

# THE PHENOMENON OF MIGRATION. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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## **Abstract:**

*Migration is not a new phenomenon, neither for Europe, nor for the entire world and it exists since the beginning of mankind. Over time, this kind of international mobility generated many opportunities, but many challenges as well. Being an extremely important and complex phenomenon, both in economic terms and mostly from the social perspective, mass emigration has never been more intense as nowadays. Together with this particular complexity, the intensity of the migration phenomenon reveals each individual's profound freedom desire, but also the acute need to ensure a better future for himself and especially for his family. Currently, an ever increasing number of individuals migrate in search of a better place, changing regions, countries or even continents.*

*Witnessing the events that transcend the people all around the world, we consider that migration generates economic, social and cultural, but also political profound changes. These major changes require the involvement of the political actors, namely the governments, in creating a favorable and reliable framework so as the society and decision makers to understand that immigrants represent an opportunity for the emerging economies and not a phenomenon that should be criticized.*

*In this paper we aim to follow the theories regarding the migration process, as well as the changes it generates, taking into consideration that of the 507 million current inhabitants of the EU, approximately 20 million are from countries outside the EU. We consider this research to be underlain, taking into consideration that regardless of the form it takes, in Europe immigration is and will remain a difficult to manage reality.*

**Key words:** immigration, migration phenomenon, political actors' decisions

**JEL classification:** F22, F50

## **1. MAIN INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRATION THEORIES**

Until now, a sole theory, which includes the whole migration as a dynamic phenomenon with influences in economic, cultural, social and politic field, has not emerged. Traditional theories about the emigrational phenomenon are still present, but were adapted and improved to some real situations, in the context in which the forms of migration, its motivation and the immigrant fluxes have known major transformation. In the published literature there are four theoretical approaches towards the international migration (neoclassical economics theory, migration transition theory, new economics of labour migration and development-migration relationship), and they are presented in an experiment of assessing the predicative and explanatory valances according to the current international migration phenomenon.

*Neoclassical economics theory.* The main idea is that external migration of population is mainly caused by economical differences. The volume of external migration of population should be a very large one especially because of the existence of some significant economic differences at a global level, because, according to neoclassical theory any country should be characterized by at least an emigrational flow, towards a more developed country. The current reality confirms this aspect; the size of the phenomenon is presently increasing. [1] Anghel Even if the neoclassical economics theory has received numerous critics about the comparison with the contemporaneous realities of external migration, the merit of this theory is mainly the fact that it highlights the importance of economic factors in the international migration field.

*Migration transition theory.* Migration economists have observed that there is a possibility of the temporarily migration to appear through the discovery of "inflated migration". An increase in wealth leads to an increase of the migration phenomenon. With an increasing wealth and in the

context of an already existing network of migration, a larger part of the population has the possibility to migrate, the selectivity of the migration tends to reduce and this “initial increasing” phenomenon leads to a development of migration in the communities. The way the migration takes place through the movement of migrants towards other geographical regions is hinging to the interaction between more than one variable, like: high level of unemployment, low-income, political persecution – push factors, but also by a romantic envision of the host country, high level of salaries and presence of relatives – pull factors. This theory represents an attempt to analyse the way that migration and longer development processes are interconnected, as well as the way the character and goal of migration development could change the evolution of development processes. [5]

*New economics of labour migration.* This theory is analysed compared to the neoclassical economic theory and to the innovation elements which the new economy brings in the exploration of migration economy. In the foreseen perspective of the new migration economy, the decision to emigrate belongs to the family or household which is included in the strategy to diminish risk by varying the sources of income. Another separate element that the new migration theory highlights is the household’s incomes which are quantified in relation to the level of development of the domestic community. One of the main issues the new migration economy refers to is concerning the emigrational context which was the base of the theory design. If a household is involved in a risk diminishing strategy through the sending of one of its members to work abroad then it is logical to do so when the costs of migration are fewer, meaning in the maturity phase of the flow. In other words, when the decision to emigrate is made it needs to take into account more than one variable, which is why salary economic theory needs to be improved. [2]

*Development-migration relationship.* In the last four decades, the role of migration had been intensely debated, as of the development of the domestic communities of emigrants and their destination. In the existing debates two different theories emerge, one based on the balanced growth, the other on asymmetrical growth. The two theories can be found in the published literature under the names “migration optimists” and “migration pessimists” in Table no.1. [4]

