Ireland, these conditions also motivated some immigrants to those countries to return to their countries of origin.

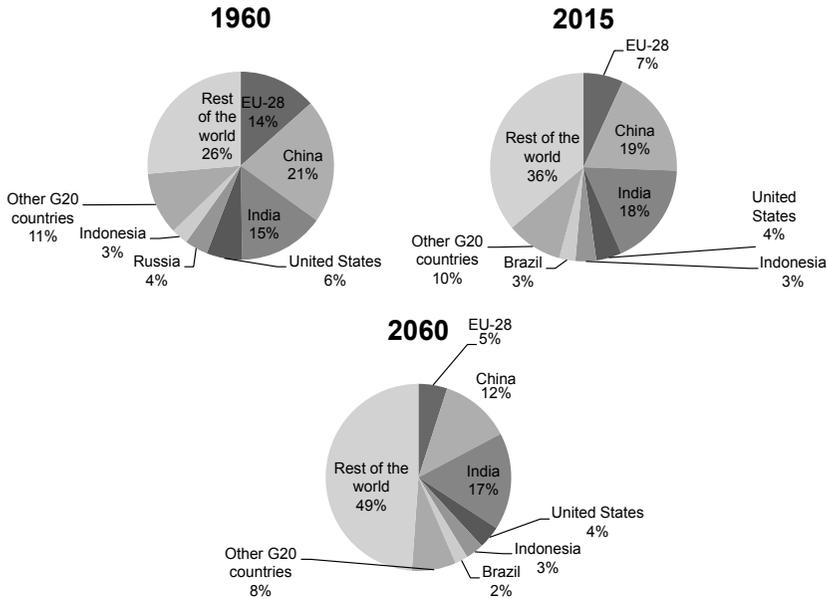
These developments have deepened the split between rural peripheries or declining former industrial heartlands and thriving metropolitan areas, coastal and tourist regions, and other richer parts of northwestern Europe.

From Twenty-Five to Five Percent

With EU enlargement at a standstill with regard to the western Balkans or Ukraine, increasingly unlikely in the case of Turkey, and actually going into reverse because of the UK's departure from the Union, the EU's

Figure 2. The European Union: Losing Weight

EU28 population as share of global population, 1960, 2015, 2060, in %



Source: Eurostat, Europop.

demographic weight will inevitably decline, particularly since the number of people living in Asia and in Africa is expected to grow throughout the 21st century.

Around 1900, Europeans comprised some 25 percent of humankind.⁵ This made Europe the most densely populated region of the globe. In 1960, today's 28 member states still equaled 13.5 percent of humanity; in 2015, that share had dropped to 6.9 percent in 2015 (Figure 2). In 2060, the EU28 population share is projected to be just 5.1 percent,⁶ assuming substantial immigration.⁷ Without the UK, the remaining EU27 will represent just 4.5 percent of humankind.⁸

⁵ <http://brilliantmaps.com/worlds-population-in-1900/>.

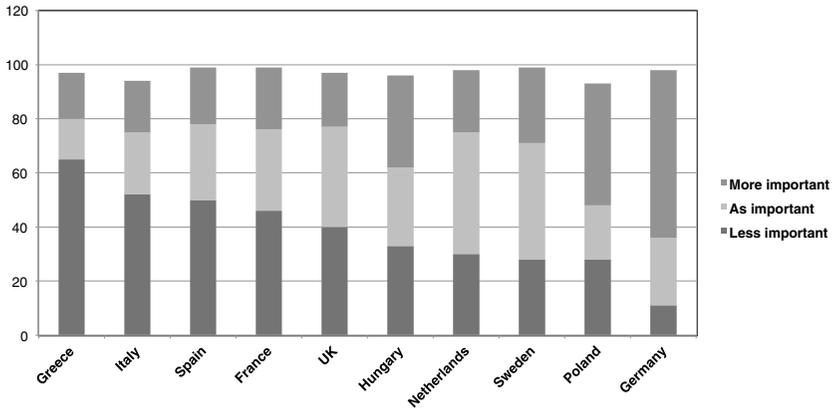
⁶ <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/>; http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=proj.

⁷ Assuming net migration gains of 1 to 1.3 million people per year; http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=proj_15nanmig&lang=de.

⁸ In 2017 the UK represented 0.87% of global population; by 2060 it is projected to drop to

Figure 3. Many Europeans See Waning Global Influence

Answer to the question: “Do you think your country plays a more important role in the world today, a less important role or about as important a role in the world as it did 10 years ago”, surveyed EU countries, 2016, in %



Source: PEW Research Center, Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey

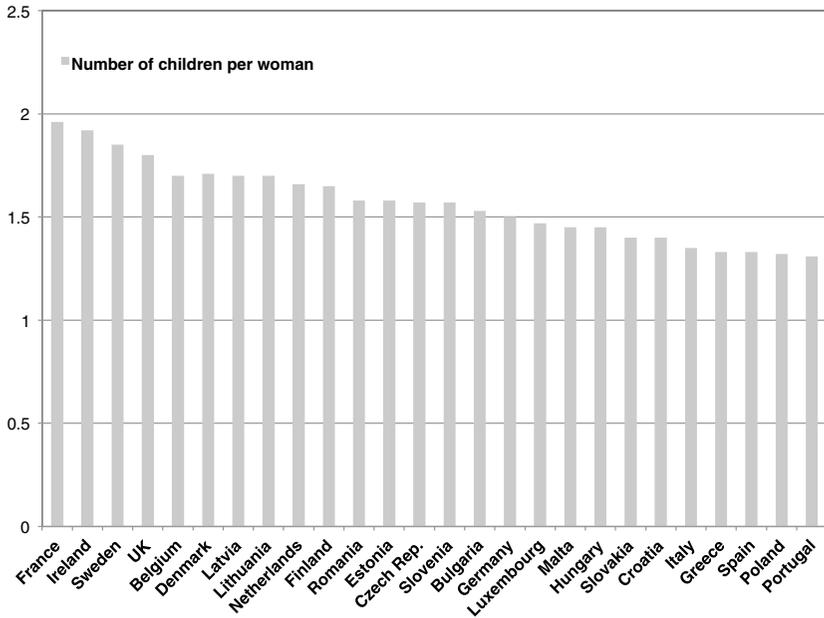
The EU remains one of the richest world regions, as well as one of the most densely populated, behind only northern India and eastern and southern China. However, the prospect of population decline—a process that has already started in many peripheries and some EU countries as a whole—coupled with the rise of China and a growing number of unresolved conflicts in Europe’s neighborhood contributes to a widespread view that Europe is becoming less important on the global stage. This is true for the EU as a whole, as well as for most EU member states (Figure 3).

