Marthe Hesselmans

New in Europe

A vision on migration

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With contributions by
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Foreword

by Sigrid Kaag
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Migration is about crossing national borders. By definition, it involves different countries, their governments, communities and individual citizens. The question is how to manage migration so that the interests of all are best served, in a way that is humane, fair and transparent.

The publication in front of you provides a much needed progressive liberal response to this question. It gives a broad outlook on major migration challenges and sets out a clear foundation of values on which to base migration policy.

Translating liberal values to actual policy solutions makes this publication an important contribution to current migration debates in Europe. It shows how European countries could act on something that touches everyone.

Introduction

In 1914, one million Belgians sought refuge in the Netherlands, fleeing from the violence of the First World War. Three decades later, half a million Dutch left for Canada, Australia or New Zealand to get away from the destruction caused by the Second World War. In the 1960s and 1970s, almost two million Spaniards migrated to other European countries as they sought to escape military dictatorship. These Europeans were all newcomers looking for a better future elsewhere. Nowadays, their countries are the 'elsewhere' to others. The newcomers of today are fleeing destruction in the Middle East or oppression in Africa. Should Europe welcome them just as Europeans were once welcomed throughout the twentieth century? Where do we draw the line?

There is nothing new about migration. People have always been moving from place to place. In recent years however, migration has turned into an extremely sensitive political issue in Europe. Governments have fallen over the issue. Extreme-right movements are thriving on it. But what is the real issue at play here? What makes migration so hard to deal with, and crucially: what are our options?

With this publication, the Hans van Mierlo Foundation lays out *a **progressive liberal vision on migration in Europe***. It analyses two urgent challenges facing European countries: managing asylum and facilitating the integration of newcomers. Proposals are made about how to deal with these challenges today and in the future. The focus of is on people seeking refuge in Europe.

This is where things went wrong in 2015. European countries were poorly equipped for the sudden surge in asylum applications that year. The consequences were severe: people drowning in the Mediterranean, chaotic scenes in Greek refugee camps and uproar in European societies. Such consequences cannot be addressed without looking at the wider context of migration though. Each asylum applicant is in the end also a migrant: a person leaving home to live elsewhere.

Chapter 1 therefore starts with a broad context analysis of migration. It focuses on three pressing questions at play both in Europe and across the globe: what makes someone a migrant, what are the effects of migration on society, and to what extent can we currently speak of a 'migration crisis'? The chapter subsequently discusses three foundations for a progressive liberal vision on migration: *human dignity, equal opportunities and durable international collaboration*.

Chapter 2 zooms in on current asylum challenges in the European Union. How can member states cooperate to better regulate who enters the EU, who is allowed to stay and who should leave? Why is it so important to have *common asylum policies* and what should they look like?

Chapter 3 deals with the *integration of newcomers*, especially refugees, in Europe. What happens once they have been given permission to reside here? How can EU-countries make sure that newcomers find their way, learn the language, get a job? And what does the integration of newcomers mean for local communities? We will discuss integration policies on the basis of five case studies in the Netherlands, Austria and three Scandinavian countries: Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The chapter ends with reflections by the Belgian mayor Bart Somers about how to deal with the diversity that migration brings to European communities.

The arrival of asylum seekers and the integration of newcomers are urgent challenges that European countries are facing at this very moment. They call for immediate action. Yet, migration is not a crisis that will pass. It is a permanent reality that requires a plan for the future and a vision of what this future should be like. Is that vision one of constant fear of migration or can we see a future in which European societies are prepared to deal with it properly and humanely? And if we, as progressive liberals, choose for being prepared, where do we start? That is the question this publication seeks to answer.

Foundations for a progressive liberal vision on migration

The term 'progressive liberal' is used in this publication in reference to the Dutch term 'sociaal-liberaal'. It stands for a political philosophy based on a rich understanding of freedom: to live a full and dignified life, people should not only be free from oppression, but also free to develop themselves. Only when they have equal opportunities to be or become who they want to be, can people truly make free choices. This requires an active role of the government. By facilitating, for instance, access to good education, affordable housing and healthcare, the government needs to make sure that people can live their lives in freedom and dignity.[1]

1.1 Pressing issues

Any vision on migration first requires an explanation of terms. What forms of migration are we talking about: for work, family, studies or asylum? Equally important is to specify what major issues we focus on. In our view, migration is not a problem that needs to be resolved. Migration does confront societies today with very real challenges that need to be tackled carefully. This section discusses the background of current migration challenges at three levels: the individual migrant, the receiving society and global migration flows.

Why these terms?

Terms related to migration are often differently interpreted. How do we define them here, and why?

The term *migrant* is used broadly in this publication. It refers to persons who leave their native country to live elsewhere, for any reason or period of time. Some migrants leave of their own free will for reasons of work or education. Others find themselves forced to leave for fear of their life.

Refugees are migrants of the latter category. In other words, they are distinguished from other migrants by their reason to leave. According to the UN Convention on Refugees, a refugee is someone with a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country without any expectations of protection by authorities. Reasons for persecution may be race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion

The term *asylum seeker* refers to an individual who is seeking international protection and whose claim has not yet been decided on by the country in which it was submitted. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee was initially an asylum seeker.

We also use the umbrella term *newcomer* in this publication. With this term, we purposefully shift the emphasis that is usually placed on the moment of, or reason for, leaving to the moment of arrival and settlement. We refer to a newcomer in this text if someone has entered a country for the first time and has been granted (temporary) residence status.

Finally, the term *resident* deserves an explanation as this relates to the integration of newcomers in their new society. By resident, we mean anyone who at a certain point in time resides in a particular country and who is officially allowed to do so. In line with the above definition, this means that newcomers are, in fact, residents. All residents, regardless of their background or the amount of time they reside in a country, should abide by the same laws and should be treated equally before the law.

Who is a migrant?
The answer to what makes someone a migrant appears fairly simple. Whoever is on the move, whoever leaves home to live elsewhere, counts as a migrant. A more difficult question is what it means to *be* a migrant? To what extent do people have the right to leave and settle elsewhere?

> *'Migration is not a problem that needs to be resolved. It does confront societies today with very real challenges that need to be tackled carefully'*

Each country will answer this question differently depending on its immigration and emigration policies. Yet, one answer is universal: people have the right to migrate for the sake of seeking protection. This right is stipulated in the United Nation's Geneva Refugee Convention of 1951 for anyone "who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."[2] The Convention prohibits the 145 countries that ratified it, which include all EU member states, to send refugees back to where they are fleeing from. Every refugee has the right to be protected.

All refugees are migrants, but not every migrant is a refugee. How to distinguish one from the other is not always clear. Neither is it clear how to implement this right of migration for those who flee persecution. The Geneva Refugee Convention does not say much about people who move for other pressing reasons, such as extreme poverty or environmental disasters. Nor does the convention oblige any country to actually provide relief. Refugees may also be sent on to other countries. It is, moreover, up to individual countries to grant or reject refugee status.

Illustrative of the confusion this may cause is the case of Afghanistan. Over the past few years EU member states have held different – and constantly changing – positions on whether or not Afghanistan should be considered a 'safe country'. Whereas Austria granted asylum to 70 per cent of Afghani asylum seekers in 2017, Finland recognised only 45 per cent of cases after it changed policies and considered significant parts of Afghanistan 'safe'.[3] Another example of confusion is found in the evolving instability in

Libya. Think of a Gambian migrant who initially sought a job in Libya but fled to Europe when Libya became unsafe. If the Gambian government were to refuse to take the migrant back – should this person be granted a refugee status?

The question of whether someone has the right to migrate is fundamental to today's migration debates. Throughout this publication we will look at what counts as a valid reason to seek refuge as well as how to treat migrants who do not claim any such reason but who left of their own free will to seek a better future elsewhere.

What makes a migrant society?
Migration is not just about people. It is about societies and about living together as members of society. How to make it possible to live together in a society of migrants and non-migrants, natives and newcomers?

We will take the Dutch society as example. With some 185,000 immigrants per year, the Netherlands is a country of arrival and settlement. Yet, it is also a country of departure. Around 30,000 Dutch people emigrate each year. Moreover, half of the immigrants in the Netherlands leave again within 10 years. Least likely to leave are, notably, people who arrived as asylum seekers. For those who stay, the question is how to become part of Dutch society. What is expected from newcomers and what should they be able to expect from society in terms of their legal rights and obligations, but also in terms of language, access to the labour market, values and sense of belonging?

These questions are not new: for centuries people have migrated to the Netherlands. Over time, the country has held different approaches to integrating newcomers. The Sephardic Jews and French Huguenots who came to the Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not always have the same rights, let alone special facilities, as the rest of the population. Throughout history, even as late as the twentieth century, refugees rarely received state support. Instead, they were expected to find refuge among Dutch communities that shared their faith or background. Belgians who fled the First World War were referred to their fellow Catholics in the southern provinces of the Netherlands. The Jewish refugees of the 1930s were expected to go knock on the door of the Jewish Dutch in Amsterdam.

It was not until the 1950s and 60s that the reception of refugees and other newcomers structurally changed in the Netherlands.[4] With the ratification

Migration figures for the Netherlands

Based on the annual averages from the years 2010 to 2017, some 185 000 immigrants arrive in the Netherlands each year: on a total population of about 17 milion people. This includes people with a Dutch background returning home: with an average of around 23 000 per year.

Of all newcomers, approximately 50 per cent leaves the country within three years. Newcomers who stay longest in the Netherlands tend to be the ones who sought asylum here. The continuing unsafe situation in their native countries often stands in the way of their return.

In 2015, 43 000 asylum seekers came to the Netherlands. By 2018 the number of first asylum applicants decreased to 20 400.

Source: Statistics Netherlands (2018). Statline: Immigration and Emigration; by month, migration background, sex; Statistics Netherlands (2018). Statline: Population with a migration background and their stay in the Netherlands; Statistics Netherlands (2015). "Most immigrants leave within 10 years".

of international human rights treaties and the emergence of the welfare state, the government took on a greater responsibility for the welfare of all its residence, irrespective of their origins. The state took on responsibility for accommodating recognised refugees. All newcomers with resident status were given the same rights as any other member within society. With these rights also came greater demands: newcomers were expected to fully participate and integrate in Dutch society. What this means however, became a topic of much, and at times heated, debate. Illustrative is the integration of newcomers who came from Turkey and Morocco in the 1970s. When the jobs they had been invited for disappeared, many ended up in the margins of society, unemployed and disconnected. Today, data show their children and grandchildren are gradually doing better and catching up in the labour market and education. Yet, almost 40 per cent say the do not feel they can belong here.[5]

Chapter three will elaborate on integration policies in the Netherlands. They constitute just one answer to the larger question of how to live together with people from different (migrant) backgrounds. Just as the Netherlands is but one example of a 'migrant society.' Each European society has had its own migration flows, with people leaving and arriving. Mobility is our shared reality. The question remains how to properly deal with the diversity that migration brings.

What makes a 'migration crisis'?
In recent years, the idea has emerged that Europe is currently experiencing a major 'migration crisis'. But is that really the case? What do the figures tell us?

First of all, some figures appear misleading. One such figure is that of 60 million refugees worldwide. This is a well-known statistic often quoted in the media.[6] Not always mentioned however, is the fact that among those 60 million over 38 million people are displaced within their countries of origin. They often live in appalling conditions, which should be of real concern to the wider international community. Yet, it is not correct to consider internally displaced people among border-crossing refugee flows. Overall, there are, in absolute figures, more people drifting than ever before. Expressed as a percentage of the growing world population, the number of migrants has remained relatively stable though. Since 1960, the global migrant figure is approximately three per cent of the population.[7]

Figure 1.1
Spread of refugees from Syria in neighbouring countries and Europe

Top 15 European countries for Syrian asylum applications in 2015

Syrian refugees registered in neighbouring countries
(up to 3 March 2016)

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2016).

Nuance is also called for when it comes to the idea of Europe as the epicentre of migration. Between 2014 and 2017, nearly 3,7 million asylum seekers arrived in the European Union, comprising the largest migration movement in Europe since World War II.[8] These numbers are significant. Yet, they make up barely 0.7 per cent of the entire EU population of 512 million. Many fled the Syrian civil war. All EU countries together received approximately 1 million Syrian asylum applications. In comparison, Lebanon, has housed over 1 million Syrians on a population of 6 million and Turkey over 3 million on

a population of 80 million.[9] Also in Africa, most of the migration is taking place within the continent. There may be significant pressure on the EU's coastal border states as African migrants seek to cross the Mediterranean Sea. But most Africans move within Africa, from countryside to urban areas, from Malawi to South Africa. Even Uganda has become a destination country: with the escalating violence in South Sudan it saw its number of refugee arrivals double from 500,000 to over 1 million within a single year.[10]

We cannot and should not deny that we live in times of large-scale migration. But the figures have not increased as sharply as is often believed. They rather show a shift in migration flows and push factors. At the start of the twentieth century, Europe was still a continent of great *emigration*. Today, the opposite applies. The motivating force behind migration is also changing. In addition to traditional push factors like poverty, instability and war, migration is increasingly driven by the new technical possibilities of a globalising world. There is more mobility and more information available about migration destinations. People are increasingly aware of the inequalities within and between their countries. These countries in turn, have become increasingly interdependent in an economic sense. Many have opened their borders for the exchange of goods and, to a certain extent, people. The world has become smaller. European welfare states appear closer to impoverished countries in Africa than ever before. Add climate change to the mix and you see the wide variety of reasons why people are moving around the world. And why this is not about to change anytime soon.

The term 'crisis' hardly applies to these developments. It creates an image of migration as a temporary phenomenon, something that European countries must and can bring an end to at their own discretion. But migration is a long-term phenomenon with far-reaching international causes and consequences. What is experienced as a crisis today is primarily a crisis of how migration movements are managed. This is another key migration question to be discussed in this publication: what can countries, in Europe and worldwide, do to better manage migration and how to tackle the root causes of why people feel the need to leave in the first place?

1.2 Vision and friction

Some believe that nation states should be protected from the catastrophe of migration, whereas others see migration as an ideal for a world without borders. But migration is neither a threat nor a utopia. ***Migration is a permanent reality that requires clear vision, values, and good management***. In this section we lay out the foundations for a progressive liberal vision on migration and how it connects with issues of asylum and the integration of newcomers in society. Core to this vision are:

I   Human dignity
II   Equal opportunities
III Durable international collaboration

Each of these foundations is briefly clarified below. We will also touch upon the friction between these values and the reality of current migration flows.

I   Human dignity

"The fundamental values of our society are freedom for, and equality of all men, regardless of beliefs, faith, sex, persuasion, or origin." [11]

These values form the basis of our progressive liberal outlook on migration. It follows that everyone has the right to a dignified existence. A person's background may never be a reason for persecution. If people are persecuted, they should be allowed to find refuge in a safe country. People who migrate for other reasons, be it for work, studies, or family reunification, do not have this right of refuge. They should however have opportunities to seek a better future elsewhere. Crucial is that no matter what reason people migrate for and whether or not they will ultimately receive residence status, all should be treated with dignity throughout their journey. Everyone has a right to live as healthy and fulfilling a life as possible and to fair treatment by the government and others.

Progressive liberalism also means that we take responsibility for the dignified existence that we grant one another–anywhere in the world. Key here is the starting point of ***freedom in solidarity***. No man is an island. Our liberties and opportunities are linked with those of others and with our surroundings.

This implies reciprocity: we treat each other as we ourselves would like to be treated, whether migrant or not, whether here or elsewhere in the world.

Friction
Offering refuge to those who flee persecution is necessary to safeguard the freedom and equality of people in need. Yet, it holds risk for the receiving communities. Large numbers of refugees in one place can lead to food shortages or (violent) conflicts between various communities in the area. Other forms of migration also bring risks. A sharp increase in labour migrants can lead to tense situations with local populations who fear the competition on the labour market and the pressure to accept lower wages, or who struggle with the different cultures and customs that migrants bring to the country.