**Table no.1 Controversy about migration and development**

| <i>Migration optimists</i> | <i>Migration pessimists</i> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Functionalist              | Structuralism               |
| Neo-classical              | Neo-Marxist                 |
| Modernisation              | Disintegration              |
| North-South net transfer   | South- North net transfer   |
| Brain gain                 | Brain drain                 |
| More equality              | More inequality             |
| Investments remittance     | Consumerism                 |
| Development                | Dependence                  |
| Less migration             | More migration              |

Source: Taylor, E., J., [The new economics of labour migration and the role of remittances in the migration process](#), Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999, p. 65

Migration optimists are mainly guided by neo-classical economical migration and also by developing by modernizing theories; the migration role is solely realized through the alignment of prices, comparing to the pessimists. Migration pessimists, are based on socio-structuralism theory in which we find the neo-Marxist dependence; the migration role being the possibility to generate the counter flows of capital and knowledge, which may be later capitalized in order to encourage development and modernizing.

In conclusion, without touching the differences between neo-classical ideas and the developing ones, the optimists and the pessimists believe that migration has mainly been a beneficial phenomenon for the developing process in domestic countries. [3]

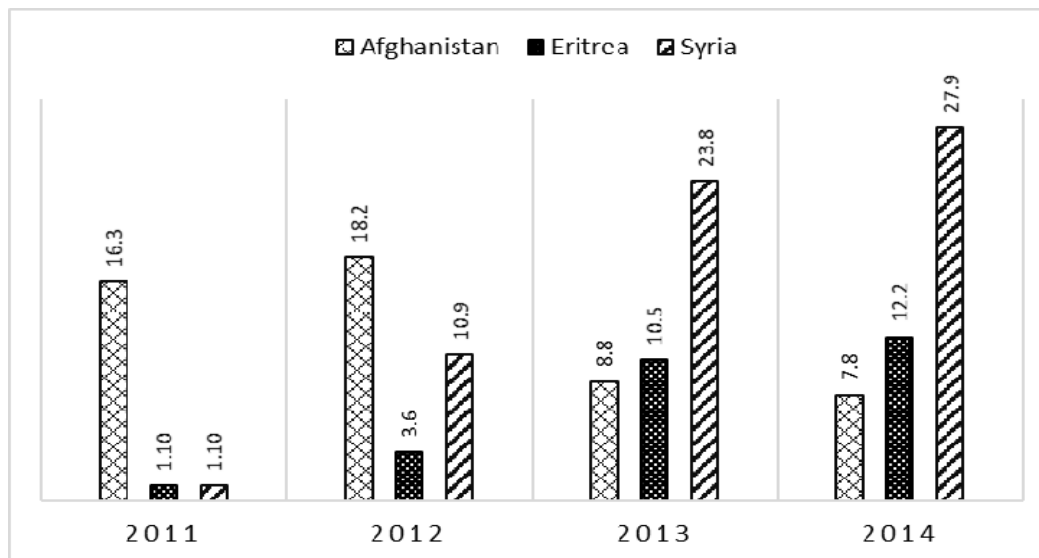
## 2. MIGRATION PHENOMENON AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS

The emigrational phenomenon is a complex one, with social, political, cultural and especially economic consequences. It has both positive and negative effects on the host country, and it all depends on the way it is managed. [6]

One of the most controversial effects of this phenomenon is the refugee crises in Europe. Presently the migration phenomenon generates many changes taking into account that today from the 507 million people of EU; almost 20 million are from countries that are not part of the EU. [7]

The refugee crisis in Europe represents a political and social phenomenon initiated by the conflicts in the Northern Africa and in the Middle East countries, the poverty and the human rights' violations in these countries. Europe's immigrants' crisis was largely amplified by the incomplete integration of all the countries on the continent in all the European mechanisms. The national interests and political attitudes towards the immigrants came into contradiction with the European policies and initiatives. Given that Europe faces the worst refugees' crisis after the Second World War, we consider that the European policies and initiatives are facing a great challenge.

The current immigrants' mass movement have strained Europe's regulations concerning the migration, testing the immigration policies and raising doubts about the maintaining of open borders. We consider that for a large number of countries, the refugee crisis represents a test concerning the basic values of the European Union.