According to the Pew Research Center, only in Germany (62 percent) and Poland (45 percent) does a significant part of the population believe that their country plays a more important role in the world today, compared with the early 2000s. In contrast, about two-thirds (65 percent) of Greeks, roughly half of Italians (52 percent) and Spanish (50 percent), and French (46 percent) as well as four in ten Britons (40 percent) say their countries now play a less important part on the world stage.

an estimated 0.6%; <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/>; <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uk-population/>.

Figure 4. More Children in France, Ireland, the UK, Scandinavia, Belgium, and the Baltics

Average number of children per woman, 2015



Source: Eurostat.

Aging and the loss in demographic weight are important trends contributing to this perception.

Declining Fertility Has Consequences

Births in Europe declined from the peak post-war baby boom years of the early 1960s to the mid-1990s. The main reason for this was a drop in the average number of children per woman from 3.0 in 1960 to 1.45 in 2000. Since then, the annual number of births has remained stable, and the average number of children per woman is increasing slightly (1.57 in 2015). This has not translated into more births in the EU28, however, because the average age of mothers at birth is also increasing.⁹

⁹ An increase in the average age of mothers at birth does not lead to fewer children per

Over time, an average of 1.5-1.6 children per woman results in a decline of native populations, since the number of children only replace roughly 75 percent of the parental generation.

The European Union is characterized by distinct regional fertility patterns. In France, Scandinavia, the UK and Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, and northern Romania, the number of children per woman is above the European average. In the majority of these countries, female labor force participation is also higher than in the rest of Europe. Fertility is particularly low, in contrast, in southern Europe as well as in Poland and in some peripheral regions of Germany (Figure 4). In these areas, female labor force participation is below the EU average.¹⁰

Low fertility translates into smaller numbers of children and smaller cohorts entering the educational system and European labor markets. If labor force participation rates and the average retirement age remain what they are today, the EU28's labor force will shrink by 65 million people by the year 2050.¹¹ This will reduce EU28 economic output considerably. It will erode the tax base of almost all affected EU countries, reducing their ability both as domestic and foreign policy actors. At least part of this gap will be filled by labor and skill recruited or admitted from third countries. In this context, however, it is important to note that many EU countries have had difficulties attracting highly qualified migrants, most of whom prefer going to the United States and Canada.¹²

Smaller cohorts reaching working age also represent a smaller pool from which Europe's armies can draw future personnel. In contrast to the private sector or the U.S. military, most European armies neither recruit

family, but to fewer births in a given year, since reproduction stretches over a longer period of time and raises the average age gap between generations.

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_labour-force-participation-women_en.pdf.

¹¹ Robert Holzmann and Rainer Münz, *Challenges and Opportunities of International Migration for the EU, Its Member States, Neighboring Countries and Regions* (Stockholm: Institute for Futures Studies, 2005).

¹² OECD, "Europe is underachieving in the global competition for talent," Paris, June 7, 2016, <http://www.oecd.org/migration/europe-is-underachieving-in-the-global-competition-for-talent.htm>; Carmen González, Roderick Parkes, Diego Valiente, Alicia Sorroza, Andreas Ette, *The EU performance in the global competition for highly-skilled migrants*, Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano/Notre Europe, March 26, 2013, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/TGAE-Gonzalez-Parkes-Sorroza-Ette-EU-global-competition-high-skilled-migrants.

non-nationals,¹³ nor can they provide speedy access to citizenship. They can therefore not rely on immigrants, and at the same time they will face growing competition from private sector employers. In the medium to long term, therefore, Europe's ability to fill the ranks of its armies could be hampered considerably by smaller birth cohorts.

The World's Oldest Continent

Life expectancy in today's EU member states grew from 67 years in 1950 to 80.5 years in 2015. Over the past two decades the average life span of those living in EU member states increased by almost 3 months per year. During this period, this catch-up process was particularly pronounced in the eastern half of the EU (and in clear contrast to eastern European countries outside the EU, such as Russia and Ukraine).

Since low fertility translates into smaller cohorts of newborns, the result is an inverted age pyramid with all age groups below 25 being smaller than the age groups 30 to 65. At the same time, higher life expectancy increases the speed of demographic aging. This process is expected to continue. The average life span of Europeans is projected to grow further, while the trend towards smaller numbers of births is unlikely to be substantially reversed.¹⁴ That will inevitably increase the demographic weight of the elderly.

In 2016, one in five EU citizens (19.2 percent) was above age 65. In 2060, the ratio is projected to be three out of ten (29.1 percent).¹⁵ Future immigration might reduce the emerging mismatch between supply and demand of labor and skills, but it will not have lasting impact on demographic aging and as migrants also grow older.

In 2001 the median age in EU28 was 37.7 years. In 2016 the median age had increased to 42.6 years. By 2050, this average will rise to 48 years. By then almost one in two Europeans will be over 50.

¹³ European exceptions are France and Spain, each of which has a Foreign Legion—but those forces are not a core element of national defense.

¹⁴ A declining number of births is almost inevitable, as the inverted age pyramid leads to a shrinking number of potential parents.