'Starting point is freedom in solidarity: our liberties and opportunities are linked with those of others and with our surroundings'

To safeguard everyone's freedom and equality, migration requires strict agreements on the reception of asylum seekers (in the country, in the region or elsewhere in the international community) and on other forms of migration for family reunification, work, or education. Existing agreements are paramount here, particularly the Geneva Refugee Convention. It establishes the intrinsic value and equality of all people. It should be clear though that this Convention is not enough to determine the rights of all migrants. Notable is the lack of consideration for people forced to move due to climate change. We do not seek to break open the Geneva Refugee Convention. Yet, we do believe additional international arrangements will be necessary to provide more clarity on how to treat people crossing borders humanely, whether or not they officially count as 'refugees'.

II Equal opportunities

"People are more than creative enough to come up with their own solutions over and over again. We want the government to support and allow people to use this strength, ingenuity, and creativity." [12]

Newcomers are first and foremost people who want to build a new life. We do not depict them as victims or as profiteers. We are not saying that all newcomers are by definition 'good people'. Our basic assumption is that all individuals have their own free will and the ability to judge and act for themselves. Every newcomer has the ability to contribute to society. The government has an important role to play in facilitating this ability.

For the latter we rely on a positive understanding of freedom. Newcomer or not, all people should have the opportunity to develop themselves. They should not only be protected from government interference in their personal lives, but the government should also create opportunities to improve one's own destiny. Affordable housing, access to good education, health care and social services are pivotal for people to build a decent life. It is the right thing to do and it is in the interest of all: living together peacefully requires all residents to be able to participate in and contribute to society.

Friction
Investing in opportunities for newcomers requires public resources. The question arises how many of these resources should be used for newcomers who might not stay for very long. Take, for instance, people who move on to another EU country as soon as they obtain a European passport [13] or migrants who come only for seasonal work or a short study programme. Another dilemma concerns people who refuse to invest in their own self-reliance, who neither enrol in education nor seek work. They should have the same opportunities as everyone else, but those opportunities should come with strings attached.

It is not only up to the government to create opportunities, it is also up to newcomers to grasp them, to set to work to build an existence here, to make their new society their own. This takes time. Not all newcomers, especially those who stay for a short period of time, can be expected to immediately learn the language and find work. Yet, from the day of arrival, all have to comply with the rules of society, just like any other resident of the country at stake. All may be expected to: respect each other's freedom and equality; make an effort to provide for oneself; and abide by the law. This does not exclude further expectations, such as newcomers participating in integration courses or employment programmes. As long as expectations are mutual: newcomers invest in their new society whilst the society invests in them.

III Durable international collaboration

"From a progressive liberal perspective, fair is what an individual would do or refrain from doing if they had no idea whether now or in the future they might be in their current position or in the position of any other person involved." [14]

No one knows how migration will develop over the next decades, but it will likely be a reality of the future as much as it is our reality today. This makes it only fair to make long-term choices for current and next generations. No country can fully manage migration and asylum on its own, let alone in the long term. People and the countries where they live are interconnected. Whatever happens in one country has impact on another. Interconnectedness leads to responsibility. Countries should work together on solutions for the transnational problems to which they themselves contribute. The CO2 emissions in countries like the Netherlands and the United States contribute to climate change, more extreme droughts and rainfall, on the African continent which may in turn force people to move elsewhere to seek a better livelihood.

'Interconnectedness leads to responsibility'

Sustainable solutions require international collaboration. Countries have a shared responsibility to tackle the root causes of migration. Collaborating is also more effective. A single European country can do little to stop the desertification of Senegal or Chad. But together, EU member states have scope to invest in green energy, sustainable agriculture, employment, education, and good governance in such countries. These investments are crucial so that people can build a decent life back home. At the same time, countries should always make sure that there are safe pathways for those who want to or who are forced to move elsewhere.

Friction
It should be clear that migration cannot and should not be prevented altogether. Given the population growth in Africa, migration from this continent is expected to increase rather than decrease over the next decades. Moreover, research shows that investments in home countries will likely enhance migration at first.[15] Next is the conflict between international agreements on the one hand, and national sovereignty on the other. Migration might well be

about crossing borders, but countries should have control about who crosses their borders.

Realism is called for. Countries have their own national interests. They want to secure their raw materials supply, for instance, or favourable import tariffs. These are often given priority over international agreements on climate, fair trade, or the distribution of refugees. Adherence to international agreements differs greatly among countries. Whilst some receive large numbers of refugees or spend a great deal on development cooperation, others build fences to stop refugees from coming in or further inflame conflicts by supplying arms to warring parties.

These areas of tension cannot be dismissed. Yet, they should not paralyse us either. As progressive liberals, we will work with the policy instruments and agreements that are available and with countries that respect them. We will also work towards new durable structures, not only those that prevent and regulate migration, but also structures that enable countries to actually benefit from the migrants that pass through their borders. Migration is not simply a reality. It is a dynamic phenomenon that comes with challenges and chances. Today's migrants may become tomorrow's entrepreneurs. They can contribute to growth in rural areas that struggle with depopulation, and tap into new markets both in their native and new country. But they cannot do so without opportunities and a clear vision on how we want to approach migration now and in the future.

1.3 Dilemmas and priorities

The above foundations clarify what we stand for: for the right of every migrant to be treated humanely; for equal opportunities for everyone, new or not, to participate in society; and for a shared international responsibility to address the root causes of migration and create safe pathways for mobility. These foundations may cause friction though. How many refugees can a country take in without exhausting its own facilities or agricultural land? When do newcomers get job opportunities if this puts pressure on the local labour or housing markets?

Frictions also emerge between and within the three foundations. We want everyone to have equal opportunities, leaving no one to fend for themselves.

At the same time, we believe that people should be able to manage for themselves and should not become dependent on the help of others. Our aspirations towards sustainable and international collaboration are not without conflict either. What is good for the future generations of one country might not necessarily be good for the current population of another country. If not done well, cutting CO2 emissions could harm local economies and cause unemployment in a country in the short term. Yet, in the long term not cutting these emissions will likely cause greater damage to economies and livelihoods worldwide.

Depending on the context, one aspect of our vision will sometimes outweigh others. If a newcomer bluntly refuses to show up at the language classes they were offered, it may be decided to cut benefits, even if this undermines equal opportunities. A newcomer whose war trauma causes someone to fail for a language exam, should however not be fined but given additional support. The next two chapters will elaborate on such and other dilemmas at play in EU asylum policy on the one hand, and the integration of newcomers on the other. Throughout, the above foundations should not be seen as a dogma, but rather as a dynamic guideline to help set priorities. Different priorities might be decided upon in different situations, as long as we keep sight of our core value: freedom in solidarity.

Shared responsibility: A durable EU asylum policy

The peak of asylum applications Europe saw in 2015 has passed. Yet, the underlying causes are still very much there. In Syria and other parts of the Middle East, peace is far from reality. Failing states in Africa are not about to transform into thriving democracies any time soon. We can expect more situations similar to the one in 2015. When this happens, we need to be prepared with a solid European response. What should such a response look like? In this chapter we will set out key *arguments, problems, and policy directions* for a future-proof EU asylum policy.

2.1 Why European cooperation?

European cooperation is crucial if we are to tackle the current asylum issues. The 2015 record of arrivals made it clear that member states must join forces and regulate asylum together. If they do not, important European achievements will risk being eroded.

First, the free movement of people and goods between member states cannot be upheld without a common asylum policy. After all, asylum seekers arriving in one Schengen country can travel on to another. Countries can build barriers and resort to border controls to stop them from doing so, but these would also undermine the freedom of all EU residents to freely move from one EU country to the next.

Second, we need a common policy to safeguard the fundamental values adopted by EU member states: respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law. All member states have committed themselves to these values. They protect the right of EU residents to live a free and full life. They also guarantee the right of people to apply for asylum in the EU, to receive (temporary) accommodation here in line with EU standards and not to be sent to a dangerous country.[16] To put these values into practice, it is necessary to coordinate policy and ensure that all people who reside in EU territory are, in fact, treated equally.

'Solidarity in the European Union means that if one country is struggling, others will lend a helping hand. There is very little solidarity now when it comes to asylum.'

Last but not least, cooperation is essential to maintain, or rather restore, solidarity between member states. Solidarity in the European Union means that if one country is struggling, other countries will lend a helping hand. When it comes to asylum, there is very little solidarity in the EU. According to the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, more than 80 per cent of the nearly 100,000 asylum seekers who arrived in the European Union in the first six months of 2017, arrived at the Italian coastline.[17] For EU border states like Italy and Greece, the impact has been significant. Local communities and authorities have been unable to cope with the arrival of asylum seekers on their shores. Asylum seekers often find themselves in appalling conditions. In general, there is confusion among member states, asylum seekers as well as EU citizens as to who may or may not enter. Confusion causes unrest. It undermines public support for refugees and jeopardises the much-needed solidarity between EU countries and communities.

Asylum in Europe is a reality that should not be shrouded in mystery. It demands clarity, for the sake of asylum seekers as well as the populations of EU member states. It must be clear to both who will or will not be accepted and in which country. There should be solid alternatives such as visas for work or study, for those who are not entitled to asylum. It is in everyone's interest that people know the procedures for asylum and, if relevant, their home-

ward return as well as other legal ways for migration. This calls for moral leadership. EU member states must jointly demonstrate that they are able to manage asylum humanely and fairly, today and tomorrow.

2.2 Too much coercion, too little solidarity

Various mechanisms for a common European asylum policy already exist. There is the Dublin Regulation and the so-called *hotspots* to assist EU border states with registering and processing asylum applications. Frontex has been transformed into the European Border and Coast Guard Agency to improve control over irregular external border crossing. Member states must comply with EU standards on the reception of asylum seekers and on processing asylum applications. However, these different mechanisms are frustrated due to poor implementation, internal strife, and tunnel vision. Focus is given to short-term deterrence tactics rather than durable regulation. The next section highlights some of the key obstacles for as well as fundamental flaws in the current EU asylum policy.

The crisis of crisis management
One prominent problem of the current EU asylum policy is its implementation. We see a fragmented landscape of committees, agencies, and groups working on asylum or related topics.[18] There is a lack of communication and coordination. Every actor in the European asylum spectrum has its own interests and usually also its own funding. This complicates policy enforcement. In addition, member states are largely responsible for the implementation. Their own short-term interests tend to prevail.[19] Sanctions are slow to take effect if they are imposed at all.

Internal divisions form another substantial hindrance. Divisions emerge in a variety of EU policy areas. Over the past few years though, they have hardened considerably when it comes to the topic of asylum. A major issue of disagreement is whether or not member states should be obliged to accept a certain number of asylum seekers – the so-called "asylum quotas". Such quotas have been agreed upon before, but were barely adhered to.[20]

What makes asylum such a divisive issue in the EU? Southern member states are reluctant to accommodate the relatively large numbers of asylum seekers arriving at their borders. Eastern European members states were until

recently, and to some extent still are, countries of emigration rather than im-migration. Although the numbers of asylum seekers arriving here have been much smaller than in the South, they triggered vehement anti-immigration campaigns and public resistance to refugees.[21] Meanwhile, in Western and Northern Europe, politicians are under public pressure from emerging anti-migration movements. The events of 2015 have given these movements more momentum to push for restrictive asylum policies with as little EU interference as possible.

This context makes it difficult to reach agreement on EU asylum policy. Member states do not adequately cooperate to ensure better control of ex-ternal borders. The available joint funds are not nearly enough or have not been adequately spent to improve accommodation conditions in Greece and support other EU border states in processing asylum applications. The result is inconsistent policy. It not only weakens the position of EU member states in dealing with asylum, but also makes citizens lose trust in their leaders' ability to control the arrival of newcomers in their societies. These leaders in turn, are cautious about participating in policies that are based on little consensus.

Ultimately, the inconsistent EU asylum policy has serious consequences for asylum seekers themselves. Humanitarian crises are imminent or are already happening in Greece, Italy, Turkey, Libya, and the Mediterranean. EU agreements with so-called safe third countries on the accommodation of asylum seekers are difficult and appear to contribute to further human rights violations. Since the EU is so divided on asylum, member states hardly have a leg to stand on in negotiations with safe countries of transit and origin. It is a catch-22 of disagreement leading to weakness and vice versa, with emergen-cy solutions often appearing to be the highest achievable goal for issues that will remain with us for a long time to come.

When one is more equal than the other
Besides poor implementation, the current EU asylum policy has two funda-mental flaws: the focus on coercion and the lack of solidarity. These flaws are particularly evident in the Dublin Regulation. This regulation is based on the premise that asylum applications are processed in one single EU country, most likely the country of arrival. The Dublin Regulation was not designed with the aim of sharing responsibility. Its main purpose from the outset was to assign responsibility for processing asylum to a single member state. This

Humanitarian disasters in figures

Mortality rate among migrants crossing the Mediterranean

2015	2016	Libya to Italy
1 in 229	1 in 88	1 in 47

In 2016, a record number of 5 000 migrants drowned while crossing the Mediter-ranean Sea. Moreover, the migration route partly shifted from Turkey-Greece to Libya-Italy and the number of deaths increased sharply in 2016 on the latter route. UNHCR (2016). "Mediterranean death toll soars to all-time high." 25 October 2016.

91%
of **children** around the world attend primary school

Only
50%
of **refugee children** attend primary school

In June 2016, only 39 per cent of children in Turkish refugee camps had access to primary and secondary education. This was 40% in Lebanon. This means that nearly 900 000 Syrian school-age refugee children and adolescents were not in school at that time. UNHCR (2016). *Missing out: Refugee education in crisis.*

was to prevent member states from sending asylum seekers on to another member state. It was also meant to stop asylum seekers from applying in different member states. In practice, the Dublin Regulation has not had the envisioned effect. Multiple attempts took place to reform it. Today, negotiations on Dublin IV appear to be in deadlock, as are the negotiations on the Common European Asylum System as a whole.

Reforming the Dublin Regulation only makes sense if its fundamental flaws are addressed. The first one concerns coercion.[22] According to the Regulation, asylum seekers have little or no say in where they might seek asylum in the EU. They have some influence on the country of application, especially if they travel by plane. But most of them travel by land or sea and are therefore forced by the Dublin Regulation to apply in one of the few EU border states. These are often not the countries where they want to stay. They prefer to travel on to Germany or Sweden where they may have family, a social network, or job opportunities.

Coercion is also the basis for accepting asylum applications. Member states must accept asylum seekers arriving at their borders into their national procedures. Some of the proposed amendments to the Dublin Regulation introduce the option to either take on a number of asylum seekers from those first countries of arrival or buy off this obligation. Either way, the principle remains of requiring countries to take in any certain number of asylum seekers. There is no consideration of what makes a good match between, for instance, an applicant's skillset and labour market demands in the EU country at hand.

A lack of solidarity is the second fundamental flaw characterising the consecutive Dublin Regulations, including current proposals for Dublin IV. In a union of equal member states, it is simply not appropriate for one country to have to receive far more asylum seekers than others purely because of its geographical location. It is contrary to the core values of the EU that reception standards are far below the minimum standards in some countries, as they cannot handle the number of applicants. It is unfair for asylum seekers in Sweden to go through a procedure within a few months in a centre with adequate facilities, while in Greece they are held for years in emergency camps in appalling conditions, without the procedure even starting. Yet this is the reality and it is harmful to both the solidarity between member states and the credibility of a European Union that claims to respect the human dignity of all.

Text box 2.2
Dublin IV

Dublin IV is the most recent (2016) and not yet adopted proposal by the European Commission for reform of the Dublin Regulation. The main proposed changes are:

- *Fairness Mechanism*: In normal circumstances, Dublin remains as it is. In the event of a member state being under disproportionate pressure, a corrective allocation mechanism takes effect. As soon as a country receives a quantity of applications that exceeds 150 per cent of a newly introduced reference key, all new applicants will be redistributed across the EU regardless of their nationality in order to alleviate the pressure on the country concerned. This applies until the number of applications falls below that level again. A member state has the option of temporarily suspending its participation in the redistribution and must then pay a 'solidarity contribution' of €250,000 to the member state where the person is placed. Particularly the latter proposal is still subject of debate.
- *Special preliminary procedure*: Obligation to 1) examine an asylum application in the member state of entry (as in the current Dublin Regulation) and 2) check whether the application is inadmissible due to the fact that the applicant first applied in another country or comes from a safe third country. If this is the case, the applicant will be deported to the country concerned. If the person comes from a safe country of origin or poses a safety risk, the application must be fast-tracked.
- *Less mobility*: New legal obligations for asylum applicants, including the obligation to reside in the member state responsible for their application, geographically limited accommodation benefits, and sanctions in case of non-compliance. Applicants face stricter rules, including far-reaching sanctions for secondary movements and limitations on their right to an effective remedy, and member states face perpetual responsibility for asylum seekers assigned to them.