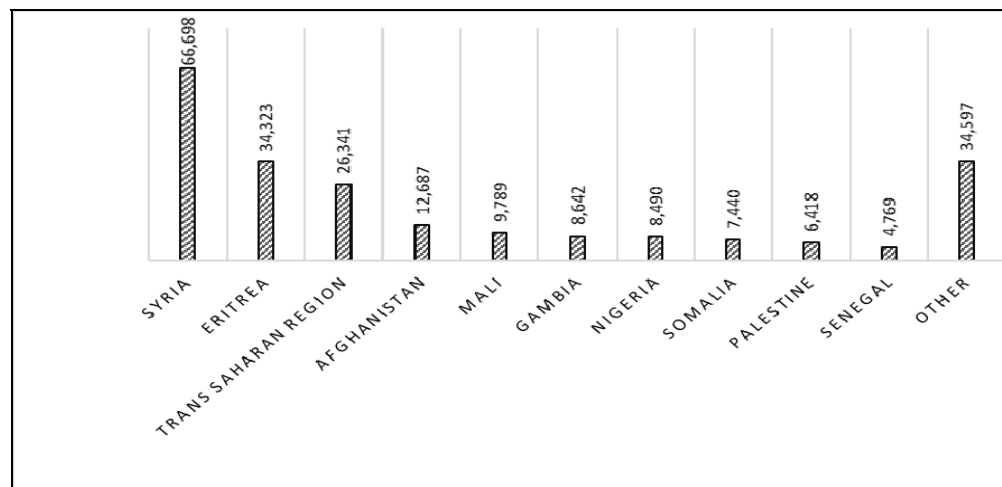


**Figure no.1. Refugees' main countries of origin**

Source: author's own, according to the data provided by [Annual Risk Analysis, 2015](#), FRONTEX

In analyzing the Figure no. 1, for the period 2011-2014 it can be observed a gradual increase in the refugees' number, mainly of those from Syria, from 1.1% in 2011 to 27.9% in 2014. [8]

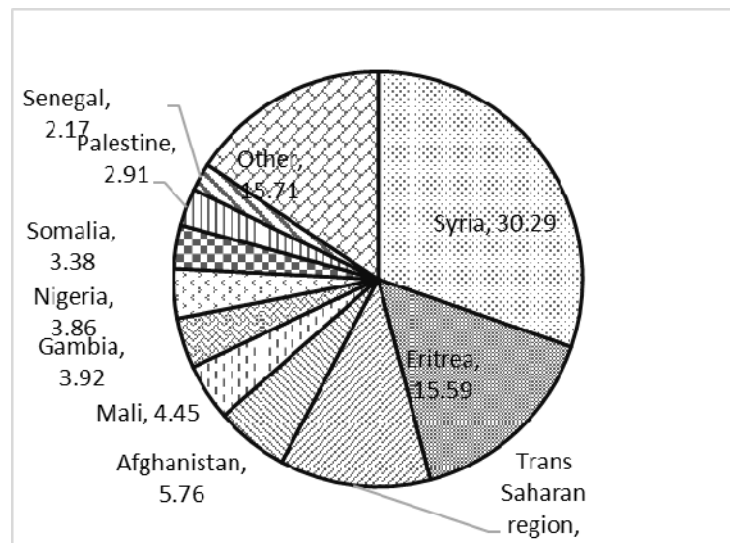
After having warned that the Schengen area is in danger if the EU countries cannot agree on a refugees' equitable distribution, the international decision makers urged Europe to collectively accept the responsibility for refugees' hosting.



**Figure no.2 The number of immigrants according to their nationality**

Source: author's own, according to the data provided by [Annual Risk Analysis, 2015](#), FRONTEX

The Schengen agreement is based on the trust that each Member State has in terms of the control of those entering the Schengen area from outside its borders, but the recent wave of refugees and immigrants overwhelmed the controls in some countries, such as Greece.