¹⁵ Eurostat; <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography-migration-projections/population-projections-data>.

This dramatic demographic aging is likely to have both socio-economic and political consequences. Societies with a higher weight of senior citizens become inherently more conservative, risk averse, and possibly less willing to see their countries engage in military conflicts abroad. Aging societies also tend to require more resources for health care and pension systems,¹⁶ leaving less fiscal space for military spending, overseas development cooperation and global climate change mitigation, all important tools of the EU's external engagement.

This pressure is significant in the context of U.S. expectations that European allies develop more military capacity and shoulder a larger share of common defense efforts.¹⁷ Currently, countries such as France, Italy and the UK already appear overstretched when they face more than one external military conflict at a time. Germany's army was not deployed abroad until the late 1990s, and the country is still very reluctant to engage in military combat.¹⁸

To a certain degree, the gaps that have appeared among external expectations, common security concerns and cross-cutting pressures on national resources have convinced most EU member states to agree on "Permanent Structured Cooperation" in the area of defense (PESCO),¹⁹ coordinated by the European External Action Service.²⁰ This will not automatically lead to higher defense budgets, but expectations are that joint research, joint development of military systems, joint procurement, joint headquarters, and actually deployable joint battle groups will generate more deployable military capacity, even if spending levels do not measurably increase.

¹⁶ Carlijn Prins and Jurriaan Kalf, "Population ageing in Europe: risks for growth and fiscal position," Rabo Bank, May 07, 2015, <https://economics.rabobank.com/publications/2015/may/population-ageing-in-europe-risks-for-growth-and-fiscal-position/>; Martin Feldstein, "The Effects of the Ageing European Population on Economic Growth and Budgets: Implications for Immigration and Other Policies" (Cambridge MA: NBER Working Paper No. 12736, 2006), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w12736.pdf>.

¹⁷ Helene Cooper, "Defense Secretary Mattis Tells NATO Allies to Spend More, or Else," February 15, 2017, *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/15/world/europe/jim-mattis-nato-trump.html>.

¹⁸ "The Debate: German Armed Forces Abroad," Review 2014: Aussenpolitik Weiterdenken, July 2, 2014, <http://www.aussenpolitik-weiter-denken.de/en/blog/article/kontroverse-bundeswehr-einsatz-im-ausland.html>.

¹⁹ 23 of the 28 EU countries have agreed to a PESCO in the field of defense, with varying participation in different programs.

²⁰ "Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) – Factsheet," European External Action Service, November 16, 2017, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/34226/permanent-structured-cooperation-pesco-factsheet_en.

Some countries even expect PESCO to provide them with more money from the EU budget. EU citizens, however, do not see this as a priority of EU spending.²¹

In short, Europe is still far away from the ability to project military power with global reach. Demographic aging, declining birth cohorts and more inward-looking populations imply that it may never get there.

Migration is Fundamentally Changing the Face of the European Union

Until the mid-1960s, Europe was predominantly a continent of emigration.²² Since the mid-1980s—for the first time in modern history—the number of third country nationals immigrating to (today’s) EU member states has become significantly larger than the number of people leaving the EU.²³ This positive migration balance is the main reason why the overall EU population is growing despite the low numbers of children per family.²⁴

At the same time, economic success, stability, and adherence to the rule of law have made many parts of the EU attractive destinations for mobile EU citizens, as well as for non-EU citizens. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, many immigrants came as recruited labor. Others came as a consequence of decolonization. Today, family reunion, labor migration, and admission for humanitarian reasons have become equally important gates of entry.

Today, some 57 million citizens and residents of the EU live outside their country of birth (Figure 6).²⁵ They represent over 11 percent of the

²¹ In 2015 only 19% of EU citizens listed defense spending as a priority area for EU budget spending. See Eurobarometer 85.1, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2016/eye2016/eb85_1_eye_2016_analytical_overview_en.pdf.

²² Klaus J. Bade, Pieter C. Emmer, Leo Lucassen, and Jochen Oltner, eds., *Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Paderborn: Fink Verlag, 2013).

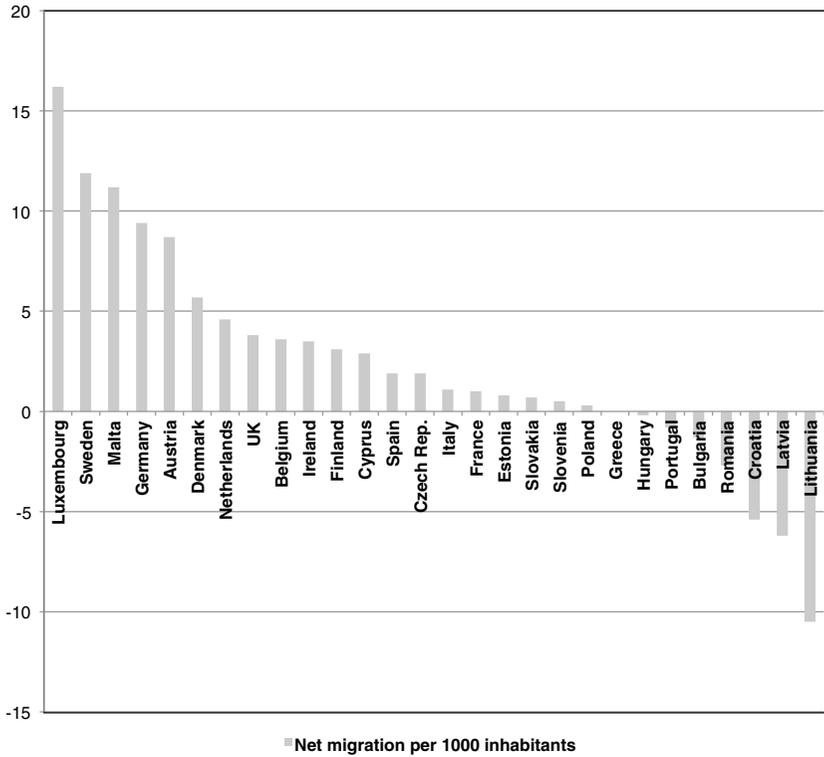
²³ Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/File:Population_change_by_component_\(annual_crude_rates\),_EU-28,_1960-2016_\(per_1_000_persons\).png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/File:Population_change_by_component_(annual_crude_rates),_EU-28,_1960-2016_(per_1_000_persons).png).