The **problem** with these proposals is that they do not provide a long-term solution to the lack of solidarity within the EU. Imbalances in distribution of asylum applications will likely persist, as the main principles underpinning the mechanism for allocating responsibility remain the same. Member states may still refuse to receive asylum seekers. There is also insufficient consideration for the individual circumstances of asylum seekers. They run the risk of being deported to supposedly 'safe' third countries where their humane treatment may be questionable because of personal backgrounds.

In *response* to the Commission's proposals, the European Parliament came up with its own position, which proposes, amongst others, that:

- The country in which an asylum seeker first arrives is no longer automatically responsible for processing the asylum application; asylum seekers that have a genuine link – such as family or prior residence – with a member state are transferred to that country.
- Those without a genuine link to an EU country should be shared fairly among all member states through a permanent and automatic relocation mechanism based on a distribution key. There are no thresholds before the mechanism kicks in, contrary to the Commission proposal. The distribution key is based on GDP and population size. Asylum seekers' preferences are taken into account.
- Countries refusing to participate in the transfer of asylum seekers could lose access to EU funds.

While the European Parliament had already adopted its negotiating position, discussions on the Dublin IV proposal remain deadlocked within the European Council. Successive countries holding the EU presidency and individual member states have been trying to circulate discussion papers to find a way out of the current deadlock, attempting to revitalise the discussions, so far with little success.

Text box 2.3
What to do with disembarkation

The summer of 2018 presented a new asylum challenge for the EU: the disembarkation of asylum seekers in the Mediterranean. During that summer, Italy and Malta increasingly refused to accept the disembarkation of people rescued at sea. Rescue boats have since been the subject of political stand-offs between EU member states over where to disembark, with *severe humanitarian consequences*. The situation has led some member states resorting to voluntary ad-hoc arrangements per ship on sharing responsibility for the people rescued.

Disembarkation of boat migrants on the Mediterranean is a serious challenge, but also an opportunity to show how things should be done. Use the ad hoc arrangements to *show how European countries* **can** *share responsibility* for people in need, and work towards their formalisation into a predictable and sustainable mechanism. Work with a group of pioneering member states that are willing and able to collaborate. Pending the deeper reform of the Dublin Regulation, this pioneering group of member states should set up a clear and humane mechanism to allocate responsibility. They should make sure that people are quickly disembarked in a European port where their applications are processed and decisions are made about return homewards or settlement in other EU countries. See also our proposal for transition centres.

Sources: ECRE (2018). *Asylum at the European Council: Outsourcing or reform?* Tubakovic (2017). "A Dublin IV recast: A new and improved system?"

ECRE (2019). *Relying on relocation: ECRE's proposal for a predictable and fair relocation arrangement following disembarkation.*

Short term and counterproductive

Finally, the main bottleneck of the current EU asylum policy is the tendency to look at short-term solutions for today's problems and not for the root causes of asylum. Focus tends to be given to halting current refugee movements by dismantling trafficking routes or tightening up border controls.[23] These are important measures, but they will do little to prevent people from having to seek refuge in Europe on the long term.

We are not dealing with a temporary development that will phase out. People from Africa and Asia have been coming to Europe for decades. Since the 1960s, Europe has seen more immigration than emigration.[24] To an extent this was due to conscious policies as European governments sought to fill their labour demands. In addition, Europe's colonial history played – and still plays – a role here. Many former colonies have maintained ties with their former colonisers and vice versa. Countries like Algeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo have large diasporas in France and Belgium, respectively. Such diasporas provide a permanent network for newcomers and constant information on the promise of prosperity in Europe.

'Asylum is, ironically, the most accessible route to the EU at the moment'

Current refugee movements cannot be understood outside of these larger migratory movements to Europe. A significant part of the people currently seeking asylum in the EU, do not flee from actual war violence. Rather, they leave because of a mix of push and pull factors. Among the pull factors are the historic relationships with Europe mentioned above. Among the push factors are underlying problems in the countries of origin, such as structural poverty, unemployment, corruption, and drought.

European countries have contributed and continue to contribute to root causes of migration, for instance through colonial divide and rule tactics, agricultural policies or unfair trade relationships. Tensions between population groups today originate from arbitrary boundaries that European rulers drew up in the past in Africa and Asia. EU funds to stop agents from people smuggling end up in the hands of corrupt authorities, undermining democratic rule unintentionally, but all the same. Meanwhile, African and Asian governments play their own part in pushing emigration from their countries by encouraging people to leave and bring back remittances or by not adequately addressing population growth and ensuing scarcities of work, land, and resources.

It should not be a surprise that people from Africa and Asia seek a future in Europe. Yet, European countries do very little to properly regulate migration flows. Possibilities for legal migration for the purposes of work or study are extremely limited, leaving people little option but to pursue irregular migration routes. That is where asylum comes in. It is, ironically, the most accessible route to the EU at the moment. A person from Senegal or Gambia has virtually no chance of a residence permit in the EU. They must have direct family here or be very highly qualified to be eligible for a work or study visa.[25] For those who still want to try, there is no other option but to join refugee flows and apply for asylum. If the crossing is successful, very few people will return home, even if their application has been rejected. They would rather disappear in illegality as most of their resources were invested in the trip and back home few opportunities await them.

The fact that most asylum seekers do not return to their home countries, even if their applications were denied, is deeply problematic. This not only has to do with the unwillingness of people to return, or of their home countries to take them back. It also signals another flaw in EU policies. These tend to be focussed on restricting the mobility of newcomers. By no means does everyone who comes to Europe want to stay there for the rest of his or her life. People hope to earn money or enrol in good education in order to raise their quality of life at home. There were more possibilities to do so in the past. Before 'Schengen', the treaty governing the free movement of persons in Europe, some EU countries still had fairly flexible migration rules. Seasonal workers could travel back and forth between Morocco and Spain, for instance.[26] The Schengen Treaty fine-tuned the external border policy across the EU. Otherwise, it would be too easy for a Moroccan seasonal worker to travel from Spain on to other member states. But the consequence is that this person no longer travels back and forth at all. Should he have been granted a residence permit, he will not want to run the risk of losing it again by going back to Morocco. He stays in Spain, preferably with his whole family.

2.3 Dilemmas and priorities

Current EU asylum policy leaves much to be desired. Also the plans for policy reform fail to sufficiently tackle the fundamental challenges asylum poses to the EU.[27] EU-countries require a long-term common strategy to regulate the arrival of newcomers at our common borders. Getting to such a strategy is not, and will not be, easy. We need to be clear about the dilemmas facing us, what priorities do we set and why.

A first priority is to invest in a ***common EU asylum policy***. This is not a self-evident choice today as we hear voices throughout Europe advocating for less collaboration. The choice we make here goes back to the first foundation of our vision on migration: human dignity. This dignity is at stake when it comes to how asylum is currently dealt with in and outside Europe. People do not leave hearth and home for no reason. They must be able to count on humane treatment wherever they go. The best way to achieve this goal within the context of the EU is a common policy, not only because EU member states are interconnected and share responsibility for what concerns them all, but also because asylum by definition affects the borders of individual EU member states.

Still, a common policy is not an end in itself, nor does it justify all means. It must be transparent, accountable and democratic. Member states should be involved as much as possible in decisions that should be transparent to their residents and to asylum seekers. Universal human rights are leading in every aspect of every policy. In addition, we are pragmatic. Collaboration does not always work. A common asylum policy can only be achieved if we keep a constant eye on everyday reality. It might sometimes be useful for a small group of member states to experiment together in the short or medium term first, before developing policy in the longer term with all member states together.

A second priority is ***sharing responsibility for asylum in the EU***. This is another difficult but current issue: who is responsible for international refugees? As far as we are concerned, the entire international community is. Based on the idea of solidarity among people and countries, we believe that EU member states share the responsibility for people in need – regardless of their origin. Their accommodation should not be completely outsourced to countries outside of the EU. We do advocate, however, to provide accom-modation in regions adjacent to the crisis areas whenever possible, as that would make the return to home countries easier when the situation allows. It is essential for people in need to receive humane treatment in their home region and, especially in the case of long stays, opportunities for education and work. Agreements about relief in so-called 'safe third countries' should only be made under strict conditions. These conditions and control mechanisms must have been established *prior* to the first arrivals to ensure the safety and humane treatment of the people concerned.

> *'There will always be ebbs and flows in people fleeing wars or disasters. We cannot prevent this, but we can make asylum more manageable by looking ahead, by making countries more stable and preparing European societies for the arrival of newcomers'*

A final, but perhaps most important, priority is that of ***long-term policy***. We oppose the current trend to primarily restrain refugee flows in the short term. We want to focus on safeguards for the future. Investments in people's home countries today are necessary to ensure that they will not need to board a smugglers' boat tomorrow. Yet, we also believe in acting on what needs to be done now. Direct action is needed on strengthening external borders, halting human trafficking and preventing migrant deaths in the Mediterranean. Such actions however, must be firmly complemented by structural investments in better governance, education, and employment in the countries of origin, as well as in more and better opportunities for (temporary) labour migration to the EU. Development policy should coincide with asylum policy and attainable work and study visa and vice versa.

Looking ahead at future generations, we need to be realistic. There will always be ebbs and flows in the numbers of people fleeing wars or disasters. We cannot prevent this, but we can make asylum more manageable by looking ahead. With long-term policies, we can make countries more stable and better equipped to cope with a (future) crisis. We can ensure that people have perspectives that are worth them staying home for. We can prepare our societies for the arrival of newcomers and make sure that all EU-residents, newly arrived or not, participate in and contribute to our societies.

Text box 2.4
Turkey as a model?
Safe third countries I

The EU has been trying to make agreements for years with so-called 'safe third countries' outside the EU about halting, receiving or taking back asylum seekers. It fits with a trend of member states shifting the responsibility for the accommodation of asylum seekers to non-EU countries – see the agreement between the EU and Turkey. We have our objections. What do we mean by a safe third country and what agreements should or should not be made?

Definitions
The term 'safe third countries' is used for countries where asylum seekers can reasonably apply (and should have applied) for asylum, for example because they have travelled through them. An important requirement is that these countries are safe. Safe third countries should not be mistaken with safe countries of origin. Migrants pass through third countries. A country of origin concerns the home they are migrating from.

Turkey
The EU-Turkey agreement of March 2016 is an example of asylum agreements between the EU and a 'safe third country'. It provided for asylum seekers who enter the EU via the Greek-Turkish border to be deported back to Turkey and for EU member states to arrange for the relocation of Syrian refugees staying in Turkish facilities. In exchange, Turkey would get financial aid and Turkish citizens would be given the opportunity to travel to the EU without visa.

Controversy
The implementation of the deal is problematic. Returns from Greece to Turkey are very few – only a few hundred so far – as the procedures in Greece are inadequate and lengthy. Thousands of asylum seekers got trapped in appalling conditions. Relocation of Syrians to the EU take place, but at a very slow rate. Furthermore, there are serious concerns about the human rights situation and the safety of asylum seekers in Turkey, especially for non-Syrians, as they do not fall under the temporary protection regime.

Text box 2.5
What goes wrong, what needs to change
Safe third countries II

What goes wrong?
The problem with agreements with safe third countries goes beyond the example of Turkey. We will address the most important:

- *There is no clear EU definition* of what a safe third country is: the Asylum Procedures Directive provides criteria, but member states decide which countries they designate as safe and how. In some of the current Dublin proposals, countries can be designated safe without fully complying with the UN Refugee Convention. It would imply the EU distancing itself from the Convention, which goes against EU treaties and values. There is also confusion and disagreement, for instance about whether or not Turkey could be designated a safe third country: many decisions on appeals in Greece refuted Turkey as safe.
- *There are no unambiguously applied EU criteria* to determine when an asylum seeker may be sent to a safe third country. Apart from the security situation, the decision depends on the extent to which there is a connection between the person and the country in question. According to the UNHCR, this should be assessed individually, and transit alone is not sufficient to establish a connection. EU member states all interpret this differently. Hungary refuses entry to anyone who took an irregular migration route via a neighbouring country. Under the agreement with Turkey, asylum seekers can be returned if they have only travelled through that country.
- *Informal agreements* with third countries such as Turkey lack essential control and verification mechanisms. They were made outside the European Parliament and were not legally established. This also makes it difficult to challenge them, and their implementation is largely dependent on Greek law rather than EU law.

How to change this?
Any new arrangements with safe third countries should only be made on the basis of a clear, unambiguous EU policy. These must be the core conditions:

- *A consistently applied EU definition and list* of safe third countries with criteria that follow the UN Refugee Convention. This list should not restrict the individual right to asylum and be established on the basis of independent and personal data of the asylum seeker concerned. Constant updates will be required, and

incentives to ensure that member states comply.

- *Binding EU regulations* as to when asylum seekers can be sent to safe third countries.
- *An individual assessment* of whether a third country can be considered safe for a specific person. This includes taking into account the specific circumstances and special needs of asylum seekers and the connection between the individual and the third country.
- F*ormal agreements* with safe third countries with the consent of the European Parliament and in accordance with EU legislative procedures. These agreements should include strict quality requirements for refugee reception and regular evaluations to monitor their implementation.
- *A long-term strategy* to better regulate asylum in the EU by providing more pathways for regular migration as well as legal asylum and investing in home countries and the region.

Sources: EC (2016). "Commission announces new migration partnerships: more collaboration with third countries for better control of migration". 4 May 2016; Laferrère and Knoll (2016). "Is the EU's migration partnership approach with African countries balanced?"; ECRE (2016). *Admissibility, responsibility and safety in European asylum procedures*; Moreno-Lax. (2015). *The legality of the "safe third country" notion contested: Insights from the law of treaties*. Gkliati. (2017). "The EU-Turkey Deal and the Safe Third Country Concept before the Greek Asylum Appeals Committees."

2.4 Policy directions

Improving EU asylum policy only works when taking the entire asylum chain into consideration: from root causes via arrival in the EU to settlement in a member state or return to the home country. This section lays out concrete proposals for a durable common EU asylum policy based on three key principles:

I   Fair management and distribution of asylum applications in the EU
II Focus on positive reinforcement
III Invest in regular migration routes

Our proposals do not exclude but complement each other. Where it does not contradict our beliefs, we build on existing EU policies.

I   Fair management and distribution of asylum applications in the EU

EU member states bare joint responsibility for managing, and not just preventing, the arrival of asylum seekers in Europe humanely and transparently. We believe that people in need must be able to find refuge and proper facilities, also within EU territory. We believe that member states should regulate asylum together. It is the only way to maintain open borders between member states. Policies must be clear for asylum seekers as well as EU residents. We call for a new system: abandon the problematic Dublin Regulation and work towards a fair distribution of asylum applications in the EU with the following proposals:

Replace 'Dublin' with a solidarity-based distribution mechanism for asylum applications in the EU: all member states take responsibility for asylum seekers. A careful distribution mechanism should ensure that no member state is overburdened with asylum applications simply because of its location. It is also important to make clear to EU residents what they can expect in terms of numbers of asylum applications in their country. This requires *jointly defined quotas* for asylum applications in each EU member state. These should consider the context of each individual member state, such as the size of its population and its gross domestic product. Quotas must be transparent and can be increased, with compensation if need be, in case a certain member state wants to accommodate more people. As soon as a member

Promising versus unpromising asylum applications

Promising must apply to asylum seekers from countries that have been designated as unsafe according to joint criteria, or *who are persecuted* in their country of origin. This does not, however, guarantee asylum, but is a preliminary decision based on background. It must be checked in follow-up proceedings whether their stories are correct and whether someone is not, for example, a war criminal.

