On the Move: Opportunities and Challenges of Migration for Europe and Israel
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Edited by: Jan Busse, Simon Gatterer, Itamar Gazala, Dr. Rem Korteweg, Dr. Roby Nathanson and Dr. Werner Puschra

The annual meeting of the Israeli-European Policy Network (IEPN) in Europe focused on the issue of migration and was held in Budapest.

Ever since mid-2015, Europe is facing an unprecedented phenomenon of migration, mainly due to the civil wars in Syria and in Iraq. Eurostat data shows that in 2015 alone, over 1.2 million first time asylum seekers, of which almost 90,000 were unaccompanied minors, applied for international protection in the member states of the EU, more than double that of the previous year. Syrians (362,800 people), Afghans (178,200) and Iraqis (121,500) were the top 3 citizenships of asylum seekers. The highest number of first time applicants was registered in Germany (441,800 people, or 35% of all first time applicants in the EU Member States), followed by Hungary (174,400, or 14%), Sweden (156,100, or 12%), Austria (85,500, or 7%), Italy (83,200, or 7%) and France (70,600, or 6%).

Compared with the population of each member state, the highest number of registered first time applicants in 2015 was recorded in Hungary (17,699 first time applicants per million inhabitants), followed by Sweden (16,016), Austria (9,970), Finland (5,876) and Germany (5,441). In 2015, there were on average 2,470 first time asylum applicants per million inhabitants in the EU member states.

The member states of the EU granted protection status to 333,350 asylum seekers in 2015, an increase of 72% compared with 2014. The highest number of persons granted protection status was registered in Germany (148,200, or 44%), followed by Sweden (34,500, or 10%), Italy (29,600, or 9%), France (26,000, or 8%), the United Kingdom (17,900, or 5%), Austria (17,800, or 5%) and the Netherlands (17,000, or 5%). Since 2008, a total of nearly 1.1 million asylum seekers have been granted protection status in the EU.

The IEPN meeting came as the EU has been struggling to find an answer to the migration crisis. The ongoing migrant crisis began in 2015, when a rising number of migrants made the journey to the EU, traveling across the Mediterranean Sea or through Southeast Europe, to seek asylum, mainly due to the conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2015 more than 3,770 people drowned or went missing while crossing the Mediterranean to Greece or Italy. Survivors often report violence and abuse by people traffickers, who charge thousands of dollars per person for their services.

As European countries struggle with the mass movement of people, some have tightened border controls. This has left tens of thousands of migrants stranded in Greece, raising fears of a humanitarian crisis. The EU, with 28 member states, each with their own government, police force and judiciary system, finds it difficult to form a consensus regarding the steps to be taken to deal with the crisis.

The location of Budapest was of particular interest.

The Hungarian government's decision to build a border fence in 2015 to stem the flow of irregular migrants was the first in a series of measures that showed EU solidarity and the Schengen passport-free zone could crumble. For this reason, perspectives from Hungary were of particular interest for the overall discussion on the refugee/migration issue.

The objective of the meeting was to share Israeli and European views on migration, and to assess whether common approaches and policy options could be identified. Necessarily the discussions focused on understanding the migration crisis facing the European Union, and drawing parallels with the Israeli situation, where possible.

The meeting focused on the three following topics:
> The Costs and Benefits of Migration:
 - Economic, political and cultural opportunities and challenges
 - Rise of Xenophobia and populism
 - Role of migration in European and Israeli History
> The security implications of migration in Europe and Israel:
 - Perspectives on security implications
 - Foreign, security and development policies and the influence on migratory movements
 - Is a fortress-mentality inevitable in response to migration?
> Israel and Europe: Different approaches to the same problem, or same approaches to different problems?
 - Policy response to migration, suggestions for improving the policies and related issues

A sense of crisis

Minutes and Conclusions of the Seminar

The European Perspective:

European participants agreed with the prevailing view expressed by the Israeli participants that Europe has a moral and political obligation to help and absorb refugees. However, they pointed out that a crisis-mode now dominated the EU approach, pushing humanitarian considerations to the background. The main issue of concern is to save Schengen – Europe's passport-free zone – as soon as possible. In 2016 so far, 148,000 irregular migrants made their way to Europe; ten times more than the same amount the previous year. The EU is generally perceived as incapable of formulating an effective response, and Frontex, the EU's border agency, is not well-equipped. This benefits populist parties which offer simple answers to complex problems, such as shutting the borders or leaving the EU. The rapid rate of migration, its transnational character and its organised nature lead to a sense in Europe that "this time is different" and that there is little to learn from previous waves of migration. In other words, Europe is facing an unprecedented situation. But it was pointed out that waves of migration always lead to nationalistic concerns and fears, and so Europe and Israel should learn from these previous events.