²⁴ Sam Morgan, “Migration only factor bumping up EU population,” Euractiv, July 11, 2017, <http://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/migration-only-factor-bumping-up-eu-population/>.

²⁵ This number is calculated from stock data available for January 1, 2015: 34.3 million people born outside of the EU-28 were living in an EU member state +18.5 million persons born in an EU member state other than the one where they were resident = 52.8 million. See

Figure 5. The European Union: More and Less Attractive Regions for Migrants

Net migration per 1000 inhabitants, 2016, EU member states



Source: Eurostat

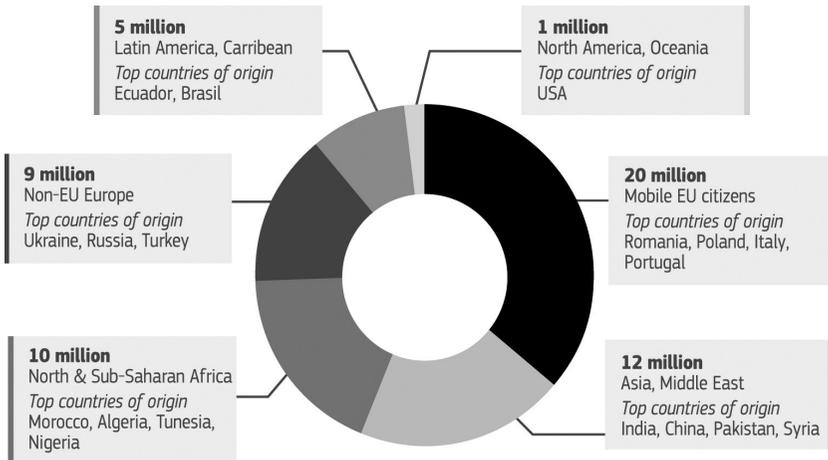
EU's total population. Slightly more than a third of them (20 million) are mobile EU citizens, with Romania, Poland, Italy, and Portugal being the most important sending countries (Figure 7). The other 37 million have come as labor migrants, dependent family members, international students or asylum seekers, and refugees.²⁶ Of these non-EU immigrants, one in

Eurostat 2016, "Migration and migrant population statistics," http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics. Given the gross inflows since January 2015, the total number on January 1, 2017 was calculated to have been 57 million.

²⁶ At the end of 2016, according to UNHCR, the EU had 1.9 million recognized refugees

Figure 6. The EU is Home and Host to 57 Million Foreign-Born People

International migrants and mobile EU citizens by region of origin, 2017, in millions)



Source: Eurostat

five is from Asia (12 million; in particular from India, China, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan, since 2015 also from Syria and Afghanistan),²⁷ one in six from Africa (10 million; more than half of them from the Maghreb). One in seven residents of the EU is from another European country outside the Union (non-EU: 9 million), with Ukraine, Russia, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania being the most important sending countries (Figure 6).

The Demographic Impact of the Refugee Crisis

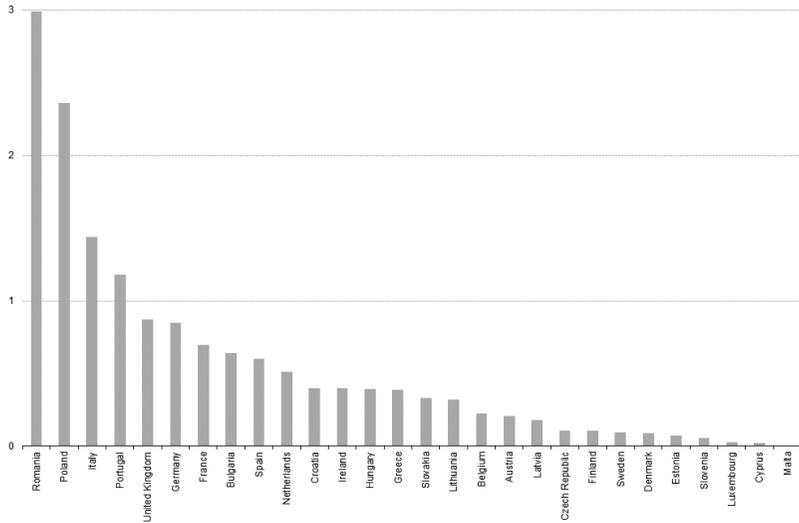
The extent to which the EU and many of its member states have become the preferred destination of immigrants from the western Balkans and the rest of the world has only recently become apparent and an issue of public concern. The main trigger was the arrival of some 1.5 million irregular migrants and refugees at Europe's southern shores during the peak years

and 1.1 million asylum seekers with pending claims residing in one of the 28 EU countries.

²⁷ See Eurostat 2017, "Asylum statistics," http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics.

Figure 7. Twenty-One Million EU Citizens Live in Another EU Member State

Mobile EU citizens, 2016, EU-28, in millions



*Since 2015-16 immigrants coming from Syria and Afghanistan have made it into the top 20 while the number of Ukrainian-born residents has doubled to become the second largest foreign-born group. Foreign-born residents originating from Russia include ethnic Germans.