Unpromising is when it is determined, after an individual procedure, that applicants do not have a chance of asylum because they come from a safe country of origin and *do not run the risk of persecution* because of their background, such as belonging to a minority oppressed in the country of origin. They do still have a chance of (temporary) regular migration, for example via study or work visas for which they should start a new application in their country of origin.

state receives asylum applications in excess of its quota, applications can be reallocated to other member states. Quotas and distribution mechanisms are adjusted depending on sudden increases. The decision to reallocate is made at transition centres and registration points:

- *Transition centres* are located in external border member states and are under EU competence. EU experts use a fully-fledged procedure here to distinguish between asylum seekers who do and who do not have a chance of asylum. Promising applications are redistributed among member states to go through a follow-up procedure. Unpromising applications are rejected and applicants are sent back home in cooperation with safe countries of origin. Unambiguous criteria are needed to determine if and when an asylum application is promising or not. The UN Refugee Convention should be leading in this respect.
- *Registration points* are located in non-border member states and managed by the member states themselves. The first distinction between promising and unpromising applications is made here at strategic locations, near airports, for example. Each applicant can rely on an individual procedure. No chance of success means immediate return. A promising application means referral to follow-up procedures in the member state concerned. Only if a member state receives more than the predetermined number of asylum applications can applications be reallocated to other member states.

Joint coordination of border controls. At border crossings, the EU should be ready to carry out strict controls. Asylum seekers may only enter the country if they proceed directly to the transition centres or registration points designated to them. This requires joint coordination and implementation of border controls. Member states must be closely involved in a transparent decision-making process. After all, countries have the sovereignty to control their own borders. Common policy is in their interest as it will prevent these very member states from being overwhelmed when there is a new peak in asylum applications. Ultimately, such a policy is essential to ensure the safety of all EU residents and migrants alike. Concretely, we seek an extension of the powers of the European Border Control Agency. This agency should be the key actor in coordinating and performing checks at EU external borders. Member states must collaborate with the agency in training and managing national border guards at the external borders or deploying their own border guards on a large scale. Regular and public evaluations are essential to ensure the transparency of border policy.

Consistent procedures for the registration and accommodation of asylum seekers. When people apply for asylum in the EU, they should be able to rely on clear standards for proper facilities. We must prevent that asylum seekers are treated better in one country than in another, or try to travel on to a country with quicker procedures. We also believe there should be set standards for the time it takes to decide whether or not someone is allowed to stay. That is why we advocate implementing equivalent asylum procedures and accommodation conditions in EU member states. This concerns the quality of accommodation, the duration of (follow-up) procedures and the decision-making process about the eventual granting of an asylum status in all member states.

'When EU member states make separate agreements with safe countries of origin, they risk undermining their joint negotiation position'

Readmission agreements with safe countries of origin to be legally established and embedded in broader development policy. Effective asylum procedures depend on the implementation of decisions. EU member states will have to work together to ensure that rejected asylum seekers return home as soon as possible. Multilateral agreements would give EU member states a stronger position in the negotiations than if they each try to arrange readmissions on their own. It is essential that readmission agreements are linked to development and trade policies and include strict criteria to guarantee the human rights and security of rejected asylum seekers. We want ***binding readmission agreements*** between EU member states and safe countries of origin. EU member states should all adhere to these agreements and not make separate agreements, as these would only serve to undermine their negotiation position. The criteria for 'safe' should consider specific groups within these countries.[28] To ensure that countries of origin comply with the agreements, we propose a comprehensive package of incentives and sanctions,[29] such as extending or suspending visas for senior officials and staff members, funds for good governance and trade opportunities, or setting or reducing annual quotas for (study) visas and investments in local employment. As part of the negotiations, countries could reach consensus for a re-admittance deadline for rejected asylum applicants.[30]

Figure 2.1
Overview proposed asylum system

So-called hotspots have been set up in the border member states of Italy and Greece since October 2015. National authorities are supported here by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) to register asylum applications and decide whether applicants should be rejected and sent back to safe home countries or dispersed within the EU for further asylum procedures.

How the hotspots are failing
Much is going wrong in how the hotspots work. Here are some of the main problems we see:
- *Unclear division of roles and responsibilities and poor coordination*: it is often unclear who bears which responsibilities – the member state and its national authorities or EASO. This confusion delays asylum procedures and creates friction between EU representatives and national officials involved in the procedures.
- *Lack of information and transparency*: the focus is on efficiency. Asylum seekers should be fingerprinted as soon as possible for a rapid start of the registration. Asylum seekers are often poorly informed and lack legal assistance, which is also due to the lack of state-provided lawyers and non-governmental organisations as these are regularly denied access to hotspots.
- *Lack of available staff*: with the Greek asylum service being continuously understaffed, the asylum procedure in the hotspots takes too long. There is also a shortage of EASO representatives at the hotspots in both Italy and Greece.
- *Substandard reception conditions*: hotspots are often overcrowded and lack essential facilities, such as health care, sufficient food and facilities for minors. Little has been done to improve this, despite repeated criticism. Furthermore, there is different treatment based on nationality, leading to unrest and people being deported without any consideration for the personal circumstances that might put them at risk at home.
- *Geographical limitations and restriction of movement*: in Italy and Greece, asylum seekers, including children, are placed in systematic and long detention without this being justified as necessary or proportionate. Greece also adopted a 'geographical limitation': asylum seekers are not transferred to the mainland but are obliged to remain on the islands where they arrived. Here they should undergo a fast border procedure to be returned to Turkey. Only asylum seekers who belong to vulnerable groups are allowed to enter the Greek mainland. However, due to delays in the procedures, asylum seekers have in reality been stranded on the islands for months, or even years.

Central to this proposal is the EU coordination of *and support* for asylum applications in border member states. With the EU asylum system we envision, these member states would no longer be obliged through 'Dublin' to accommodate asylum seekers simply because they are the first country of arrival. Instead, border member states receive ample EU support to humanely accommodate asylum seekers, process applications, send back rejected applicants, and forward promising applicants on to other member states. This leaves many details still to be elaborated. We believe these should be the main principles:

- *Focus on transition*: Asylum seekers' stay in the centres should be as brief as possible and focused on either immediate return or referral to a member state for follow-up procedures.
- *Invest in asylum expertise*: EU experts, national and local authorities should be trained to decide effectively and on the basis of legal criteria whether an application is promising or not. Speed is desired, but never at the expense of a legitimate procedure for each individual applicant. The applicant should have possibilities for legal support and personal circumstances must be taken into account. This would also serve to prevent uncertainty later on as to whether someone has exhausted all legal remedies.
- *Guarantee human dignity*: Centres should have proper facilities, including clear information about procedures, (legal) support for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, and opportunities for asylum children to attend school.
- *Ensure independent monitoring*: Conditions and procedures in the centres should be regularly monitored by institutions whose operations are not governed by political decision-making.
- *A test phase* will be needed to measure the (unintended) impact of the transition centres. It should be tested whether they become a pull-factor for applicants or rather cause applicants to avoid the centres. The test phase could also be used to strengthen local authorities that could eventually play a greater role in the coordination and implementation in the centres.

Sources: Tsourdi (2017). "Hotspots and EU agencies: Towards an integrated European administration?" *EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy*, 26 January 2017; European Parliamentary Research Service (2017). *Addressing migration in the European Union*; ECRE (2016). *The implementation of hotspots in Italy and Greece: A study*; Danish Refugee Council (2019). *Rights at risk: Implications of a closer nexus between asylum and return procedures*.

ɪɪ Focus on positive reinforcement

To put a future-proof asylum policy into practice, we need feasible plans. Below are three proposals for a more effective implementation of current and future ᴇᴜ asylum policies. In our view, this requires a shift from coercion to positive enforcement. In this system we envision, member states and asylum seekers should both find good reason to collaborate. They should feel motivated and not forced. Still, some level of obligation remains necessary. Having a functioning asylum system is too important to be left to the good will of individual member states or asylum seekers. The ᴇᴜ should have the authority to sanction those who thwart the system. Also, even though we strive for the inclusion of all member states, it will sometimes be necessary to move ahead on a smaller scale with the willing and the able. Always with one goal: to manage asylum to the ᴇᴜ together, humanely and transparently.

Pioneer group of member states. This first proposal is an example of taking a step back to move forward. With the idea of a pioneer group, we temporarily put aside the aim for a fully shared asylum policy. Call it a trial period in which we join forces with a small group of member states to develop and implement asylum policies on a limited scale and see what works best.[31] It is up to member states to decide if they are willing to join this pioneer group and commit to joint agreements on border control, transition centres, cooperation with safe countries of origin, and distribution of asylum applications. The instrument of *enhanced cooperation* can be useful here. Key here is for the pioneers to operate strictly within ᴇᴜ legislation and not behind closed doors. Agreements should be as transparent as possible and open to other member states to join at any time.

Carrots and sticks. Accepting asylum applications should become more appealing for member states. When a country takes responsibility for asylum seekers, it should be able to count on tangible support from the ᴇᴜ.[32] Think of financial resources for accommodation as well as advice and training on implementing asylum procedures.[33] Reward a country that takes in asylum seekers with funding for integration programmes that could benefit all its residents, such as broadly accessible language or employment programmes. This is especially important for those ᴇᴜ countries that have relatively little experience with immigration. Allow and encourage them to build up decent integration structures so that communities can prepare for the arrival of newcomers. Meanwhile, we still need sanctions to counterbalance any mem-

Enhanced cooperation

Enhanced cooperation has been an option since the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) and implemented in its present form since the Treaty of Lisbon (2007). It allows for at least nine member states to enter into closer cooperation with each other, assisted by and through ᴇᴜ institutions, without any involvement of other member states. Other member states keep the right to join whenever they want. In this way, deadlocks can be avoided if one member state or a group of member states blocks legislation. The instrument comes within the policy strategy of a multi-speed Europe: one group of member states takes the lead and others can follow suit later. It can, however, also lead to fragmentation within the ᴇᴜ. In practice, enhanced cooperation is a rare occurrence, either because an issue falls outside the ᴇᴜ's competences or because the member states always attempt to act within joint ᴇᴜ frameworks first.

Sources: the Dutch Advisory Council on International Affairs (2015). *Gedifferentieerde integratie: Verschillende routes in de EU-samenwerking* [Differentiated integration: Different routes in EU collaboration]; Kreilinger (2015). "Proposal to use enhanced cooperation in the refugee crisis". *Jacques Delors Institute*.

Mutual recognition of positive asylum decisions

For now, member states only recognise each other's decisions to return an asylum seeker whose claim has been rejected: this follows from the Returns Directive, as Member states are obliged to recognize return decisions by other member states. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of member states also recognising each other's decisions to grant refugee status?

Benefits
Refugees will find it easier to travel, work and study within the EU if their status is recognised by all member states. The rights of residence permit holders would be better protected throughout the EU. More mobility and security can, in turn, promote integration. It allows residence permit holders to join existing networks in other member states or move for better job prospects. Member states would benefit from *faster integration* and from the clarity provided by mutual recognition. Moreover, mutual recognition would help *stem secondary movements* because the chance of a positive asylum decision should then be equal no matter where asylum seekers move to within the EU.

Disadvantages
This proposal depends on the trust between member states and their authorities. At present, we often see mutual distrust and division. There are also many *ambiguities*. When, for example, may a status holder travel freely: after five years, as is currently the rule, or sooner? Further research is needed to see how this proposal might work and to counterbalance the current EU trend to further restrict the mobility of residence permit holders.

Sources: Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (2017). *Safe passage: Mutual recognition of positive asylum decisions within EU and Schengen associate states*; Mitsigelas (2015). *Mutual recognition of positive asylum decisions in the European Union*.

ber states that categorically refuse to cooperate. These should be enforced expediently.[34] If a country visibly violates the rules, a fine should follow as soon as possible and this fine should be increased as time goes by and as the member state continues to refuse.

Mobility. We seek greater mobility for people who have been or will likely be granted asylum in an EU member state. They should be allowed to transfer to other member states where they have existing (family) connections or a good match on the labour market. This will increase the chance of successful integration. It also helps when people are motivated to cooperate. In a functioning asylum system, applicants adhere to the rules. Currently, this does not happen enough. Too many asylum seekers bend the rules, knowingly or unknowingly. To change this we need to have a transparent system that offers clear opportunities and restrictions. Transfers should always happen in close consultation with the countries at hand. They make the final decision about who can stay within their national borders. It is also in their interest that countries receive newcomers who are motivated to invest in their new homes.[35]

III Invest in regular migration routes

A realistic EU asylum policy addresses the root causes. People will migrate when their home country holds no future for them. As long as the inequality between Europe and its neighbouring countries is as great as it currently is, people will seek – and find – ways to get to the EU. Too many now do so through irregular migration routes. Instead of applying for a visa, they pay handlers and apply for asylum even when they have no chance of getting it. With the following proposals, we aim to make asylum the safe and limited option it should be and create better prospects for regular migration to the EU as well as building a dignified life in safe countries of origin.

Regular migration routes. To better control refugee flows to the EU, it needs to expand legal pathways for asylum and migration. Asylum should be a safe but limited option only for those who have had to leave their country for fear of their life. It should be well organized through, for instance, ***humanitarian visas and more resettlement*** from (UNHCR) refugee camps in crisis regions. For people from safe countries of origin who are not persecuted, there should be options for regular migration in the form of temporary ***study and work*** visas. These must be subject to strict conditions. The number of visas should

be limited. When a visa expires, people must leave immediately. Member states should be smart about issuing work visas for sectors with labour shortages, such as agriculture or tourism. Engage companies in determining such shortages and develop structures to support a smooth entrance into and exit out of the labour market. Let migrants gain experience in the EU. Prevent a brain drain by making sure that people will leave once their permit expires and have good reasons to so: because they have new ideas, money, and skills to build a decent life back home.

Future in the region. People who have had to flee persecution and who have found refuge in the region should be able to *work on their future while they wait* for return or resettlement. Although accommodation in the region should, in principle, be short term, the reality is that people often stay in refugee camps for years, sometimes for all their lives. While they stay in these camps, people must have opportunities to learn and work. This is also crucial in order to prevent new cycles of conflict and refugee flows. If we do not invest now, refugee camps might become breeding grounds for radicalisation in the long run.[36] Last but not least, the EU must expand and better implement resettlement programmes so that people can actually leave the camps and build up their lives elsewhere when the situation in their home country does not improve.

Future in countries of origin. Eventually, the roots of asylum and migration lie in the countries of origin where people are confronted with war, poverty, climate change, and oppression. A better life there is a matter of long-term and serious commitment. Temporary development projects will not do. Structural investments are needed in education, employment and democratic governance. Today, the EU invests too much in military and police deployment to combat terrorism and discourage human trafficking. However, entire communities in the Sahara are driven by human trafficking because there are few other jobs available. The EU must work towards durable and safe alternatives for income generation in these countries. We should invest in local economies, in sustainable food supply and agriculture, in education, employment, and trade. Give people reasons to stay at home and not fall into the traps of human trafficking. And make sure that they can gain skills and experience at home for so that if people do follow regular migration routes to Europe, they have something to offer to the labour markets here.

Of common concern: **Effective integration policies**

Of the nearly 3,7 million asylum seekers who came to the European Union between 2014 and 2017, not all will stay. For those who do, the question arises how to integrate into their new home countries. This is not only a question for the newcomers, but also for the citizens and governments of the European countries involved. Once migrants have received a (temporary) permit, they become residents of these countries. It is in the general interest that all residents, new or not, actively participate in society. That is what integration is about.

In this chapter, we will analyse *the foundations of integration*. The focus is on the integration of refugees. Those who flee persecution and have been granted asylum, are unlikely to return to their home countries anytime soon. It might take years, if not decades, for a country to recover after a period of violence and political instability. Meanwhile, integration is often a struggle for precisely this group of newcomers. Their position in society is often vulnerable. Each country will have to develop its own policies on this, adhering to the national context. The main question in this chapter is which progressive liberal principles should apply here and what practices can we learn from?

3.1 **What integration is and should be about**

Discussions about integration are often taken to the extreme. They build on assumptions about newcomers who would not want to integrate or about

EU citizens who would not accept newcomers even if they do integrate. The debate tends to focus on controversies and symbolic politics about whether a police officer may wear a headscarf or boys and girls should have separate swimming lessons. These are not frivolous themes. But they cannot be discussed properly until we talk about the foundations of integration.