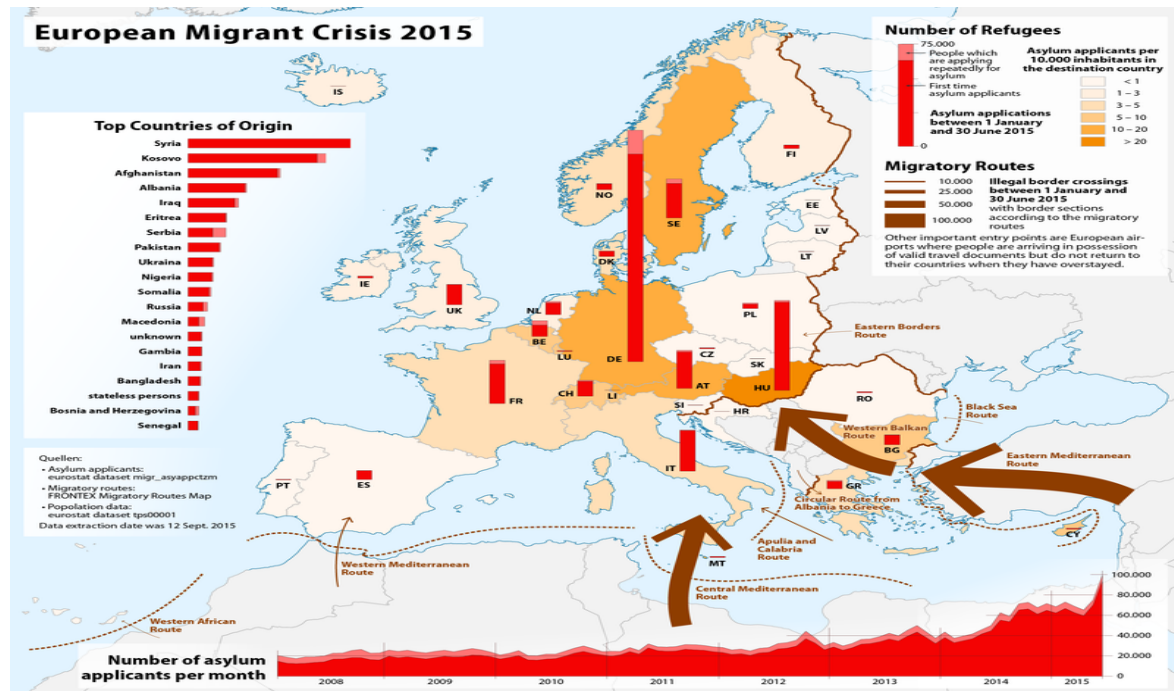


**Figure no.3 The structure of total immigrants according to their nationality**

Source: author's own, according to the data provided by [Annual Risk Analysis, 2015](#), FRONTEX

Figure no.3 highlights the main categories of immigrants according to their nationality, as well as their number. Researching the provided data, it can be noticed that the largest number of refugees are Syrian (about 67,000), followed by those from Eritrea (about 35,000) and those from the trans-Saharan region. [8]

The large refugees' number triggered extensive international controversy, which in some situations damaged the diplomatic relations between states and amplified uncertainty about the European structure itself.



**Figure no.4 Map of European Migrant Crisis**

Source: [FRONTEX, Migratory Routes Map, 2015](#)

The unprecedented drama that occurred recently in the Mediterranean are increasingly sounding the alarm on the phenomenon of illegal migration from the Middle East and Africa towards Europe. Most immigrants have left behind a mixture of civil war, pressure and extreme poverty. For them, homeland is no longer an option to consider, especially since most of them are young people with ages over 30 years.

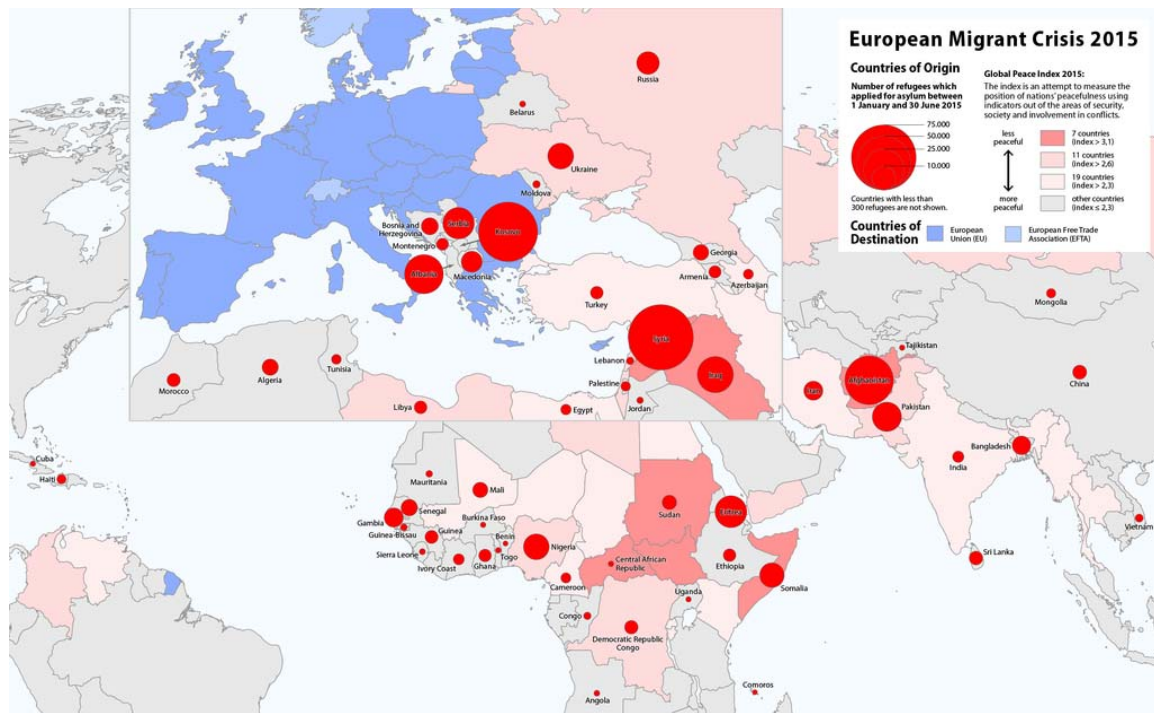
The refugees are coming to Europe either through Malta or directly mooring on the shores of Italy, as shown on Figure no.4. Other commonly used routes are those from the borders between Turkey and the EU, the immigrants having the option to stop in Bulgaria or Greece in the first phase of their new lives on European ground. Afterwards, many refugees are heading for Germany, France and the UK, these countries' governments considering that the southern countries are pushing the refugees' flow towards them.