Note: Cyprus and Malta have not provided detailed data by individual EU citizenship. The United Kingdom and Spain have provided detailed data by individual EU citizenship only for the most numerous ones.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_pop1ctz)

2015-2016. The EU member states where the inflow had a lasting demographic effect were not the countries of first arrival, i.e., Italy and Greece. Because of secondary movements, the demographic impact was the largest in Sweden, Austria, Finland, Belgium, and Germany (alongside non-EU countries Norway and Switzerland). The foreign-born population in these countries rose by 0.7 percentage points in Germany to 15.6 percent, by 1.5 percentage points in Sweden to 18.3 percent, and by 1.1 percent in Austria to 18.5 percent foreign born residents as share of total population.²⁸

Overall, in 2015-16, the share of foreign-born residents in EU and EFTA states only rose by 0.3 percentage points to 11.3 percent at the end of 2016. The symbolic and political reverberations, however, far exceeded

²⁸ Pew research based on Eurostat and UN Population Division.

the demographic impact. At the same time Europeans, on average, overestimate the share of immigrants in their countries: Italians put the share of immigrants at 30 percent (actually 7%); the French at 28 percent (actually 13%), Hungarians at 26 percent (actually 2%), Britons at 24 percent (actually 13%), and the Germans at 23 percent (actually 13%).²⁹

Immigration and Diversity: Seen as a Curse, Not as a Blessing

In contrast to citizens of traditional immigration countries like the United States,³⁰ Canada,³¹ and Australia,³² the majority of Europeans do not see growing ethno-religious diversity at home as a positive development (Figure 8). In countries with a longer tradition of recruiting or accepting immigrants and hosting refugees—namely France, the UK, and Sweden—the minority of people seeing diversity as positive contribution to their society (26–36%) is a bit larger than the share of those who think diversity is making their country a worse place to live. The same is true for Spain (positive view: 31%).

The opposite pattern can be found in Hungary and Poland—two countries without any post-war experience of ethno-religious diversity caused by immigration (positive view: 14-17%)—but also in the two countries currently most confronted with inflows of irregular migrants and refugees (Italy, Greece; positive view: 10-18%).

Migration and Terrorism: The European Union's Two Most Important Issues, According to its Citizens

For the moment, EU citizens think that terrorism (2017: 44%, +12 percentage points since autumn 2016) and (irregular) migration (2017:

²⁹ <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/perceptions-are-not-reality-what-world-gets-wrong>.

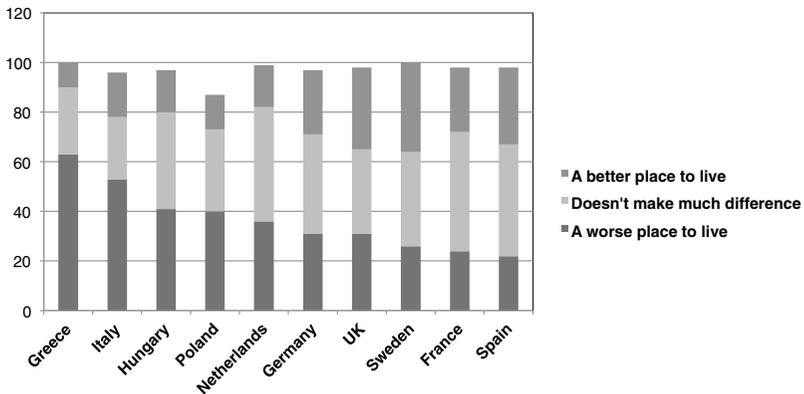
³⁰ Pew Research Center, “Attitudes toward increasing diversity in the U.S.,” February 16, 2017, <http://www.people-press.org/2017/02/16/4-attitudes-toward-increasing-diversity-in-the-u-s/>.

³¹ Andrew Duff, “Canadians increasingly comfortable with diversity: survey,” *Ottawa Citizen*, May 20, 2017, <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/canadians-increasingly-comfortable-with-diversity-survey>.

³² Andrew Markus, “Australia’s Changing Attitudes To Immigration,” *Huffington Post*, July 15, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/andrew-markus/australias-changing-attitudes-to-immigration_b_8404648.html.

Figure 8. Few Europeans Say Growing Diversity Makes their Country a Better Place to Live

Answer to the question: “Overall do you think having an increasing number of people of many different races, ethnic groups and nationalities in our country makes this country a better place to live, a worse place to live, or does not make much difference either way?”, surveyed EU countries, 2016, in %



Source: PEW Research Center, Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey

38%, –7 percentage points since autumn 2016)³³ are the two most important challenges the EU is facing.³⁴ Only one of them is a demographic phenomenon, but neither can be addressed effectively by individual EU member states, and therefore have both domestic as well as a foreign policy dimension. The two issues only emerged on top of the list since 2013-14 (Figure 9).

In 2017, terrorism was the top issue of concern in 21 of the 28 EU member states (up from just one EU country, Spain, in 2015). Citizens' views were related to developments in Europe, but not necessarily in their own country.

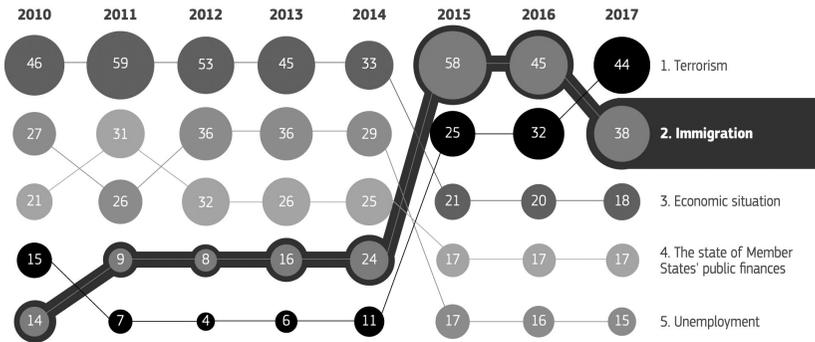
Citizens of countries that had been hit by terrorist attacks in 2015-2017, namely Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden, and the UK, did not

³³ <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2142>.