A progressive liberal stance on integration starts with the **mutual expectations** that people may have of each other as residents of a particular country. What is necessary to live together peacefully with whoever resides here? We believe that this requires for each resident to: respect the individual freedom and equality of each other; make an effort to provide for one's own existence; and comply with the law.

- The first expectation that everyone should **respect each individual's freedom and equality** departs from the belief that no one is an island. Our lives are interconnected. To be free ourselves, we need to allow others to be free as well. We grant each other the possibility to be who we want to be – as long as this does not harm others – and the opportunities to develop ourselves further.
- **Efforts to provide for one's own existence** concerns the social expectation that residents will be, or try to become, self-reliant. It is not about everyone always being able to work and thus provide for their own income. But people who are, given their age and physical and mental abilities, eligible to work, may be excepted to make an effort to do so, by having and keeping a paid job, but also by pursuing education, studying the language or doing voluntary work in order to prepare for such a job.
- The third foundation, **compliance with the law**, is not just an expectation, but also a legal obligation: whoever lives here abides by the laws of the country. This also includes equal treatment before the law regardless of a person's origin or background.

We see these foundations as key conditions for living together in an open and free society. They apply to newcomers as much as they apply to other residents. However, to newcomers they may not always be as obvious as they may be to other residents. People arrive with other languages and worldviews, different or no professional networks, training or work experiences, and with knowledge of foreign laws and regulations. Integration is a process for newcomers to make these expectations their own and to participate as members of society.

Text box 3.1
Focus on participation, not tradition

The integration of newcomers is a hotly debated topic in many European societies. These debates often revolve around the extent to which newcomers should adapt to the national culture and identity of their new European home. They tend to focus on customs and traditions, such as the Dutch custom to shake hands when you first meet each other or a school's tradition to have the children do a Christmas play. Customs and traditions may be part of European societies, but we do not believe that partaking in them is a *condition* for integration.

Integration should be about what we fundamentally expect from each other. What is truly necessary if residents are to live together peacefully? That is respect for each person's freedom and equality, abiding by the law and commitment to contribute to society. Knowledge of the language, history and democracy are also important if we want people to better understand each other. Learning about customs and traditions may be helpful, but we do not see it as a requirement for integration.

Besides, national customs and traditions are constantly changing. They adapt with the times and have different meanings to different people. We cannot and do not want to expect newcomers to adapt to something that even citizens themselves do not agree on.

Integration is not just a personal affair, but concerns the entire society. It is not an automatic process either. Integration requires real facilities and a certain way of thinking. Attitudes matter. Newcomers and receiving communities need to be open to engage with each other. It is up to newcomers to seek and seize opportunities to find their way in society. It is up to citizens, authorities, companies and organizations to make sure they *can* find their way. Through social interaction: the best way to practice a language is not through an online course, but in the street, in the office canteen or on the schoolyard. Through high-quality and affordable language courses, employment opportunities and other public services that help newcomers participate. And through work: employers have a responsibility when it comes to actually hiring people and doing so under good labour conditions. With joint efforts, newcomers have the best chances of building their own livelihoods and contributing to society.

'Employers have a responsibility when it comes to actually hiring people and doing so under good labour conditions'

3.2 Dilemmas and priorities

Integration is often dismissed as something newcomers need to sort out for themselves. In our view, it is a broad social issue though that requires government intervention. Each country has to determine this intervention according to the national context. There are choices to make: who takes responsibility for integration, who can take part and how much are we willing to invest. These are the priorities we set for a progressive liberal integration policy:

First is the choice to regard **integration as a common concern**. At stake here is the question of whether newcomers should be left to their own devices to find their way in society. Some would say yes, because it was their decision to migrate. Yet, not all newcomers made this decision freely. Some were forced by circumstances. Moreover, once newcomers receive a (temporary) residence permit, responsibilities shift. From that point onwards, the newcomer is a resident of the destination country, even if it is only for a limited amount of time. And from that point onwards, the government has a responsibility

for this resident, as it has for all its residents. In a free and open society, we believe that the government should enable all residents to develop themselves and build a dignified life for themselves. Anyone who struggles with this, is entitled to support. All residents contribute to such support through taxes. It allows and obligates the government to provide proper integration programmes such as accessible language courses or job trainings. Newcomers should seize such opportunities and make the best of them.

Next, we choose for advancing integration **with and within the local community**. The question here is who is integration for and where should it take place. Integration is typically associated with newcomers who need to find their way in society. But what is needed for effective integration – language skills, employment, education – is needed for all residents to get by. We believe it is crucial to invest in newcomers as we invest in any other resident. This is best done at the local level, where there is better sight of specific needs and opportunities in the area. At the local level, integration can also be set up in a way that it benefits other residents in need. Think of job training programmes for unemployed youth or language courses for functionally illiterate citizens. At its core, integration is about *each* residents being able to participate in society. This does not mean however that everyone should get exactly the same opportunities. Newcomers require different kind of language or employment programmes than people who have been born and raised in a particular community. Key is to invest in each individual.

Finally, we choose to **invest in the Europeans of the future**. The pivotal question here is how much societies should set aside today for the integration of the newcomers of tomorrow. The difficulty here is that we do not know who these newcomers will be. It is hard to predict how many people might seek asylum in Europe in the future. What we can expect is that new people will come here and that this necessitates sustainable integration facilities. We prefer to invest right now rather than compensate later through social welfare. Make sure that newcomers can become and remain self-sufficient participants in society. We advocate for a solid groundwork of integration programmes that can be expanded whenever there is a peak in for instance asylum applications. Investing in integration is a two-way street. Newcomers need to invest time and effort. They may also be asked to pay for programmes so as to enhance their ownership of the integration process. But that should not cause newcomers to get into financial problems.

Country cases

The integration of newcomers is a national affair. Yet, countries face similar challenges and can learn from each other's failures and best practices. This section contains contributions from the Netherlands, Austria and three Scandinavian countries: Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Each of these countries was faced with the arrival of a relatively high number of refugees between 2014 and 2017.

In the *Netherlands*, coercive integration policies appeared to have made newcomers, especially refugees, more reliant on social services rather than self-sufficient residents. What lessons can we learn from this and in which directions should we look for solutions? The *Scandinavian countries* are often used as an example of how to do things right. What best practices do we see here and what challenges emerge nonetheless? *Austria* shows what happens when a right-wing government defunds integration programmes: can local municipalities pick up the pieces?

Figure 3.1
First time asylum applications 2014–2017

	Asylum applications	Asylum seekers to total population
Sweden	276 000	2.70%
Norway	48 000	0.90%
Denmark	45 000	0.80%
Netherlands	100 000	0.59%
Austria	174 000	2.02%

Sources: Eurostat 2018a and 2018b

Please note: A country like Austria receives relatively high numbers of first asylum applications as it is situated on the outskirts of the EU. The Netherlands sees far more family migrants. The group of Syrians arriving in the Netherlands as 'first asylum applicants' in 2014, doubled in size within 18 months as a consequence of family reunification, family formation or childbirths. After 30 months, this group had grown by 125 per cent.[37]

Netherlands: *The urgency to invest*

by Marthe Hesselmans

In the past decade, the Dutch government dismantled much of its integration policy for newcomers. What remained was a coercive system of private courses and government exams that enhanced rather than mitigated the marginalization of newcomers in society. We see a rift between Dutch nationals who are suspicious of newcomers not making an effort to integrate on the one hand, and newcomers who feel they can never belong regardless of their efforts on the other hand. The current government is now working towards policy change. This section is meant to identify and clarify what went wrong and make suggestions towards a more effective integration policy that can benefit the wider society.

Dependent
New legislation in 2013 reduced existing Dutch integration programmes to a policy focused primarily on newcomers' personal responsibility. Governmental facilities to learn the language and the ins and outs of society were cut down until only the obligatory integration examination remained. Newcomers had to pass these examinations on the Dutch language, labour market and societal values within three years. By way of preparation, they had to find their own private courses and bear the costs themselves or take government loans. The government only offered the possibility to convert the loan into a gift for recognized refugees if they passed the exam within three years. If they failed, they had to pay a fine on top of repaying the loan and risked deportation.

The idea behind all of this was that it would encourage independence. In practice, however, newcomers – and particularly refugees – got caught in a process that slowed down rather than advanced their integration. The complicated procedure to prepare for the examination placed high demands on newcomers. The outcome was especially negative for newcomers who had applied for and received asylum in the Netherlands. Just one in every three refugees completed the exam within the allotted time. Many others ended up with high debts constraining their already difficult integration process and making them more rather than less dependent of social welfare.

Excluded

A second error in the former policy was that it tuned in with existing divisions between people with or without a migration background. Newcomers were framed as people who had to prove that they assimilated. They had to sign a formal declaration of participating in Dutch society or otherwise risk being fined or losing their residence permit.[38] Even refugees who had been granted a formal asylum status were threatened with deportation if they did not complete their integration exam on time. Deportation does not, or only in highly exceptional cases, apply to Dutch nationals.[39] This conveyed a message of legal inequality: a newcomer, even after having received (temporary) residence status, was not entirely equal to a Dutch national in the eyes of the law.

In addition to legislation and formal policy, newcomers have been (and are often still) set apart from other Dutch residents in political and public discourses. Newcomers would have to adapt to national standards and values and renounce their own culture – especially if this culture is regarded as 'conservative' and incompatible with what are considered to be the typically Dutch core values of individual freedom and tolerance.[40] Dutch nationals whose orthodox Christian beliefs make them criticise these core values do not have to fulfil such requirements. This gives the impression that newcomers have to abide by different rules. It undermines their integration. Why should newcomers make an effort to belong when they are not accepted anyway? Besides, shouldn't *all* residents of the Netherlands, newcomer or not, be free to have their own culture as long as this does not harm others?
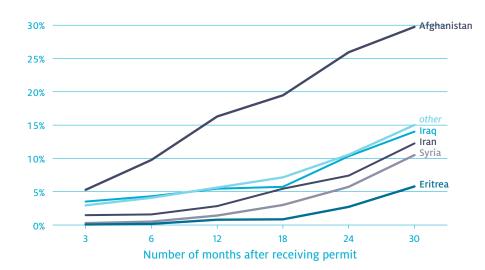
Marginalised

Finally, integration policy in the Netherlands has had a tunnel vision. Too little attention was paid to what is needed in the long-term to help the ever-changing groups of newcomers find their place in society. Consecutive

governments have cut budgets rather than investing in integration. Municipalities had to downsize programmes that helped newcomers get around, such as language classes, work experience placements or for instance a local introduction week for newcomers to get to know the area. Over the years, such programmes increasingly came to depend on impromptu solutions, temporarily available funds and volunteers. If an asylum reception centre closed its doors when the numbers of refugees decreased, this often meant an end to existing initiatives, leaving municipalities ill-prepared for new peaks in arrivals.

Moreover, integration initiatives have been severely hindered by restrictive national legislation, such as the rule that asylum seekers were not, or scarcely, allowed to work until they had been granted a residence permit. The way the courses and exams were designed, was also problematic. Most lessons and exams took place during the day. People had to take time off from work and travel significant distances to attend. This did not help the already cumbersome exploration of the labour market.

Figure 3.2

Percentage of working asylum status holders upon months of residence

Sources: Statistics Netherlands (2018), *Uit de startblokken*, Pp. 33

Data of 2018 show that 2.5 years after receiving their residence permit, an average of 11 per cent of the 18 to 65 year-old asylum seekers has found work.[41] After 5 years, the average figure increases to 50 per cent, albeit mostly in part-time jobs.[42] The policy has thus led to a catch-22 in which newcomers do not learn the language, hardly come into contact with other residents, cannot build a network, have problems finding work and increasingly live in isolation. It invokes memories of the 1960s and 1970s when the Netherlands was similarly poorly prepared for the newcomers from Turkey and Morocco. At that time it also lacked planning for the future. People were expected to return to their own country. Dutch society did not sufficiently invest in the newcomers, and in turn they did not sufficiently invest in their new society. The two-way street of investing in integration became a dead-end. We should not let that happen with current or future generations of newcomers, for their sake and for the sake of Dutch society at large.

Policy directions

Any effective integration policy should be focused on having newcomers participate in society, in its education system and labour market, as soon as possible. This will not succeed without the involvement of the entire society. The next paragraphs put forward some concrete proposals for Dutch integration policy at the levels of the national government, local communities and authorities, organizations and businesses.

Setting the preconditions

Policies for the integration of newcomers, especially refugees, should follow two tracks: 1) opportunities for language study and (voluntary) work upon arrival; and 2) a personal integration plan once a (temporary) residence permit has been granted.

The first track is primarily for asylum seekers who are waiting for a decision on their residence permit. They should get the chance to work on their future as soon as they arrive. The direct goal here is not integration into Dutch society, as some asylum seekers will not be granted a permit. The importance lies rather in making sure their waiting time is valuable. This could also help alleviate the specific situation of stateless people who often remain in limbo for a long time as no country will accept them. Allow people to gain experiences in the Netherlands that they can use in their future here or take with them to other destinations if they are not granted residency. This also encourages denied asylum seekers to cooperate with their departure. They

would not have to return empty-handed but bring new knowledge and skills that they can also deploy in their home country. In general, early interventions help advance both the integration of those who are allowed to stay and the return of those who must leave.[43]

The second track departs from mutual investments. Newcomers with a residence permit should have their own ***personal integration plan***, including language study, the possibility of (paid or volunteer) work and, if necessary, further education. These possibilities should be geared to the knowledge and skills newcomers have brought with them. It can be agreed with an Iraqi scientist, for instance, that she enrols in a Dutch crash course immediately, that arrangements will be made for the recognition of her diplomas and that she will acquire work experience in companies where her knowledge is useful. An illiterate refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo would rather take literacy and Dutch language classes in combination with volunteer work, for instance. Customisation also entails that we take into account the gender-specific aspects of integration. Far too often, women miss opportunities to integrate, due to their role in the family or low-level education in their home country. They will need additional attention if we are to increase their chances of participating in society.

Plans like these cannot do without secure facilities that any newcomer can depend on: accessible and affordable language classes, financial support for the translation of diplomas, and access to public facilities. In turn, the government may expect from newcomers that they make their own integration a success. If they consistently refuse, the government must be able to use penalties, such as benefit deductions. However, we prefer positive incentives. Newcomers who make good efforts, should get further opportunities, such as advanced language classes or interest-free loans to pursue higher education. The individual newcomer remains the point of departure. Some will find their way sooner than others. But all newcomers should have the chance to work on their own future from the day of arrival.

Engaging the entire society

Integration policies should be designed so that society as a whole can benefit. This requires widely accessible programmes for *anyone* who could use some support to participate in society. There should be language classes for refugees and for functionally illiterate citizens.[44] Traineeships and on-the-job-learning programmes should be available for newcomers as well as for

unemployed youth. Widely accessible also means low-threshold. People who struggle with self-reliance often get stuck in the complex bureaucracy of the welfare state.[45] Especially for this group of people, it is essential that support is not provided on yet another digital platform, but at an actual desk, next to a shopping centre, for instance or a school.

Widely accessible does not mean that all should enrol in the same programme. Different people need different kinds of support. It will not work to sit a Dutch national with low literacy next to a Syrian refugee in the same language class. But it is useful if they meet during breaks or on joined field trips. Interaction is crucial for effective integration. The proposed programmes should boost encounters between newcomers and other local residents. Even better is when they build on existing community initiatives.[46] The Netherlands has an extensive network of volunteers who help with, for instance, tutoring asylum children or teaching their parents to ride a bike. These types of activities do not only provide practical support. They above all, enable newcomers to experience everyday life in the Netherlands and get in touch with other members of the community they live in. This cannot be enforced by governmental policy. But it can be encouraged and be made more effective and durable.

Starting locally
Municipal authorities should be at the forefront of the integration of newcomers in their region. They must have a birds-eye view of the quality and accessibility of integration programmes. This will need sound and sufficient budgeting. **Integration costs money, but it saves even more in the end.** Investments in good local programmes for language classes or work guidance can help avoid newcomers becoming dependent on costly public facilities in the long-term. It is reasonable to ask newcomers to contribute financially to their own integration, but not at the expense of their personal situation. Contributions should align with their financial capabilities or take the form of a loan that can be repaid over a long term with low interest.