Push Factors

Understanding the push factors of migration is essential. One participant said that the mobility of people makes governments in destination countries nervous, as this is seen as a threat to the existing political order. Migration from countries of origin is increasing because people there have lost faith in globalisation's ability to deliver economic benefits. Yet by stopping or dissuading people from leaving, the West is indirectly promoting demographic and social-economic pressures and tensions in countries of origin, which eventually cause migration. A more welcoming attitude is needed.

Europe's policy response, however, was criticised for being primarily focused on borders, with little concern about 'push' factors or how to integrate people once they have arrived. The emphasis is on who can, and who cannot, enter. European enlightenment produced two kinds of values; universalism and nationalism. Yet these are in conflict, and nationalism appears to be winning. Politicians are instrumentalising the fear of the public and the European debate is focused on preserving national interests, not collective interests.

Hungary as an Example

In Hungary, domestic political considerations determined the government's policy towards migration. The Hungarian government was criticised for ignoring the migration strategy it had adopted in 2014. Instead the government in Budapest fuelled tensions by emphasising the need to protect Hungary's "Christian, national and family values" in light of the rise of migration. There is little discussion in Hungary of push factors, such as the Syrian war. Prime Minister Orban is trying to portray the crisis as one created by EU federalists, who purposely bring refugees to Europe to destroy the model of the homogeneous nation state. Critics say that Orban does not want to solve the refugee crisis, because he needs it for his own political agenda. In this sense, the refugee crisis enabled Orban to present himself as the major opponent of German Chancellor Merkel's pro-refugee approach in Europe.

Central and Eastern European countries also define their national character more in ethno-cultural terms than Western European countries do, and are more openly protective of their national independence. Post-communist countries in Europe had difficulties to set up their asylum systems and were unprepared for a crisis like the current one. Only the arrival of a small number of people led to a collapse of the system leading to inhumane situations for the migrants.

A practical issue it creates is that, under the current European system, migrants have a right to seek asylum, but they do not have a right to choose the country in which they intend to stay. So should asylum seekers be helped to move to more welcoming countries in Europe or should asylum seekers stay in Hungary and other central European countries where they might be treated less humanely?

The Israeli Perspective:

The parallels between Israel and the EU are striking and worrisome. One of the speakers highlighted the different attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers in Israel, formerly and currently. In the 1950s, 680,000 refugees came to Israel from Africa, Asia and the Middle East, followed by 1 million people from the former Soviet Union after 1990. Then, the influx was viewed as a challenge that was to be managed. By contrast, at present, Tel Aviv's 50,000 African refugees are seen as a threat.

Migration to Israel used to be ethno-cultural, based on a 'right of return' for Jews. But that has changed. A security mind-set has become dominant; governmental and public discourse refers to asylum seekers as 'infiltrators'. Israel's fence at the Egyptian border and detention facilities have reduced the numbers of migrants and has kept migration out of

the headlines, and so few people care about the plight of refugees. One participant said that Israel faces a dilemma; sustaining the ethno-religious composition of the country, but giving up on its humanitarian values in the process.

Israeli perceptions of Europe's handling of the crisis are spiteful. A common assessment is that the Europeans will now finally understand what it is to deal with large groups of Arabs and a concomitant security threat. In fact, some Israeli companies are assessing how they can profit from Europe's renewed security concerns.

Conclusion:

Amid this gloom, it was difficult to identify succinct policy options, nevertheless some broad principles emerged. Europe and Israel should both ensure humanitarian treatment of those who arrive. Once here, asylum seekers need to be properly integrated into society. They should get support to learn the language and the country's socio-cultural codes. They should also have access to employment and education. But perhaps most importantly, failure to understand and address the 'push' factors of migration will lead to ineffective and unsustainable solutions. Migration will continue, the only question is whether and how it can be managed.

Israel and the EU: Risks of the New Migration

Dr. Roderick Parkes

European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)

Executive Summary

How to conceive of the security threat facing Israel

and the EU when it comes to migration? This paper looks beyond their joint exposure to Syria or Iraq, where vast populations are being displaced, let alone the transit states such as Lebanon or Egypt showing worrying signs of economic and political fragility. And it looks beyond Africa, where economic growth is triggering a steep growth in birth rates – a deviation from the usual pattern of economic development, and a potential trigger for resource shortages and mass human movements.