³⁴ Between 2009 and 2016, unemployment was the most important issue at national level. Twenty-nine percent of respondents ranked it as the top concern in 2017.

Figure 9. Migration and Terrorism Matter Most

Main issues of concern that the EU is facing, EU28 average, 2010-2017, in %



Source: Eurobarometer 79 to 87. Note: A maximum of 2 issues could be mentioned in the answer.

give fighting terrorism a higher priority than citizens of unaffected countries. On the contrary: scores were highest in Latvia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, and Malta (58-60%), countries not directly affected by terrorism.³⁵

Europeans are Concerned about the Arrival of International Migrants

In 2017, close to four in ten respondents (38%) mentioned immigration as the most important issue facing the EU. This issue had topped the list of perceived challenges in 2015 and 2016 (Figure 9).³⁶

The highest support for EU involvement in migration management has been voiced in Cyprus (91%), Malta (87%), and Portugal (86%). The lowest is in Denmark (57%), the Czech Republic (57%), Latvia (60%), and Poland (63%).³⁷

The reason for this gap is that Mediterranean countries see the EU as an institution that might help stem, or at least manage, the inflow of irreg-

³⁵ Eurobarometer 87, https://data.europa.eu/euodp/data/dataset/S2142_87_3_STD87_ENG.

³⁶ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586580/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)586580_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586580/EPRS_BRI(2016)586580_EN.pdf).

³⁷ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1302_en.htm; https://data.europa.eu/euodp/data/dataset/S2142_87_3_STD87_ENG.

ular migrants and refugees, whereas many people in Denmark, central Europe, and the Baltics perceive EU institutions to be facilitating the inflow of refugees to their countries via Europe-wide relocation and resettlement schemes that redistribute asylum seekers within the EU. Hence, they tend to be more skeptical.

Outside the UK and Denmark,³⁸ public discourse, and therefore citizen focus, is primarily on irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, while regular migration and intra-EU mobility are less of a concern.³⁹

In the case of migration there was no direct link between public opinion and documented flows. Countries most exposed to the arrival of irregular migrants and refugees in 2015-2017 were Italy, Greece, and Spain. Secondary movements of irregular migrants and refugees after their arrival in the EU mainly targeted Austria, Germany, and Sweden. The countries in which the public was most concerned about migration were, however, Estonia, Hungary, and Denmark (56-62%). Migration also heads the list in Germany, Austria, and Sweden, where inflows of irregular migrants and refugees—in particular from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan—had reached unprecedented levels in 2015-2016. The level of concern was even higher in Estonia and Hungary, however, which had not been affected by irregular inflows on a permanent basis.

These figures underscore that direct exposure to irregular migration and major concerns are not directly linked when citizens expect more political action to be taken at national and EU level.⁴⁰

At the same time, it is important to note that 50 percent of those polled viewed refugees as a burden, whereas only 41 percent saw them as an enrichment. Negative views are particularly pronounced in Hungary, Poland, Greece, and Italy, where 65-82 percent see those seeking humanitarian protection as a burden (Figure 10). In those same countries, a distinct majority (65-73 percent) also perceives Syrian and Iraqi refugees to be a major threat (Figure 11) and generally sees diversity as a negative development in general (Figure 8).

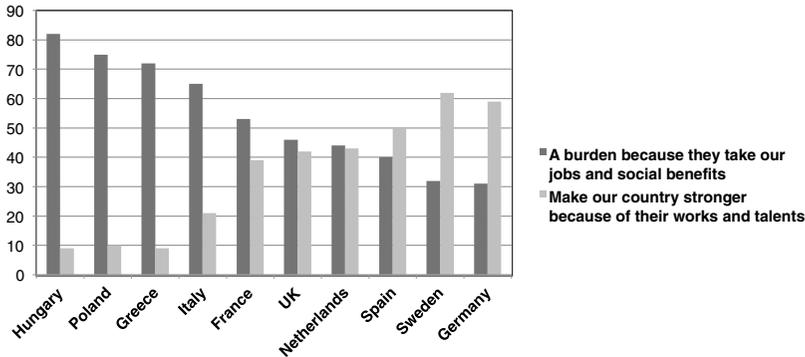
³⁸ Denmark and the UK have negotiated an opt-out in the area of European migration and asylum policy and are therefore not taking part in EU relocation and resettlement programs.

³⁹ Economic and Social Research Council, *Mapping Immigration Controversy*, <https://mappingimmigrationcontroversy.com/>.

⁴⁰ European Parliamentary Research Service, “Public Opinion and EU Policies,” October 18, 2016, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/TD_ExpectationsGap.pdf.

Figure 10. Many Europeans See Refugees as a Burden

Answer to the question: “Refugees are ... a burden because they take our jobs and social benefits; ... make our country stronger because of their works and talents,” surveyed EU countries, 2016, in %



Source: PEW Research Center, Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey

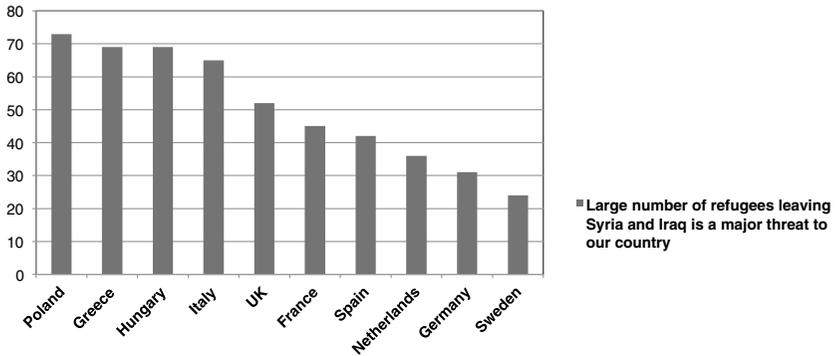
Countries with predominantly negative views comprise (a) societies that have seen Syrian and Iraqi refugees (most, but not all of them Muslims) passing through in large numbers (Hungary and Greece), (b) a country that is confronted mostly with irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa (Italy) and (c) a country (Poland) that has not been affected (and therefore not burdened) by refugee flows, but objects to relocation within Europe and direct resettlement from crisis areas. Negative views also prevail in France and the UK,⁴¹ despite the fact that these two countries have seen neither a major inflow of Middle Eastern refugees nor arrivals of irregular African migrants at their shores, but are home and host to large Muslim and other immigrant communities.