Companies and organisations are the mandatory links in local integration programmes. They should provide the internships, work experience placements and the on-the-job-learning programmes that can help newcomers to find paid work.[47] They can also act as coaches and share their experiences as entrepreneurs with newcomers who want to start their own businesses. This requires effort and coordination. We want municipalities to create (financial) incentives for employers who recruit newcomers or other residents who struggle to enter the labour market. The facilities for newcomers should

Local stories

In recent years, various Dutch municipalities have initiated their own integration programmes. The municipality of the city of Utrecht for instance, launched the **Einstein Plan** in collaboration with the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) to arrange for the housing of both asylum seekers and young adults in a neighbourhood with significant housing shortages. The plan included diverse and widely accessible programmes for all residents, including English and Dutch language classes, and courses in IT and business ownership. The result was that newcomers and local residents worked together towards their own and joint future in the district.

The city of Amsterdam decided to provide free language courses for motivated newcomers who intend to stay in the Netherlands for several years. The course takes approximately three months, with three hours of language classes per week, which also focus on job application skills and provide general information about the labour market. In collaboration with the Free University of Amsterdam, the municipality also conducted a pilot study of a **personal abilities scan** (NOA) for refugees. This scan entails the profiling of the refugee on the basis of self-reliance, (Dutch and English) language proficiency, learning ability, personality and personal competences. This profile can be used to design personal integration programmes. As an additional advantage, the data of the participating refugees can also be used in designing further integration policy.

The **Refugee Company**, also based in Amsterdam, offers another valuable perspective. Since early 2017, this non-profit organisation has collaborated with the LOLA Amsterdam Foundation for Solving Building Vacancies in establishing a location where newcomers can acquire work experience. The focus is on asylum applicants staying in a nearby reception centre. The Refugee Company gives them the opportunity to set up their own business activities or liaise with existing ones, such as a coffee bar, sewing shop or catering company. Above all, newcomers have the chance to adjust to the Dutch working climate. Some move on to other companies within the city or start their own business.

See: Ranzeberg and Noordhuizen (2016). *Beleid voor EU-migranten: Factsheet Gemeente Amsterdam* [EU migration policy: Fact Sheet of the Municipality of Amsterdam]; Interviews with the Einstein Plan project coordinator on May 9 and August 25, 2017; NOA. *Personal Profile Scan for Refugees*; Municipality of The Hague (2017); Visit to the *Refugee Company* on May 2, 2017; www.refugeecompany.com.

be designed to offer new opportunities to everyone. Regardless of whether someone is a refugee, a recent graduate unable to find work, or an experienced secretary who has been made redundant after twenty years on the job, they all should have the chance of finding rewarding work.

Conclusion

The Dutch approach to integrating newcomers has left a lot to be desired for quite some time. At the moment of writing, much of the described policies are still in place. New policies are being developed though. The main principles for this policy will likely be a personal integration plan with three different learning tracks:

1. A regular track in which newcomers will do an exam in Dutch language, general knowledge of Dutch society and the labour market, and norms and values;
2. An educational track that prepares for enrolment in college or university;
3. A self-reliance track for newcomers with (very) low levels of education, providing them with extra support in terms of literacy, for instance, and setting less stringent integration demands than the regular track.

Depending on a newcomers' personal abilities it will be up to the municipality to determine which track they will follow. A personal long-term plan for language classes, work guidance or studies will then be designed in mutual consultation. To an extent, this intended policy is in line with the paths towards a solution discussed in this chapter. Still missing however, is the link between the integration of newcomers and local communities. Also, it still remains to be seen if future policies will focus more on positive incentives instead of sanctions.

In the end, integration is something to be proud of, for both newcomers and society at large. It takes real effort to live together peacefully. Newcomers should be encouraged to make an effort just as other residents should be invited to engage in such efforts. It needs to be clear to all residents that they are worthy members of society. Access to good education, opportunities to work, knowledge of society and the state of law form the basic conditions for integration and the participation of everyone. These things cannot be left to private companies or community initiatives alone. The importance of integration is too great to be dependent on the number of available volunteers, donations or profit figures. It is up to the government to lay a firm foundation for the actual realisation of integration by communities, local businesses and, above all, the newcomers themselves.

Scandinavia: *Refugees at work*

by Patrick Joyce

*This paper was tabled at the plenary meeting of the Migration Policy Institute's Transatlantic Council on Migration held in Vienna on February 11–12, 2019, on "Rebuilding Community after Crisis: An Updated Social Contract for a New Migration Reality." An earlier version was published in MPI's Migration Information Source in February 2018 (*www.migrationinformation.org*).*

Introduction

Germany was the top destination country by far for refugees arriving in the years between 2014 and 2017. But much-smaller Sweden received more asylum applications in relation to its population. The other two Scandinavian countries – Norway and Denmark – also saw significant numbers of asylum seekers in relation to their small populations. Since then, Scandinavian countries have turned to the sizable task of integrating new arrivals into the labour market.

Refugees have struggled to find work in the Scandinavian countries. Figure 1 shows the employment rate (per cent) among adult refugees in Sweden, Denmark and Norway by years after arrival in the host country. As shown in Figure 1 only between 20 and 35 per cent of male refugees are working two years after arrival. The share in work increases with each year after arrival but employment generally plateaus after ten to fifteen years, significantly below the employment rate among the overall population. Female refugees need more time than males to find work. They usually have less schooling than their male counterparts and often bear children after arrival.[48] Employment among female refugees picks up after some time though.

Refugees have long faced several barriers to finding work in Scandinavia, including lower average levels of education than the domestic workforce, lack of host-country language skills, a limited professional network and discrimination.[49] These challenges, combined with the large number of arrivals in 2015–16, increased the willingness of Scandinavian governments to promote faster tracks to employment. In Denmark large reforms of integration policies were introduced in 2016. This led to substantial improvements in labour market outcomes.
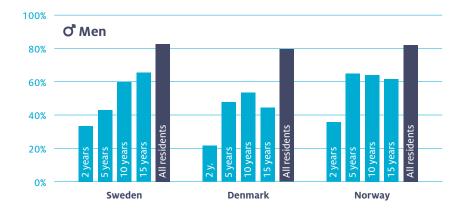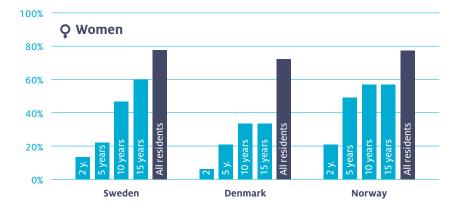
Figure 3.3

Employment rate of working age refugees by years of residence

Sources: SCB, 2016; Schultz-Nielsen, 2017; Bratsberg et al. 2017 and Eurostat, 2018c.

Figure 3.4

Compulsory integration programmes for refugees and Spouses 2018

	Denmark	Norway	Sweden
Responsible agent	Municipalities	Municipalities	Central government
Length	1 to 5 years	2 to 3 years	2 years
Components	Language and civic education, workforce training	Language and civic education, workforce training	Language and civic education, workforce training
Participants *(as of Jan 1, 2018)*	21 400	21 400	74 300
Tuition Charged	None	None	None
Economic support for participants* *(Extra allowances for housing and families)*	Means tested: Max 815 Euros per month before tax. 33 per cent of base salary	Fixed sum: 1 680 Euros per month before tax. 71 per cent of base salary	Fixed sum: 710 Euros per month after tax. 49 per cent of base salary
Required for permanent residence	Yes	Yes	No
In work 3 months after completing programme**	45 per cent	37 per cent	39 per cent
In education 3 months after completing programme	n.a	12 per cent	5 per cent

* Figures 2017. ** In Denmark the employment is measured after 3 years, the average duration of the integration programme.

Sources: Joyce, 2017; UIM, 2017; UIM, 2018a; IMDi, 2018 and Arbetsförmedlingen, 2018c.

Integration programmes in Scandinavia

Denmark and Norway allocate new refugees to selected municipalities and withdraw welfare payments from those who move before completing the integration programme. Sweden allows refugees to settle more freely. Recent arrivals tend to settle in metropolitan areas where job prospects are better, but housing is cramped, schools perform badly, and crime is high. Initiatives to control the settlement of new arrivals in Sweden are being prepared.[50]

Denmark, Norway, and Sweden provide full-time integration programmes for refugees, with benefit payments conditional upon their participation. The programmes contain language education combined with apprentice-

ships and internships, vocational training, and assistance from employment offices in finding work.

In Denmark and Norway, the municipalities are responsible for implementation of the integration programme while the central government provides funding and sets up general guidelines. The Danish government regulates municipal efforts in detail while Norwegian municipalities have more freedom.[51] Some municipalities favour private internships or public jobs to get working fast while others favour regular schooling. There are vast differences in integration outcomes between municipalities. In the best-performing towns refugees are employed at rates almost twice of those in the worst performing areas. The Norwegian government is not content with these differences and plans to make the integration programme more uniform across the country.[52]

The integration programmes are similar but the economic benefits for the participants differ considerably between the countries. In Denmark refugees receive a reduced means tested benefit 45 per cent lower than the basic social welfare for Danish residents.[53] In Sweden refugees who participate in the integration programme receive a fixed benefit 30 per cent higher than the basic social welfare. In Norway the benefit for participants is almost twice as high as the basic social welfare. If refugees are unemployed after the programme their benefits will be reduced to the basic level.[54]

The priorities differ somewhat between countries. In Norway more refugees are enrolled in regular education after the programme. In Denmark the overall priority is to find work as fast as possible.

Why do labour market outcomes for refugees in Scandinavia differ?
Refugees taking part in the Norwegian integration programme have so far fared better than in Denmark and Sweden. Since 2012 half of the refugees in Norway have found work or enrolled in education immediately after the programme.[55] In Denmark and Sweden, integration programmes have been less effective. Up until 2016 only one third of the participants found work or enrolled in education after the programme.

The outcomes in Denmark and Sweden have improved the last two years, luckily coinciding with the surge of new arrivals. In 2018, 45 per cent of participants were employed or in education after completing the programme in both countries. In Sweden a large degree of this improvement is due to

a surge of subsidized jobs in the public sector. While these jobs provide on the job training it is unlikely that more than a fraction of the refugees will remain employed when the subsidies run out.

'Since 2012 half of the refugees in Norway have found work or enrolled in education immediately after the integration programme'

In Denmark the share in non-subsidised employment after the integration programme has increased from 28 per cent in 2015 to 45 per cent in 2018. Among male refugees the employment rate is almost 60 per cent. This major improvement is due to some major reforms in 2016:

- First, in principle all newly arrived refugees are considered to be ready to work and required to take part in the integration programme on a full-time basis. Childcare is available free of charge for families with low incomes.
- Second, the programme is more closely linked to the labour market. Every participant must spend two days per week as an intern or trainee at a workplace. The rest of the week is divided among language training, civic orientation, and efforts to find longer-term work.
- Third, the Danish programme has been adapted more to the abilities of individual participants. Before 2016 the integration programme lasted three years for everyone. Now refugees with stronger skills or work abilities are expected to start working within a year, with additional language training available after work and on weekends. Refugees with no or very little schooling may stay in the programme for up to five years.
- Fourth, more economic incentives promote part-time work among refugees on welfare. They can keep a large share of the income they earn from work, while benefits are reduced for those who do not work at all.[56]

Lessons from Scandinavia on fostering successful labour market integration
The refugee influx in 2015–2016 tested the resilience of the integration systems in Scandinavia. So far it looks like they have met the challenge. Europe's population is aging, and the continent stands to benefit from the arrival of younger migrants but this requires further improvement of policies to shorten the time from arrival to work. Scandinavian countries offer several lessons in this respect.

Intervene early

The big increase in the number of asylum seekers in 2015–2016 led to long waiting periods before the asylum seekers had their claims reviewed. Long waiting periods are stressful and can negatively impact the psychological health of asylum seekers, which in turn can have serious implications for their ability to integrate. All Scandinavian countries try to make use of the waiting time in the asylum centres to start the integration process and offer some language training and civic orientation to asylum seekers. Asylum seekers can have their education and work skills assessed and even work during the waiting period. Norway allows asylum seekers deemed to have good prospects of having their claims approved to start the full integration programme.[57] Special asylum centres (*Integreringsmottak*) are dedicated for this group in the municipalities where they will be settled if their claims are granted to help them continue their training uninterrupted.[58]

'In Denmark, vocational training is combined with internships in fields with high labour demand. In Sweden, refugees find work through a programme that subsidizes salaries in the first years.'

Focus on host-country language skills

Proficiency in the language of the host country is very important in finding a job.[59] This has become increasingly true as entry-level jobs are predominantly in the service sector rather than in manufacturing. While some service jobs may be performed with only knowledge of English, public service jobs in sectors such as childcare and elderly care require proficiency in the host-country language. All three countries are struggling to improve results in the language training courses. The big challenge has been to provide courses tailored to refugees with very different native languages and education backgrounds that range from holding university degrees to having limited literacy skills. Combining language education with employment training, preferably in the workplace, has shown to be effective.[60] Both Denmark and Norway require refugees to pass basic language tests before they are eligible for permanent residence. Denmark pays cash bonuses to refugees who pass their language tests and grants permanent residence faster to those who pass a more advanced test. Since these incentives where introduced the share of

refugees who pass the language test within five years of arrival has increased from 60 to 70 per cent.[61]

Provide bridges to regular work

The Scandinavian countries have high entry-level salaries, which makes it harder for newcomers to find their first job. Public support for a general reduction in entry-level wages to create more jobs has so far been low; subsidized jobs for new migrants have been provided instead. Evaluations have shown that subsidized jobs in the private sector provide a better route to regular jobs than public sector job programmes.[62] In Denmark and Sweden the state, employers and trade unions have agreed on new temporary trainee positions for refugees in the private sector with either lower wages or a state subsidy to reduce labour costs. The positions are in industry and in the service sector and can last up to two years. One successful Danish programme (*Branchepakker*) combines vocational training with multiple internships in a field with high labour demand, most commonly in the service-sector industries.[63] A Swedish programme that pays half of the salary for two years for private employers who hire newly arrived refugees has helped many to qualify for permanent work. In late 2018 21,000 refugees were employed through this system.

Make better use of refugees' skills

Even if the average level of education is low among refugees there are sizeable groups with education or practical skills in high demand. Educated migrants usually find work fast but risk getting stuck in jobs below their skill level.[64]

Initiatives to recognise foreign credentials have been effective and so have bridging courses when adopted on a smaller scale.[65] The Swedish government has allocated funds to scale up these initiatives. Especially promising is the so-called Fast Track programme targeting newcomers with skills in 14 high-demand professions, including chefs, lorry drivers, construction workers, engineers, nurses, and teachers. The Fast Track programme contains skill assessment, tailored language and vocational training and internships, to help them resume their profession in Sweden. So far, 7,000 newly arrived refugees have taken part. Half of them found regular work in their profession within 20 months. The programme is only available for newly arrived refugees but plans are in place to offer it to refugees who have lived in Sweden longer but still are unemployed or in jobs that do not utilize their qualifications.[66]

Conclusion

The Scandinavian experience shows that the labour migrant integration of refugees is a slow process. Looking ahead, the most important priority will be to shorten the length of time that elapses from when newcomers arrive to when they get their first job, especially for refugee women, whose employment outcomes lag behind those of their male counterparts. Experiences from all three countries have shown that early interventions (such as assessing skills early in the asylum process, or even providing some asylum seekers with access to a full-time integration programme) and language and vocational training that are tailored to the labour market can produce significant improvements in that sense. Efforts to support the participation of refugee women (such as providing childcare, improving outreach, and providing fast-track services for more female-dominated professions) in integration programming can in turn help narrow the gender gap.

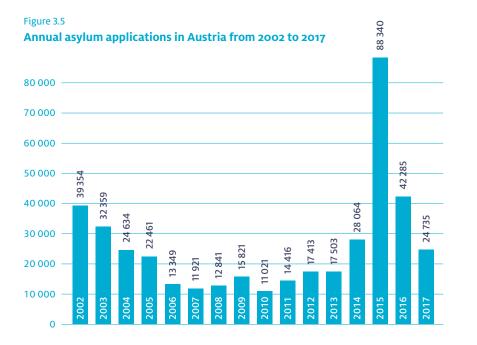# Austria: *National defunding, local innovations*

by Dieter Feierabend

A glance at the history of integration policy in Austria shows that it has long been ignored at the federal level and discussed in a polarising discourse. In its current conservative political climate, local initiatives and communities have however become the innovators of pragmatic integration of refugees.

