

Legal and Illegal Migration in the EU. Implications Regarding European Labor Market. What Does the Future Has to Offer?

Jaradat Mohammad
Iurian Sergiu-Dan
„Valahia” University from Târgoviște
jaradat_hadi@yahoo.com
iurian_sergiu@yahoo.com

Abstract

At the beginning of the 21st century, international statistics showed that a person in 35 is a migrant, which means that, if all of them occupy a well-defined territory, they would form the sixth country in the world as a population. The last years have raised, more than ever, the issue of migration (immigrants and emigrants), especially the illegal one.

The present article aims to seek the roots of modern day European migration, the implications regarding the EU labour market, and, thus, try to anticipate the effects of the migratory process in the EU.

Key words: migration, effects of migration, migration policy, integration of migrants.

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1. Introduction

Europe is currently the scene of processes whose effects are similar and, in some respects, the same:

- on one hand, globalization, which erodes and even eliminates barriers to international flows of people, goods, services, capital and information;
- and, on the other hand, the enlargement of the European Union, which allows the citizens of the least developed countries to aspire to a higher standard of living perceived as much higher in the EU countries.

One of the consequences of these two processes is the increase of migratory flows from the east to the west, especially from Central and Eastern Europe, but also from Central Asia and Africa to the West. The phenomenon is not new for the post-Cold War period, but its magnitude is different, since during the communist years migration was very well controlled, in the sense of keeping the citizens in the country of origin. Obviously, migration, predominantly illegal, exists, but the fall of Communism has opened borders and markets, making it possible to increase the number of migrants.

The effects of migration can be viewed from the perspective of three directions: the effects of migration on the country of origin, the population of the destination country and the migrants themselves. It is necessary to investigate the small communities left by emigrants and immigrants.

Migration and the resolution of problems associated with it are one of the Juncker Commission's political priorities. Community experts underline that the EU is facing a number of long-term economic and demographic challenges, while the EU economy is increasingly dependent on highly skilled jobs. The European Commission considers that migration can be an important way to increase the sustainability of the social assistance system and ensure a sustainable growth of the EU economy.

Some authors [Chateau & Raffaelli, 2016] appreciate that the EU aims to strike a balance between regulating legal migration and combating clandestine immigration, and to develop a uniform level of rights and obligations for legal migrants comparable to that of EU citizens.

Social partners in many Member States have expressed their support for the access and integration of asylum seekers into the labour market. Governments, employers' organizations and trade unions have put forward several proposals, including [Archick, 2017]:

- reducing the waiting period for asylum seekers to allow them to get a job as soon as possible;
- the rapid identification of migrants with the skills necessary for the labor market;
- the possibility of introducing phased salaries below collectively agreed minimums;
- the introduction of active employment policies that provide vocational training and job-finding services that quickly identify the need for labor market skills.

Since 2010 migration in Europe was determined by several aspects relating [Bocancea, 2016]:

- ✓ politics (internal conflicts, external conflicts- between states, civil wars, problems regarding the violation of human rights, political regimes, bad governance etc.)
- ✓ economy (poor economies, dysfunctional and inefficient, lack of jobs, unemployment, poverty)
- ✓ social events (low life expectancy rate, poor working conditions, low income, life standards under poverty etc)
- ✓ religious incidents (discrimination, intolerance, conflicts between different cults)
- ✓ cultural differences (ethnic discrimination, gender discrimination)
- ✓ natural causes (dezasres)
- ✓ sanitary events (epidemics)

These chain of events triggered on of the biggest migrating flows since the Second World War, with people from all over Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Tunis, Libya, Mauritania, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Western Sahara etc.), Middle East (Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Yemen etc.) and South Asia (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan), trying to find their way to the EU borders.

Due to their difficult path to the EU borders, using false guides (whose only specialty is human trafficking), each year the number of deaths within migrant populations increases. It is estimated that by the end of 2015 more than 22 thousands lives were lost only in the Mediterranean Sea.

Migration is also the root of negative effects such as: the increasing of populism, extremism and fundamentalism, criminality and racial manifests, terrorist acts which lead to the deaths of hundreds of people.

The EU is therefore faced with a number of challenges.