This paper instead pictures migration as a feature of globalisation. It argues that tight migration control has been a necessary pre-condition for the lifting of restrictions on global trade and capital flows. And it argues that now, as those trade and capital flows struggle to bring sustainable development, people are back on the move again. The EU and Israel, which both have a strong stake in Western-led globalisation, are badly exposed to these people flows and the loss of territorial order they represent.

A crisis of global development

The refugee situation in the Middle East is increasingly recognised as a crisis of development policy: the causes of the conflict can be traced to factors such as resource mismanagement, heavy urbanisation, unemployment and a youth bulge. The solutions, too, are increasingly being sought in the realm of development policy: Lebanon and Jordan, the World Bank and UNHCR, the US and UK all agree that a humanitarian response would be too short-term and what is required is an effort to create jobs and livelihoods for the dispossessed. But this is just the tip of the iceberg: the links between the ongoing refugee crisis and the crisis of global development run even deeper.

It is important to know that the promise of sustainable development has been key in persuading people in poorer countries to stay in their home countries, and as such is vital to globalisation. Over the past 25 years, the world's economies have massively liberalised trade and capital flows. But they could never have done so, if workers too had been free to move: mass migration from poor to rich countries would have fatally disrupted processes of national state-building. Governments therefore needed to give workers in poor countries a reason to stay home and build institutions – and they did so by holding out the promise of global economic and political development.

Bodies like the World Trade Organisation and World Bank developed the necessary recipe: trade flows would create manufacturing jobs in poorer states, and investment flows would then deliver the technology to transform these into high-skilled work. As unskilled workers joined the middle-classes, they would demand a greater say in domestic politics, laying the foundation for democratic government. They would have smaller family sizes too, as their governments began providing them with welfare support, thus reducing problems of overpopulation. In this way, globalisation would bring people everywhere good government and prosperity so they didn't have to move.

If irregular migration is now on the rise, it is a sign that this recipe has not always been successful. People are not just migrating because of unemployment or political violence – such things have long been routine in the developing world. They are migrating because they have lost hope in any improvement. Ironically, this comes at just the moment global economic convergence has finally begun to occur: for the first

time in 150 years, poorer economies are catching up with the rich, facilitated by the decline of the West and the rise of a few large emerging economies. But this global power shift only increases the geopolitical overtones of the development crisis.

Moreover, this paper attempts to answer several key questions regarding the immigration crisis:

> How is the development crisis affecting migration flows?
> How are these trends playing out in the Middle East and Africa?
> What risks do the EU and Israel share?
> Are there any solutions to the migration crisis?
> Is the fortress mentality (more strict border control polices) inevitable?

For the full-text article: http://goo.gl/1Vztt7

They are here Already, What do we do now?

Discussion on the challenges presented by the massive waves of refugees

Dr. Dvora Blum

Institute for Immigration and Social Integration, Ruppin Academic Center, Israel

Executive Summary

The history and the literature have proven that policy of social integration is an essential tool of the modern state to cope with mass waves of immigrants. Such strategy has a positive influence not only on

the wellbeing of the immigrant, but also on the host society, reinforcing democratic values and strengthens the social fabric.

Using Lazarus & Folkman's transactional model of stress and coping to analyse the current situation in Europe, this paper argues that the way the situation is perceived by the host states affect their ability to create conditions that will enable optimal cognitive decision-making and adequate social integration practices implementation. It is all about governments' point of view of the current mass immigration as a threat, or as a challenge offering opportunities.

The Israeli case is presented in this paper to demonstrate this argument. Based on the Israeli experience with mass-migration waves, basic requirements for successful immigrant integration are suggested. Even countries that cannot or do not want to invest in the full integration of the immigrant (because "he'll soon return to his own country") must still invest in at least the three critical elements of short- or long-term integration:

> Language acquisition: Lack of acquiring the language in a regulated, guided process may encourage a tendency toward separation and lack of identification with the absorbing society and its culture.

> Intercultural encounter and social codes: The cultural distance between the current refugee groups and the local residents, requires bridging and mutual acquaintance. Behavior that deviates from the local norms intensifies the sense of being a stereotypical outsider, and increases mutual suspicions between the refugee and the local people.