"When I talked about integration twenty years ago, people thought I was talking about inclusion of peoples with disability" – this quote by Kenan Güngör, one of Austria's leading integration experts, sums up Austrian integration policy very well. For a long time, Austria – as well as Germany – held on to the idea of guest workers (German "Gastarbeiter"): immigrants who would one day return to their country of origin. As a result, neither the government nor society at large felt the need to either monitor or develop integration policies.

The municipalities have proved to be pioneers of integration policy in Austria's federal political system. At the local level, the task of integrating migrants, especially with regards to housing, was already perceived as a new field of action in the 1990s. A few years later, integration policies also advanced to the regional states ("Länder"). In 2006, Tyrol was the first state in Austria to develop its own integration mission statement. At the federal level, however, it took until 2008 for integration policies to be incorporated into the government programme. The 2010 presented national action plan for integration (NAP.I) is considered as a first cornerstone of integration policy.

Migration as winning election theme (for the right)
For a long time, integration policy was considered as a highly contested, yet minor policy field. This changed dramatically in 2015, with the influx of asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Annual asylum applications in Austria from 2002 to 2017

Source: Austrian Department of Interior

As seen in the figure above, the number of asylum applications has more than tripled in 2015. With 10,4 applications per capita (for comparison, the Netherlands had 2,7) Austria was one of the major destination countries during the peak years of 2015–2017. This sharp increase exposed not only the weaknesses of the Austrian asylum system (some asylum seekers had to sleep outdoors in initial reception centres for weeks), but also of the integration system. Austrian municipalities were simply overwhelmed with the admission of people entitled to asylum. Especially the lack of housing was a major issue. Similarly, both the school system and the labour market service were massively overstrained. Spontaneous networks of engaged citizens like "Train of Hope" supported asylum seekers upon arrival in Austria. While such initiatives where usually short lived (most of them dissolved after a couple of months), many citizens continued to support the people who came to Austria in 2015. One example: since the Austrian integration system had too few German courses to give all refugees the opportunity to learn German, retired teachers offered German courses for free.

While the initial response of Austrians was overwhelmingly positive, the dysfunctional asylum- and integration system, combined with the absence of a coordinated asylum-approach on a European level, led to feelings of powerlessness. A fundamental change in mood could be observed after the New Year's Eve sexual assaults in Germany in 2015/16. Until then, there had been occasional reports of sexual assaults by asylum seekers and status holders in Austria. Now, it developed into a dominant issue for Austrian media and society. Tabloid papers and the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) portrayed migrants as uneducated and criminal. They would not share "Austrian values" and only move to Austria because of its "generous welfare system". Research about the asylum seekers who arrived in Austria in 2015 shows a quite different picture.[67] Most hold less traditional values than their compatriots and have a predominantly middle-class, well-educated background. Meanwhile it cannot be concluded from statistics that crime figures actually rose due to migration.

Yet, during the 2017 general election campaign the Freedom Party (FPÖ) ran predominantly on issues of migration and integration. It promised an end to "the asylum wave" and that "unfair and undeserved social assistance claims" for migrants would be cut. Then Foreign and Integration Minister Sebastian Kurz, the newly elected leader of the Conservative People's Party (ÖVP), campaigned on the "closure of the Western Balkan route". On the other side of the debate, the Green Party with MEP Ulrike Lunacek as their leader, campaigned on a "refugees welcome" platform, arguing for a continuation of a liberal asylum policy and few integration rules. The Greens heavily criticised the policies of Kurz and the FPÖ as populist and sometimes racist, claiming its integration approach led to a division of society.

Integration in practice: national defunding vs. local investments
Both ÖVP and FPÖ achieved significant electoral gains on Election Day and the "grand coalition" of social democrats (SPÖ) and conservatives was replaced by an ÖVP-FPÖ government. The conservative-far right government

defunded integration policies such as language courses. It also tightened already restrictive asylum policies and introduced a new social welfare scheme. Welfare benefits are now linked with language skills (which most asylum status holders cannot possibly have) and without minimum standards for food, clothes, personal hygiene, household items, heating, electricity or personal needs. Furthermore, Austria today deports well-integrated rejected asylum seekers, who are in training and education, even if a majority of them are working in fields with labour shortages. A majority of those have lived in Austria for four years or longer as they waited for a decision on their status. Currently, the government is debating a "maximum hourly wage" of €1,50 for working asylum seekers to "secure Austrian jobs" and a "protective custody" for potentially "dangerous migrants" who did not commit a crime.

'Mayors built an informal cross-party integration network'

In this polarising environment one remarkable development is often overlooked. Several mayors built an informal cross-party network, sharing information and best-practice examples for successful integration. Some municipalities in Vorarlberg for example, offer asylum status holders subsidized housing for up to three years. If every adult household member reaches a minimum knowledge of German, the lease will be renewed indefinitely. It is up to them at which pace they learn and if they participate in government funded language classes or – for example – through civil society initiatives. This approach has helped encouraging especially female asylum status holders to learn German. Furthermore, it has helped labour market integration of status holders due to better language skills.

Other examples are the Regional Competence Centres of Integration (ReKis) in Upper Austria. These centres support hosting communities and municipal authorities in their integration activities. Their core mandate is the facilitation of regional and communal integration processes through moderation of workshops, the establishment of social and professional networks, capacity building and dissemination of information for newcomers about integration programmes.

What makes a liberal integration policy
The examples of Vorarlberg and Upper Austria show what should be the core of liberal integration policy: self-determination and freedom. In a society that focuses on individual liberties, one cannot regulate all aspects of social life through laws and regulations. What we can and should regulate are the values on which our society is built: liberal democracy, freedom of speech, self-determination and human rights. These values are not only core to Austrian society, but to all EU-member states that have confirmed the EU Treaty of Lisbon. Importantly, an overwhelming majority of migrants share these values! At the end of the day, it is not our origin, age or gender that unites us, but our common goals and attitudes.

The aim of integration policy should be that all people living in our countries can sustain themselves and participate independently in a society based on our shared European values. Therefore, we should expect all residents of Europe to respect these core values. However, no one must shed their origin or their cultural roots. Simultaneously, it is important for immigrants to get to know the social and cultural habits in their new host countries. For in everyday reality, habits, rather than values, tend to be the cause of social conflict.

Integration is not a single step that a person takes, but a process. That is why the political framework of how we – as a society – shape integration is at the heart of everything we must do. From a liberal point of view, integration policy is binding for every citizen and is intended to enable immigrants to live their own live. Therefore, liberals should make the case for a clear integration management system. It should be based on three pillars:

A comprehensive integration law that defines responsibilities and competences at all government levels. At present, quite often only informal and weak structures exist. They often serve only appearances. The federal level needs its own Integration Ministry with strong links in all relevant ministries working together in a network. This network needs to involve both civil society and academia.

Special legislation for newcomers should be limited. When it comes to integration, politicians quite often tend to craft special legislation that targets only a small subgroup. In Austria, for example, many children do not have sufficient language skills when they enter the schooling system. Special legislation exists to support language training of certain groups of children, for instance with migrant backgrounds. However, as research shows, a majority of children with language deficits have Austrian backgrounds. A liberal solution would be to craft one legislation tackling language defi-

cits of all children. At the end of the day the origins should not matter. The current practices serve neither transparency nor traceability. Therefore, in the future, there should only be special legislation for target groups in case of urgent need. The principle must apply: As many general laws as reasonable, as few special laws as necessary.

Comprehensive assessment of all integration activities with clear target measures is needed. Successful integration means that the needs (i.e. social benefits) in some areas will decrease over time. This will only be achieved with an activating integration policy and not just "simple care", which leads to a "learned helplessness." Integration policy must be knowledge-based, needs oriented, empowering, effective, efficient and sustainable. This needs to be closely monitored and evaluated.

Ultimately, integration policy in its core should be about freedom and self-determination. Unfortunately, the left/right polarisation had led to an environment in which liberals across Europe have lost their self-confidence when it comes to advocating this core of integration. But who, if not liberals, are perfectly equipped to deliver policies on the basis of individual freedom? It is time for a change, a liberal one.

Epilogue: **Living together in diversity**

by Bart Somers
Mayor of Mechelen, Belgium

There are numerous benefits of living together in diversity. Socially, people of different cultures can enrich each other. Economically, new residents can contribute to our welfare state. But honestly, all that does not matter. Super diverse cities are a fact, whether you like it or not.

In Mechelen, people of 138 different origins live together in peace. One in two children has a foreign background. It is of no use to complain about this, as it is the given reality. Our job is to tackle potential challenges and to make migration a success story. The Mechelen Model is all about creating an inclusive society, where all citizens identify themselves with the society they live in. Because when feeling part of a society, you will not attack that same society. That is why no one from Mechelen went to fight in Syria, while the neighbouring cities had a lot of radicalised citizens who did leave: Vilvoorde (27), Antwerp (93) and Molenbeek (47).

As citizens of Mechelen, we share one identity. That does not mean people cannot have more identities. It is possible to feel Belgian, European, Muslim, liberal, brother, lawyer, and homosexual, all at the same time. The primacy of the individual, and its freedom to be who he or she wants to be, is a principle of the Enlightenment that we as liberals must defend at all times.

This is crucial because when you start labelling people, it automatically creates a situation of animosity, where it is one group versus the other. Role models

and success stories are ignored, because they do not fit into the polarising narrative of "us versus them". As liberals, it is our task to change this, because exactly those role models motivate new generations and destroy prejudices.

The Mechelen Model has gained an international reputation. Cities like Berlin and Stockholm visit Mechelen to see this multilevel approach of living together in diversity. For example, socially strong people who normally are not eligible to obtain a social home are allowed to live there, but in return they have to contribute socially to that neighbourhood. In short, they empower the neighbourhood with the social capital they possess. They organise barbecues and gatherings, they help children with their schoolwork, they support new residents to apply for jobs and they make sure people know their neighbours. Because when people know each other, they do not fear each other.

That is the reason why mixed schools and mixed sport clubs are so important. In Mechelen, there was a time when white upper class residents rather preferred to send their children to a school far away then close to home, due to the fact that there were too many children with foreign backgrounds. And vice versa, people with migrant backgrounds did not send their kids to schools where there were only upper class children. With the project "School in Sight" we made it a priority to convince these parents that this is not a good long-term strategy. You do not want your children to grow up in a city with segregated schools and segregated neighbourhoods. And it works both ways. School in Sight convinces several parents at once to enrol their children in a school nearby so their children do not feel alone. By persuading a large group of parents at the same time you break the barrier of mono-cultural schools.

Now, young children of mixed backgrounds play, learn, and live together. Therefore, the next generation will cope much better with super diverse realities than my generation. They will not know anything else. For them, a friend with a darker skin is just as much a citizen of this city. And that's how it is supposed to be.

I refuse to speak with the populist rhetoric as some of the other politicians. When a drug dealer happens to be a Muslim, my actions and communication do not change. His religion is not important in this situation. When a Belgian mother joins ISIS in Syria with her young son, I want to save her kid, because as a liberal mayor I see it as my responsibility.

That does not mean you have to be soft. On the contrary, citizenship comes with obligations. If you want to live here, you have to obey certain rules and you have to be willing to work and to learn our language. We increased the budget of the police force and we invested a lot of money in cameras. Crime control is a priority, because there cannot be freedom without safety. Populists do not see the difference between being soft and being human. Liberals do.

'Because when people know each other, they do not fear each other'

In 2016, my city voluntarily took in 200 refugees. And we will do it again. Not because we are pro-open borders, but because we believe in human rights. Most of the refugees will have to return to their home countries. But in the meantime we give them a bed and some clothes. Their children can go to school and make friends. Adults can do voluntary work. We have a civilian initiative called "Welcome in Mechelen". This is an organisation created by citizens who actively engage to help out refugees while they are here. This makes me proud and I am not the only one.

In 2008, only 64 per cent of the people were proud to be a citizen of Mechelen. Today that number has risen to 81 per cent. Now 35 per cent of the people in our city has a positive attitude towards other cultures. In 2011, it was only 21 per cent of the people in Mechelen. Ten years ago, an extreme right party obtained more than 30 per cent of the votes in my city. In the last elections, that same party had less than 10 per cent. This is the result of all our investments. We cleaned the streets, we created green parks, we built community houses, we developed beautiful care centres, and we improved our public service. When people are proud to live in our city and they meet each other in the public space, this benefits the social cohesion.

As liberals, we do not use politics of fear to win elections. We use politics of hope and optimism, without ever losing sight of reality.

Summary

Migration is intrinsic to Europe – both historically and currently. Migration is not a problem in and of itself, but it does pose real challenges. Over the past years migration to Europe has been badly managed and this has lead to uncertainty. For people who seek to come to Europe, migration routes are unclear and unsafe. For people who already live in Europe, there is no sense of control over which newcomers will join their society, for how long and how. Uncertainty leads to tensions and, more often than not, to the tendency of reverting to extreme measures: close the borders, stop all migrants. If such measures have any effect, it tends to be diverting. Migration flows are stemmed in one place, only to emerge or increase in another place.

As progressive liberals we do not seek to stem migration movements. We want to regulate migration so that all people concerned – newcomers and local communities – can benefit. We see *migration as a dynamic process*. It changes constantly and comes with challenges as well as opportunities. If left unregulated, migration can be very disrupting. It can put pressure on local labour markets, feed social tensions and enhance inequality. But when regulated well, migration can also boost economies, help communities flourish and allow people to improve their livelihoods.

This publication sets out a vision for how Europe can make the best of its migration reality. It is based on *three foundations*. The first is human dignity. All people, regardless of their background, should be able to build a dignified life

for themselves. People who are persecuted should be given shelter. Equal opportunities form the second foundation. People should be given the chance to build a dignified life at home and elsewhere. This includes safe migration routes and possibilities work and study abroad. Once admitted to a European country, newcomers should be treated just like any other resident of that country. The third foundation encompasses the mutual solidarity between countries and people, now and in the future. International agreements are necessary to ensure humane and transparent management of migration and refugee flows, today and in the future.

On the basis of this vision, we turn to policy practice on two topics: 1) EU asylum and 2) integration of newcomers. On the first topic we see major problems in existing EU asylum policy. There is too little solidarity, too much coercion and short-term crisis management. A ***future-proof EU asylum system*** should build on shared responsibility. For this, we propose: replacing the Dublin Regulation with a solidarity-based distribution mechanism; rewarding member states and asylum applicants when they cooperate and not just sanctioning when they refuse; and creating more legal pathways for asylum and migration to the EU. Key to all these proposals is their focus on long-term collaboration. Member states will only be able to control migration flows if they work together on current challenges as well as their root causes.

'Wellicht hier nog een quote om het af te ronden. Mooi als hij over 3 regels kan lopen; dus zo'n 30 woorden lang zal fijn zijn voor het opvullen'

Long-term policies are also necessary when it comes to the second topic of integration. In many European countries, newcomers today make a false start. They struggle with low education levels, unemployment and isolation. ***Effective integration policies*** require a certain way of thinking and serious investments. This becomes clear when we look at recent integration policies in the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Austria. Each country has its own trajectory. Common challenges are found when integration is defunded: newcomers get further marginalised and dependent on welfare. In addition, we see a common thread in best practices: investing in language courses and employment at the municipality level in a way that all residents, new or not, can benefit.

The publication ends with a strong urge for liberal politics of hope. Speaking as mayor of the Belgian city of Mechelen, Bart Somers calls for liberals to embrace the diversity that migration brings to our European cities and towns. It requires optimism while keeping sight of reality. Migration is our shared European reality. Frictions between people from different backgrounds have been and will be part of that reality. Liberals should not shun them, but make sure that people engage, that all get opportunities and that all can feel proud to live in Europe.