2. The priorities of the European Migration agenda

Migration can be both an opportunity and a challenge for the EU. Medium and long-term priorities consist of initiating structural actions beyond the refugee crisis and implicit emergencies in order to help EU Member States manage all aspects of migration as best they can. The European Migration agenda is built on four pillars: [European Council, 2017]

- **Discouraging illegal immigration**, which focuses on addressing the root causes of illegal migration from non-EU countries, dismantling smuggling and trafficking networks and correlating actions to better implement policies on the rapid return of those who have been refused asylum.
- **Rescuing human lives and securing external borders**: this implies better management of external borders, in particular by solidarity with Member States located at the EU's external borders (particularly Greece and Italy), as well as improving the efficiency of crossing points of the border.
- Strengthen the Common Asylum Policy, given that EU asylum policies must be based on solidarity with those in need of international protection as well as between Member States of the European Union by fully implementing the common rules that need to be ensured through a systemic monitoring.
- Developing a new policy on legal migration: Given the demographic challenges facing the European Union, which will become more prominent in the long term, the new policy must focus on attracting workers needed by the EU economy, notably through the recognition of professional qualifications.

3. Financing instruments

Funding migration policies is being provided through the Fund for Migration, Integration and Asylum (AMIF), but at the same time, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) plays also an important role in this process.

For 2014-2020, in the opinion of Community experts, at least 20% of ESF resources will contribute to social inclusion, which includes measures to integrate migrants, with a special focus on asylum seekers and refugees, as well as on their children. The funds allocated can support specific initiatives to improve language and professional skills, foster access to education, promote labor market integration, stimulate inclusive intercultural exchanges, and support awareness-raising campaigns for both host communities and migrants. [European Council, 2017]

For the 2014-2020 period, the Internal Affairs budget amounts to 10.52 billion euros. With a total budget of € 6.9 billion, the Fund for Migration, Integration and Asylum and the Internal Security Fund will finance actions to support EU internal affairs policies to protect the freedom and security of the EU and its citizens in 2014 - 2020.

In order to implement the actions on migration, integration, asylum and internal border security supported by the two above mentioned funds, the European Commission will work closely with all EU countries. For actions undertaken at EU level, the Commission will also cooperate directly with international organizations and civil society through grants and public contracts that are awarded through calls for proposals and public procurement procedures, respectively.

Since 2015, the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs also manages the funding of research and innovation activities needed to protect Community citizens, society and the economy as a whole. Such activities are funded under the "Horizon 2020" Societal Research Challenge, such as "Europe in a Changing World - Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies" (€1.309 billion) , "Safe societies - protecting the freedom and security of Europe and its citizens" (funding: EUR 1.695 billion). [EU Council, 2017]

4. The future of migration in the EU

The Lisbon Strategy has determined EU actors to act for assessing EU's labor markets before promoting economic immigration. Of course it is the obligation of the decision makers to know and act accordingly to the needs of their labor markets. The key point of understanding all the economic migration process is to know how the European decision makers asses and act accordingly to their needs, and the way they coordinate their efforts.

EU's vision towards this process is one that it's already been planned with the help of some strategic planning and actions by different European organizations that help facilitate the creation of the so called "European economic migrant policies". [Stoica, 2016]

It is in the European understanding that there needs to be a clear distinction between the EU migrants and the third-country national with residence status, applying in the hosting European country. Europeans have always been opened to this kind of migration as long as it involves young people that aim to develop a much more favourable environment when it comes to business, or that even aim to open their own business. This is one of the main reasons why there have been a number of debates at European level regarding the way the EU should handle the asylum seekers and refugee problem.

Most of the EU members have agreed that a number of "illegal migrants" can be sustainable and even healthy for the European markets as long as this number is carefully considered, and it's being spread around certain areas helping grooving the positive migration well needed in some rural areas.

Regarding the future of the migration in the EU and its impact when it comes to the asylum seekers and refugees, there are 3 major questions that need to be addressed:

- a) Can the illegal migration process be fully stopped, not at the EU borders, but rather at its roots? The EU needs much more attention, coordination and especially founding to help create a peaceful and more stable environment in the sending countries in order to successfully contribute at the world peace and help itself on the long term.

- b) Can the illegal migration process be fully controlled when it comes to identifying each migrant and its intentions? This involves more coordinate action on behalf of the EU regarding the internal security measures that need to be taken, even though some activists might consider them as being discriminating.
- c) Can the illegal migrants be persuaded to move to certain European areas or should the freedom of movement be reconsidered? It should be for their own benefit to move to some certain European areas where there is indeed a huge need for positive migration. But far too many migrants would never dream of working to some rural parts of Italy or Hungary, but rather dream of crowding the European capitals, or other urban areas which are already being overpopulated with both the original population and the economical migrants that are EU citizens. [Dumitrescu, 2016]

The future of the economic impact of the migration in Europe lies in the way this problem will be addressed from both parts: European action plan and the illegal migrants desire to cooperate and understand the EU problems as much as the EU is open to understanding theirs.