> Employment training and guidance: Employment guidance, together with appropriate geographic dispersal, can help avert refugee concentration in weak metropolis neighborhoods. Also, the return of these refugees to their own countries can be greatly eased by pre-planned vocational training that takes into account not only the refugees' need to make a living during their stay in the host country but also the nature of the labor market in the country of origin.

The Israeli poet Mo'iz (Mosheh) Ben Harosh successfully expresses the feelings of the immigrant who feels out of place in the absorbing society. Ben Harosh came to Israel with his parents from Morocco when he was twelve. In his poem 'Immigrant', he describes with clear-headed hindsight the innocence of a boy brought to a new land without yet understanding the significance of the big change in his life:

"He is twelve years old / In the airport / Standing next to his mother / Fearful / Happy / Still doesn't know / That everything he does from now on / Will be a blunder" (free translation)

The perceptions of governments vis-a-vis mass immigration have not yet been documented in poetry. However, clearly the states' decision makers are the central players in choosing the coping mechanisms to deal with the impacts of great immigration waves. In order to maintain a modern state as a liberal entity that promotes democratic and humanity values, while simultaneously assisting refugees that reach its shores, the immigration-wave phenomenon must be viewed by government policy and decision-makers as a challenge, not a threat.

For the full-text article: http://goo.gl/YUaiEw

Differing Perceptions of Migration

Andrew MacDowall, Central and Eastern Europe

correspondent and analyst

Executive Summary

The migrant – or refugee – crisis has revealed and deepened rifts as great as almost any to emerge in the European Union's six-decade history. This has occurred when the Union faces some of its biggest challenges, combining to create an atmosphere of existential angst: the Eurozone crisis, the war in Ukraine and uncertainty over responses to it, and the potential departure of the United Kingdom ("Brexit").

In some ways, these crises have interacted and reinforced one another. The refugee crisis is seen by some as one of the factors most likely to influence a "Leave" vote in the UK, while German's supposedly compassionate response to non-European migrants has been contrasted with its firm line with its own European partners to the south. Russia's actions in Syria are seen by some as exacerbating refugee flows to Russia's advantage, while also further re-asserting Moscow's position as a powerful actor not only in its "neighbourhood" (Ukraine), but in its areas of traditional influence (Syria, indeed the Eastern Mediterranean).

There have been repeated calls for a "united European response" to the crisis from politicians, officials, international agencies, and journalists, who see a continent-wide problem that needs a continent-wide solution. There are practical and ideological reasons for this: the crisis involves many European countries, including member states, candidate states, prospective candidates, as well as neighbourhood states outside the continent. Ideologically, some feel that welcoming refugees fleeing violence and persecution is the embodiment of "European values".

But such a "coordinated response" has not been forthcoming, largely because of the wide range of different views taken on the crisis by the 28 EU member states, and 26 Schengen countries. Two of the most effective actors of the whole crisis are two who have acted unilaterally, albeit with substantial support from elsewhere in the continent. These two are Germany's Angela Merkel, and Hungary's Viktor Orban. Leaving aside value judgements of their decisions, Merkel's public willingness to accept refugees on the one hand, and Orban's building of a fence to keep migrants out on the other, have been effective. One of the problems in finding a European solution to the crisis is the gulf in views. For her most hard-line opponents, Merkel's policy is sheer lunacy, the suicide of a continent; for his opponents, Orban's behaviour and rhetoric towards refugees brings the politics of the 1930s back to Europe.

Much of the debate regarding migrants in Europe at the moment is about borders and rules, with little consideration for what happens afterwards. While this is perhaps understandable in a serious crisis, the focus on frontiers and legality – which is particularly prevalent in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) – cannot address the long-term issues of integration. While for the time being this is largely a challenge for Western European recipients of migration (and those in the Middle East that already offer a medium-term home to millions of Syrians), over the longer term it will become a challenge for Central and Eastern Europeans well. Now may be the time to start preparing for it.

The CEE countries often criticise immigration policies elsewhere in Europe. They have an opportunity to suggest a different model: building walls and ramping up nationalist rhetoric is no long-term solution, particularly if refugees are indeed relocated to CEE countries. The precedent of the political and societal stigmatisation of "the other" in CEE societies is an appalling, tragic one. Ghettoising immigrants and minorities, rather than seeking to accept and integrate, would be the biggest security risk of all.

For the full-text article: http://goo.gl/NdtkCC