A different pattern can be found in Germany and Sweden, two countries that have accepted the largest numbers of Middle Eastern refugees in 2015-2017. In these countries, the share of people seeing refugees mainly as a burden is much smaller (31-32 percent; Figure 10); and only a minority sees them as a major threat (24-31 percent; Figure 11).

⁴¹ The UK (like Denmark) has an opt-out in the area of European migration and asylum policy and is therefore exempt from relocation and resettlement programs. Being outside Schengen the UK also has the possibility of control and minimize irregular inflows.

Figure 11. Many Europeans See Refugees from Syria and Iraq as a Threat

Those saying that refugees leaving Syria and Iraq are a threat to their country, surveyed EU countries, 2016, in %



Source: PEW Research Center, Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey

Parts of Europe’s public sees the two priority areas as interlinked, fearing that people entering the EU as asylum seekers and being accepted as refugees might become terrorists. In this context it is often overlooked that the EU “exports” many more EU-born and radicalized young Muslims joining terrorist groups than it “imports” foreign fighters arriving among irregular migrants and refugees.⁴² As a result, the main inflow of jihadists to Europe is made up of foreign fighters with EU citizenship returning from Iraq, Syria, and occasionally also from Afghanistan.⁴³

Protection of External Schengen Borders Has Become a New Priority

A few years ago, “Schengen”⁴⁴ was a synonym for the free movement of travelers and goods crossing intra-EU border without being checked.

⁴² See Bibi van Ginkel and Eva Entenmann, eds., *The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union*. ICCT Research Paper. The Hague: International Centre of Counter Terrorism, 2016, https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf.

⁴³ AFP, “Europe’s dilemma—how to deal with returning jihadists,” in *al-Monitor*, June 16, 2017, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/afp/2017/06/eu-attacks-jihadists.html>.

⁴⁴ The Schengen Area comprises 22 EU and 4 non-EU European states that have officially

During the migration crisis, “Schengen” became increasingly associated with a lack of control at the external borders that the Schengen countries manage on behalf of one another. As a reaction to the recent inflows of irregular migrants and refugees at Europe’s southern shores and land borders, some 71 percent of EU citizens in 2017 wanted the EU to engage more in the protection of external borders.

Differences across member states on this issue were moderate, with the exception of Sweden. The strongest support for increased EU action was registered in Cyprus (86%), the Czech Republic (81%), and Malta (80%). The weakest support by far was expressed by citizens in Sweden (48%)—the only country in which less than half of the citizens surveyed support increased EU intervention in this area. Other countries with comparatively weak support were Croatia (61%) and the Netherlands (64%). However, this still means that two thirds of the population would like to see increased EU involvement in external border protection (Figure 17).⁴⁵

The EU and some of its member states have reacted both to the surge in irregular flows and to public concern by building new walls and fences at external EU borders,⁴⁶ expanding the mandate of EU’s Border and Coast Guard agency Frontex, including a rapidly deployable reserve pool of at least 1,500 border guards,⁴⁷ deploying additional border guards at several external borders,⁴⁸ and by running maritime surveillance, search and rescue operations in the Aegean⁴⁹ and the central Mediterranean.⁵⁰

abolished passport and all other types of border control at their mutual borders. The area mostly functions as a single country for international travel purposes, with a common visa policy. It is named after the Luxembourg town of Schengen, where the agreement was made.

⁴⁵ European Parliament Briefing, “Public expectations and EU policies: Protection of external borders,” July 2016, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586589/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)586589_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586589/EPRS_BRI(2016)586589_EN.pdf).

⁴⁶ Hungarian borders with Serbia and Bulgaria, and Greek borders with Turkey.

⁴⁷ Frontex, A year in review, 2017, http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/General/A_Year_in_Review.pdf.

⁴⁸ At the Bulgarian border with Turkey, the Greek border with Macedonia, at migrant and refugee registration centers (so-called hotspots) in Greece and Italy.

⁴⁹ Operation Poseidon (Frontex operation).

⁵⁰ Operation Triton (Frontex operation); EUNavFor Med Sophia (EU member states operation).

The Migration Crisis Became a Trigger for More External Engagement

As more and more EU citizens came to see the large number of irregular migrants as a burden, or perhaps even as a threat, electorates adopted more anti-immigrant positions. This strengthened nativist anti-immigrant parties, but also put border controls, asylum and irregular migration at the top of mainstream party agendas.

As a result, many national governments and the EU as a whole reacted to the perceived migration crisis and increasingly adverse public opinion by trying to reform and speed up asylum procedures and implementing more effective border controls. At the same time, the EU and several of its member states stepped up cooperation with neighboring transit countries hosting migrants on their way to Europe.

The oldest of these types of cooperation exists between Spain and Morocco,⁵¹ which has traditionally tried to bring under control irregular flows in the western Mediterranean as well as between western Africa and the Canary Islands. In a similar way, Germany—and later also the European Commission—negotiated an agreement with Turkey aiming at reducing the flow of migrants across the Aegean. That deal involved financial support and the implementation of a resettlement program on the EU side, while Turkey promised—and delivered on—stricter enforcement of exit controls and repatriation of irregular migrants back from Greece.⁵² As a next step, Italy, France, and the EU negotiated agreements with Libyan actors, including the internationally recognized GNA government in Tripoli and several militias, in order to reduce the number of African migrants leaving for Italy via the central Mediterranean.⁵³ Those arrangements included strengthening the capacities of Libya's coast guards and

⁵¹ Sergio Carrera, Jean-Pierre Cassarino, Nora El Qadim, Mehdi Lahlou and Leonhard den Hertog, *EU-Morocco Cooperation on Readmission, Borders and Protection: A model to follow?* (Brussels: CEPS paper on Liberty and Security in Europe, 2016; see also Judith Sunderland, "Outsourcing Border Control to Morocco a Recipe for Abuse," *Human Rights Watch*, August 28, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/28/outourcing-border-control-morocco-recipe-abuse>).