In terms of immigrants' receiving, Sweden holds the record on the number of refugees accepted on its territory.

After receiving last year about 90,000 asylum applications, at the beginning of this year Austria adopted a first set of measures in order to limit migrants' receipt, limiting to 80 the number of those that can apply daily for asylum and to 3,200 the number of those entering every day on Austrian territory in order to continue their journey on to other European countries.

Currently, the European Commission proposed a permanent system for refugees' allocation in EU's countries, the states being allowed to refuse for one year the receipt of immigrants outside the EU, paying instead a contribution of 250,000 euros for each refused immigrant. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic announced their opposition against the European Commission's initiative to create a permanent immigrants' distribution system based on compulsory quota. This system leads to great disagreement among the leaders of the EU countries.





**Figure no.5 Countries of origin of refugees which have applied for asylum in Europe**

Source: [FRONTEX, Migratory Routes Map, 2015](http://FRONTEX.MigratoryRoutesMap.2015)

Another problem that Europe is facing and that must be carefully managed is that within this massive number of people that entered the EU are not only refugees, but increasingly more migrants, people that do not qualify for the refugee status.

We consider that it is time for Europe to choose between surrendering and starting to send these people back so as to build a future in their own country.

### 3. SOLUTIONS FOR THE ATTENUATION OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Currently, the resumption of the Mare Nostrum program is able to limit the Mediterranean tragedies' number. But, in order for Brussels to resume the program of patrolling the waters of the Mediterranean, an agreement within the EU on the allocation of the refugees arriving on the continent is required.

Another option, consisting in the destruction of the ships used by Libyan traffickers, has the risk of fueling the military tensions in Libya and the threat that traffickers will resort to even unsafe ships for human trafficking. [10]

Meanwhile, armistices in North Africa and Middle East can be a solution to solve the refugee exodus to Europe, but this alternative involves a relatively long waiting time. Another possibility is that of relocating Syrian refugees in other Arab countries, but since the number of those already in Libya grows by the day, this option has a delayed effect.

The refugee crisis is an existential crisis of the European Union and, unless the appropriate solutions are found, the very existence of the EU will be questioned. The most valid solution in terms of the refugee crisis is represented by the compliance with the agreement from within the EU, through which member countries assume this ongoing and evolving humanitarian crisis.

Given that Europe faces the worst refugees' crisis after the Second World War, we consider that the European policies and initiatives are facing a great challenge.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Because of migration, European countries are confronting with this multicultural phenomenon thus achieving a multi-ethnic character. Although migration has both positive and negative consequences on the host country, the globalization of emigrational flows keeps diversifying. A proven fact is that, not always poor persons are the ones that leave their country first, but sometimes the ones that make the first step are persons that are from the middle class and intellectuals.

The migration consequences are considered to be different because emigrants are seen as different groups and not homogenous masses, and they have a different impact on the host country's economy. I think the migration process of people is initiated mainly by two reasons: conflicts, which represent one of the most present causes, limitation of opportunities. Usually people leave, they do not return to the origin country, thus the country loses its educational investment. The phenomenon is known as "brain drain", meaning in general a continuous transfer of personnel from less developed countries to strong economical developed countries.

In my opinion, the migration phenomenon means the existence of three actors: the fellow, the government and international organizations. These actors have more divergent goals and objectives sometimes even competing ones; the free movement of competing intellectual capital allows it to adapt to the rules of global market economy. I believe that the ones that will benefit from this process are the ones that will adapt themselves the best to the requirements of the global economy, the essential element of this competition being the human factor.

I believe that migration is a process that will forever evolve and is interdependent of the socio-political evolution worldwide. The migration phenomenon can have a significant contribution to the development and the reducing of poverty in the host country, but it can also generate a series of negative implications that need to be handled with care.

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