The first step towards understanding the illegal migrants (the term "illegal migrants" is a rather inappropriate but short one, that describes asylum seekers and refugees that receive temporary or permanent acceptance within the EU. It is being used in this article in this short form to differentiate this type of population, from the "legal migrants", as in the ones who are EU citizens and use their right of free movement for workers) by the European authorities would be to organize them, help create some form of leadership among them, so that the decisions regarding their future would be easier to be negotiated and communicated.

The way European authorities have treated the migrant crisis has led to the impression that they face some form of persecution, and has made many migrants question the civilized status of the European authorities. This hostile attitude, especially from the European border authorities have helped create among the illegal migrants some form of chaos and fuels a form of unwillingness towards accepting any form of European leadership. It is somehow a sequel of the process of braking through the European borders. If they managed to do that, why would they listen to anything European authorities have to say? They will go where they want to go, and do what they want to do anyway.

Therefore it is imperative that European authorities should cultivate some form of local leadership amongst the illegal migrant population, that will be respected and accepted by them.

The second step would be to help them understand the European culture and values in order to help raise their openness towards the decisions that are taken regarding them. Activists spend far too much time and resources on convincing the EU population to accept illegal migrants that populate their cities, instead of spending the same amount of time and resources educating the migrant population into understanding the problems of their new "home".

By having a rather preconceived notion of what Europe or "paradise" as many migrants like to call it, they tend to see their future as one being in a European capital or large urban area where they might succeed. This is why European authorities need to take action into convincing them that the place where they have migrated it's not a perfect one, and if they insist on crowding areas that are already far too crowded, they might be faced with discrimination and rejection from both EU population and the legal EU migrants. [Bunyan, 2016]

It has taken some European countries many years, if not decades to accept certain migrant European populations, even though for most of them it was for their own benefit, because the eastern European migrants were occupying jobs that no native citizens would have. For example the case of the Romanian workers, that in the last 10-15 years have populated countries such as Italy and Spain, with more than 3 million Romanian workers having a long working history in these regions. Yet still proven their utility for these societies, Romanians still have to face discrimination and rejection in some parts of Italy and Spain.

If for instance illegal migrants would insist on crowding these areas, they would find themselves in an immense hostile situation where they would have to face huge discrimination from both Italian or Spanish and Romanian populations living there. But this is only one example. Similar examples can be found all over Europe, so it would be in their best interest to understand the way the working force is being distributed all over the EU, in order to avoid being led into a hostile situation.

The third step would involve long term actions that would involve reconstructing the sending countries. Most of the illegal migrants come from areas where there is currently a state of war. Thus EU needs to invest more into helping the situations in these countries, either by helping the allies that fight towards ending the war and promoting democracy, or by directly financing long term infrastructure projects that will help these countries to recover and grow and help put an end to the migration process from the Middle East and Africa.

5. Conclusion

Migration is a phenomenon that has evolved in a dramatic form over the past twenty years. No matter what the providing country, or the causes that lead to that event, or the ways in which the receiving countries have manifested, one thing stands out above everything else: the need for survival of the individuals, their unquestioned desire to find a better home and a better life for themselves and their families. [Zamfirache, 2014]

The International Organization for migration states that if we look at the rhythm of growth among migrants flows in the last two decades we can estimate that in 2050 the number of migrants will be over 405 million people. Even though the number might seem high, some would argue that only 3 % of the worlds population would be on the move, making it a controllable process. Others might point to the increasing risks for the people who have left their homes, and very few humanitarian aids which came to their rescue.

Yet, EU's actions regarding migration are still insufficient, and the lack of coordination among interested parties still remains questionable. EU seems to be more concerned with the blockade of the migrant flows into the transit countries, helping them secure their borders, offering assistance in developing registration processes of asylum seekers etc., instead of a coordinated process in their sending countries, which would stop this process.

The biggest fear among legal migrants (especially eastern and central European ones) is that the migrant flows will eventually offer alternative cheap labour force in Europe, which will undermine their efforts in establishing themselves as honest working force and will decrease the income. This is one of the reasons why right wing parties have gained more and more political capital all over Europe.

The EU agencies need to direct their efforts towards studying the effects that illegal migrant flows might produce over EU's legal migrants, from economical and social point of view.

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