⁵² https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/eu_turkey_statement_17032017_en.pdf; <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20-%20Twelve%20facts%20about%20the%20EU-Turkey%20Agreement%20-%20January%202017.pdf>

⁵³ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/19163/EU-Libya%20relations; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya-italy/eu-sticks-to-libya-strategy-on-migrants-despite-human-rights-concerns-idUSKCN1BP2CQ>.

turning local actors, like the al-Djabassi militia, from notorious smugglers into remunerated forces assisting in the field of migration control.⁵⁴

Both from a demographic and a policy perspective, these arrangements clearly were successful, dramatically reducing the numbers of irregular migrants and refugees arriving in Europe while reducing the need to carry out search and rescue activities.⁵⁵ There is, however, a downside to these achievements. It has become a lot more complicated for genuine refugees to ask for asylum on EU territory; and the EU now bears some indirect responsibility for (partly horrible) living conditions in camps where irregular migrants and (would-be) asylum seekers are detained as a consequence of the negotiated arrangements with transit countries like Libya.

Beyond arrangements with transit countries, the EU and several EU member states have reached out to source countries. Western Balkan countries, Ukraine, and Moldova have accepted and implemented readmission agreements facilitating the return of their citizens found in irregular situations in EU member states.⁵⁶ This was and remains a quid-pro-quo for EU/Schengen countries offering visa-free travel, financial and development assistance as well as a possible path to future EU membership.

In addition to the approach taken in the EU's neighborhood, so-called Migration Partnership Agreements (MPAs) are being negotiated with African countries.⁵⁷ These MPAs include both Mobility Partnerships and Common Agendas on Migration and Mobility.⁵⁸ The idea behind these agreements is to allow for travel visa restrictions to be loosened, and possibly work permits or access to higher education in EU countries being granted. In return, African partner countries have to ensure their support in restricting illegal border crossing and accepting repatriation of their citizens detected in irregular situation in an EU member state.

⁵⁴ Declan Walsh and Jason Horowitz, "Italy, Going It Alone, Stalls the Flow of Migrants. But at What Cost?" *New York Times*, September 17, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/17/world/europe/italy-libya-migrant-crisis.html>.

⁵⁵ EUNavFor Med Sophia, Operation Triton.

⁵⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/irregular-migration-return-policy_en; <http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=352>.

⁵⁷ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/factsheet_cc_format_migration_partnership_framework_update_2.pdf; https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/global-approach-to-migration_en.

⁵⁸ For example, with Ethiopia: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6050_en.htm.

In parallel, the EU has launched an investment initiative addressing the so-called root causes of migration. Within the framework of the European External Investment Plan (EIP), a sum of up to € 44 billion will be invested in public and private sector projects with the aim of creating jobs and reducing the need to emigrate.⁵⁹ This is part of a larger shift in development assistance replacing grants and budget support by loan guarantees and subsidies on interest payments.⁶⁰

One can conclude that the EU takes a carrot-and-stick approach: countries collaborating in the field of migration control and readmission are rewarded; those that don't collaborate could risk continued trade restrictions and possibly cuts in project funding or general support for their state budgets. From the European side, the main aim clearly is facilitating repatriation and curbing irregular migration, with the side effect of reducing casualties on the way from Africa to Europe.

It is clear that the EU's engagement with neighboring and African countries would not have reached its current intensity without a demographic trigger: large numbers of irregular migrants and refugees arriving at Mediterranean shores.

Conclusion

External realities, global challenges, and internal requirements are pushing European countries and the EU as a whole to become more engaged in Europe's neighborhood and beyond. In this situation, at least two demographic trends are of relevance.

First, aging and stagnating or even shrinking native populations could lead to more risk-averse and inward-looking societies with clear spending priorities in the areas of public pensions, health, and old-age care. This would make any augmented external engagement—from military and humanitarian action to higher development assistance—more difficult.

⁵⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/factsheet-eu-external-investment-plan_en.pdf.

⁶⁰ William Hynes and Simon Scott, "The Evolution of Official Development Assistance: Achievements, Criticisms and a Way Forward," OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers No. 12. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2013, <http://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/Evolution%20of%20ODA.pdf>.

The priority would most likely be on defensive measures and accommodation.

Second, the perceived threats of imported extremism, irregular migration and loss of control over external borders would require policies that go beyond increasing the number of border guards and building higher fences. Active engagement with Middle Eastern, African, and Western Asian neighbors and outreach to potential allies would be required as global imbalances favoring migration are here to stay.

Against this background, relations between the EU and Turkey have particularly suffered. Many no longer see Turkey as a potential demographic and geopolitical gain for the EU, but as a country drifting in an illiberal direction and trying to instrumentalize its diaspora. This would reduce the country from a strategic ally and EU candidate to just a valuable shield against irregular migrants, refugees, and other repercussions of conflicts in the Middle East.

All this comes at a moment where intra-EU and international migration split Europe into demographically winning and losing regions; but also into different camps: those defending free movement within the EU, the need to attract qualified migrants and to uphold humanitarian obligations with respect to refugees; and those who would like stop the admission of asylum seekers, oppose their relocation within Europe and would also like to reduce legal migration and mobility to much lower levels.

In sum: demographic change and trends will play a role in Europe's future foreign policy and international engagement, but they seem to work in opposite directions.