Foundations for a progressive liberal vision on migration

Highlights **Chapter 1**

Point of departure
A society that is prepared for the reality of migration. It is clear who is allowed to enter and who may stay or who may not. Newcomers will be given opportunities to build a decent life for themselves. Countries share the responsibility of providing migrants prospects for the future within and outside of their home region.

Human dignity
A progressive liberal stance on migration is rooted in the premise of human dignity. A person's background may never be a reason for persecution. If people are persecuted, they should be allowed to find refuge in a safe country. Asylum seekers and people migrating for other reasons should always be treated humanely. This is a shared responsibility of people and the countries in which they live. ***Freedom comes with solidarity***: each person's liberties and opportunities are linked with those of others. This implies reciprocity: we treat each other as we ourselves would like to be treated, whether here or elsewhere in the world. That is why we stand for:

• The safeguarding of the inalienable rights of all people at all times;

• Humane reception of refugees in their home regions and in the EU;

• Equal opportunities for newcomers to participate in society.

Equal opportunities
We firmly believe in newcomers' ability to participate in and contribute to society. Once it is decided that they may reside in the destination country, newcomers should receive equal opportunities to build their own lives there. The government has a role to play. It should create the right conditions in which newcomers can learn the language, study, understand their legal rights and obligations in society, find a decent job, and live in affordable homes. This is only fair and it is in the general interest that newcomers quickly become self-reliant residents. Opportunities come with strings attached. ***Like any other resident, we expect newcomers to***:

• Respect the fundamental freedom and equality of all people;

• Abide by the laws and legislation of the destination country;

• Make efforts to provide for themselves.

Durable international collaboration
Migration is not an isolated, national or short-term affair. We see it as an international responsibility to provide refugees with shelter and regulate current and future migration. Countries cannot manage this entirely on their own. Migration is ever changing and, by definition, transnational. That is why we strive for international collaboration focused on long-term solutions. We seek to tackle the underlying causes and think ahead. We want to invest in the potential of migration in a pragmatic way. ***Today's migrants may be tomorrow's entrepreneurs***. If managed well, they can contribute to growth, for instance in rural areas that struggle with depopulation, or tap into new markets in their native and new country. This requires international collaboration focused on:

• Joint agreements about the humane reception and resettlement of refugees;

• Well-managed regular migration routes and safe pathways to asylum;

• Investing in migrants' countries of origin, fair trade, and good governance.

A durable EU asylum policy

Point of departure
EU member states share the responsibility for the reception of refugees, control of external borders, and regular migration routes.

Fair management and distribution of asylum applications in the EU
Member states should have a joint, humane and transparent policy for the reception of refugees and for migration regulation. ***Countries are interdependent***, with an ensuing responsibility for people in need and for the communities that provide them with shelter. Rather than shirking our duty by leaving refugee relief to EU border countries or neighbouring regions, we tackle it together. Such common policies should be verifiable and transparent for EU residents as well as asylum seekers. It should be clear to all who may stay and who must return. In terms of implementation, we seek to:

- Replace 'Dublin' by an EU asylum allocation mechanism based on solidarity;
- Jointly coordinate border controls and asylum procedures;
- Implement uniform procedures for the registration and reception of asylum seekers;
- Make legally binding readmission agreements with safe countries, embedded in development policy.

Focus on positive reinforcement
When implementing a new EU asylum system, we acknowledge the vastly differing views of member states and the great diversity among asylum seekers. The focus should be on ***motivation rather than coercion***. With positive reinforcement, we encourage member states to adhere to the system. Compliance with agreements is rewarded. We want to create better possibilities for mobility and mutually beneficial matches between refugees and their countries of settlement. Yet, we remain realistic. The primary goal is to share one common asylum policy with all member states. This means that strict sanctions are sometimes called for or that we have to take a step back and collaborate on a smaller scale. We propose the following steps:

- A pioneer group of member states implements the new asylum system: other member states are free to join at any time. 'Free-riding' is halted and transparency is safeguarded;
- Rewards for complying member states and swift measures when they refuse;
- Matching refugees and member states, contingent on labour market supply and demand.

Invest in regular migration routes
A truly future-proof asylum policy is focused on the root causes. People will continue to migrate when they feel that their home country holds no future for them. That is why we want to make sure that (potential) migrants can ***regain trust*** in a possible future in their home country, or elsewhere if necessary. On the one hand, we invest in countries of origin so that people no longer need to leave. On the other, we ensure that if people want to leave, they can do so safely and in a way that contributes to their new society. We advocate:

- More attainable visas to come to the EU temporarily for work or study;
- Smart support for reception of refugees in their home region, focused on employment, and education;
- Stronger local economies, education, and government in migrants' countries of origin.

Effective integration policies

Point of departure
Newcomers should be empowered to quickly become self-reliant residents in their new home country. Their integration should be facilitated in such a way that the entire society benefits.

Build on newcomers' strengths
Integration relies on newcomers' individual abilities. They have already taken a major step by leaving their country of origin, which they could not have done without determination and persistence. The host society should build on that strength. This requires solid integration policies that provide newcomers with opportunities to start their new life from the day of arrival. Opportunities should be tailored to people's diverse needs and abilities. We see two directions for newcomers:

- Upon arrival: direct access to language programmes and opportunities for (voluntary) work;

- Once residence is granted: a personal plan combining language, work, study, and rule of law.

Involve society as a whole
Integration starts with the newcomer, but it is never about the individual alone. It is par excellence a matter of the entire community. The best way for newcomers to practice a new language is to do so among native speakers of this language. Integration touches upon broad social issues. It is about participation in the labour market and having sufficient language skills and schooling *so that everyone can keep up* with our increasingly complex society. Any citizen can struggle with these issues. Integration programmes should, therefore, be designed to benefit everyone. We propose local programmes where all residents, newcomers or otherwise, can find:

- Language lessons for various users, from illiterate citizens to university educated newcomers;

- Work counselling and work experience programmes at local businesses and organisations;

- Grassroots initiatives through which newcomers can engage with the community.

Advance integration locally
Apart from the efforts of community members and the newcomers themselves, the support of government and businesses is paramount to the integration process. We advocate clear national standards as to what society expects from newcomers and what they can expect from society. But *municipalities should be in charge* the implementation integration programmes and engage local businesses, institutions, and organisations. Businesses are crucial for arranging work experience placements required for people to (re-)enter the labour market. Local government should help match supply and demand, remove bureaucratic obstacles and provide financial support where necessary. Considerable public investments are necessary to safeguard the basic conditions for integration: language, employment, and understanding one's rights and obligations in society. Investments should be made so that they benefit the entire society, for instance in:

- Labour market participation through more work experience places and entrepreneurial coaching;

- Less bureaucracy and more possibilities to combine work, studies and family care;

- Community programmes with focus on language, work and interaction.

EU asylum policies and definitions

In 1999, the Common European Asylum Policy (CEAS) was established in two stages. One of the main issues in the initial construction was the protection of fundamental rights. More emphasis was placed on security later. The first stage concerned the harmonisation of common minimum standards. A common asylum procedure and a uniform protection status would be introduced across the EU in the second stage. But the objective of a uniform and common procedure has not been achieved yet. Key elements of existing EU asylum legislation include:

UN Convention on Refugees (1951) has been a key point of departure for EU asylum policy. Especially important is the principle of non-refoulement (Article 33): States may not send people back to countries where they fear persecution because of their ethnic origin, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or their political convictions. Both the UN Refugee Convention and the principle of non-refoulement have been incorporated in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The **Dublin Regulation** was adopted in 2013 as a means to assign responsibility for the assessment of an asylum application to a single EU member state on the basis of objective criteria. Its third version is now in force. The criteria for responsibility are (in hierarchical order): the presence of family members, possession of a residence document or visa from a particular member state, or the entering of, or residence in, a member state. The most commonly applied criterion though is illegal entry or residence in a member state.

Article 16 of the Dublin Regulation obliges a member state to which it assigns responsibility to take back asylum seekers from a non-responsible state. That member state must subsequently assess the application for asylum. The system ensures that an asylum seeker cannot lodge an application in more than one member state and that an asylum seeker arriving in a member state that is not responsible, is sent back to the member state that is responsible.

The **Asylum Procedures Directive** guarantees asylum seekers access to a procedure and procedural safeguards before, during and after the procedure. The first directive (2005) contained vague rules that were often not adhered to. The safeguards have been honed in the new directive (2015), particularly the possibility of an effective legal remedy against a decision on the asylum application.

The **Reception Conditions Directive** states the conditions for the reception of asylum seekers in member states. It guarantees access to housing, food, education, care and employment and aims to ensure their equal treatment as well as prevent them from continuing their journey. The directive leaves the member states a great deal of leeway for its implementation. An example is the access to the labour market: member states are free to arrange this for themselves.

The **Qualification Directive** defines a refugee (in keeping with the UN Refugee Convention) and persons eligible for protection on other grounds. The 2011 directive also offers subsidiary protection, that is to say, that an asylum seeker is not granted refugee status, but is allowed to stay in the member state if there is a risk of serious harm upon return to the country of origin.

EURODAC Regulation is the EU fingerprint database to identify asylum seekers and people who cross the border illegally. This enables the implementation of the Dublin Regulation – as it enables authorities to determine whether asylum seekers have already applied for asylum in or transited through another EU state.

Most of the above regulatory instruments (except for the Dublin Regulation) are directives and only serve to provide minimum standards. The idea was that member states would adopt them as the lowest standards and would feel inclined to do more. The result has been quite the opposite: many member states adopted them as they were and refused a higher degree of harmonisation or protection.

Key actors in the EU asylum system

European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
established in 2010

The European Asylum Support Office assists in the design and implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Member states and their migration services are encouraged to utilise its know-how and practical support. If countries are under considerable pressure, the office also provides support in the processing of asylum applications and in the construction and designation of reception centres. In turn, the member states and the European Commission are represented on the EASO Board.

European Asylum Agency (EUAA)
as proposed by the European Commission in 2016

In 2016, the European Commission presented its proposal to strengthen the role of EASO and turn it into the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). This agency is supposed to play a larger role in shaping the Common European Asylum System. The proposed regulation boosts its role in technical and operational support, the collection of information and analysis, including on countries of origin, but also coordination of practical cooperation to enhance convergence of asylum practices amongst member states. Negotiations on the proposal to establish the EUAA are still on-going.

European Border and Coast Guard Agency
commonly referred to as Frontex

The EBCG Agency was established in 2014 and its mandate and tasks have slowly been extended in order for it to transform into a fully-fledged EU Agency. The Agency does not have its own equipment or border guards, but it coordinates operational cooperation between member states. The new Commission proposal of September 2018 proposes to expand its tasks, budget, competencies and budget significantly: it proposes a massive budget increase to 12 billion euros and the creation of a standing corps of 10.000 EU border guards by 2020. The Commission sees a crucial role for the Agency in return operations and it introduces cooperation between the European Asylum Agency and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency by the way of the deployment of migration management support teams at hotspots.

European Council

The European Council defines the EU's overall political direction and priorities. It is not one of the EU's legislating institutions, so does not negotiate or adopt EU laws. Instead it sets the EU's policy agenda, traditionally by adopting 'conclusions' during European Council meetings that identify issues of concern and actions to take. The members of the European Council are the heads of state or government of the 28 EU member states, the European Council President and the President of the European Commission.

European Commission

The European Commission is the EU's politically independent executive arm. It is alone responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation, and it implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. It consists of a team or 'College' of Commissioners, 1 from each EU country.

European Parliament

The European Parliament is the EU's law-making body. It is directly elected by EU voters every 5 years. There are 751 MEPs (Members of the European Parliament).

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Endnotes

1 For more about progressive liberalism, see: Brummer (2019). *Wat is social-liberalisme?* [What does progressive liberalism stand for?]

2 UNHCR (1951). *Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees*. [Commonly referred to as the Geneva Refugee Convention.

3 ECRE (2017). EU Migration policy and returns: Case study on Afghanistan, Pp. 19.

4 Lucassen (2006). Gelijkheid en onbehagen: De wortels van het integratiedebat in West-Europa [Equality and discomfort: The roots of the debate on integration in West Europe].

5 SCP Netherlands Institute for Social Research (2016). *Integratie in zicht?* [Integration in sight?]. Pp. 211–213.

6 Hannah Postel, Cynthia Rathinasamy and Michael Clemens (2015). "Europe's refugee crisis is not as big as you've heard, and not without recent precedent". *Center for Global Development*.

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8 Eurostat (2019), "Asylum and First Time Asylum Applicants by Citizenship, Age and Sex."

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10 Flahaux and Haas (2016). "African migration: trends, patterns, drivers". *Comparative Migration Studies*, 4 (1); UNHCR (2017). "Uganda and UN to convene 'solidarity summit' amid fast-growing refugee emergency." 21 June 2017.

11 Van Mierlo Stichting (2018). *Basic Values of Progressive Liberalism: A European Perspective*. Pp. 123

12 Van Mierlo Stichting (2018). *Basic Values of Progressive Liberalism: A European Perspective*. Pp. 26.

13 For example, more than half of the Somalis who were granted a residence permit in the Netherlands in the 2000s travelled directly to England as soon as they had obtained a European passport. Regioplan (2010). *Somaliërs in Nederland: Een verkenning van hun maatchappelijke positie en aanknopingspunten voor het beleid*. [Somalis in the Netherlands: An exploration of their social position and starting points for policy.] Pp. 12.

14 Van Mierlo Stichting (2018). *Basic Values of Progressive Liberalism: A European Perspective*. Pp. 42.

15 Dietz and Haas, "Wen er maar aan! Migratie en ontwikkeling, een ongemakkelijke boodschap." [Get used to it! Migration and development, an uncomfortable message].

16 In 2007, this right was officially recognised in the Lisbon Treaty that came into effect in 2009 and has been ratified by all the member states. For the definition of a refugee, the Lisbon Treaty refers to the UN Refugee Convention. EU (2007). *Lisbon Treaty*. Chapter 2. Art. 63.

17 An estimated 99,864 refugees arrived in Europe by sea between January and June of 2017. UNHCR (2017). *Europe: Key data Q1+Q2*; An estimated 99,864 refugees arrived in Europe by sea between January and June of 2017. UNHCR (2017). *Italy: Sea arrivals dashboard*.

18 Raphaëlle Faure, Mikaela Gavas and Anna Knoll (2015). *Challenges to a comprehensive EU migration and asylum policy*. See also Appendix II for an overview of the EU asylum system.

19 Heijer, Rijpma and Spijkerboer (2016). "Coercion, prohibition, and great expectations."

20 Illustrative is the agreement that EU member states would accept asylum seekers from Greece and Italy, among others, under a quota system. A mere 5% of the total number of allocated asylum seekers were actually relocated under this system. That is 8,000 of the 160,000 refugees designated for relocation. European Commission (2016). *Factsheet Relocation and Settlement*.

21 As for another example, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic declared in September 2015 that any proposal for mandatory and permanent quotas for refugee accommodation would be unacceptable. See: Visegrádgroep (2015). *Joint statement of the Heads of Government of the Visegrad Group countries*. 4 September 2015.

22 Heijer, Rijpma and Spijkerboer (2016). "Coercion, prohibition, and great expectations." Pp. 6.

23 Carrera et al. (2015). *The EU's response to the refugee crisis*.

24 Eurostat (2016). *Asylum statistics*; Rica, Glitz and Ortega (2013). *Immigration in Europe*. Pp. 5–7, 94.

25 An example is the so-called 'European Blue Card'. Only highly-skilled migrants have a chance of coming to an EU member state through this scheme. But they are discouraged by complex procedures which may vary from one member state to another. See: Desiderio (2016). "Blue card redux."

26 Labour migration between Spain and Morocco fell sharply due to tighter border controls around Gibraltar and stagnating economic growth. Enríquez and Ramón (2010). *Circular migration between Spain and Morocco?*

27 See Annex I for an overview of the current EU asylum system and proposals for adaptation.

28 In 2015, the EC proposed a list of safe countries of origin based on the national lists of twelve member states. The Commission may immediately remove a country from the list if the safety situation in the country deteriorates. If member states use this list, applications for asylum from citizens of these countries can be processed more quickly, which also means that they can be deported more rapidly once it has been established that they are not entitled to asylum. Asylum seekers shall not be automatically rejected if they come from a listed country. Due to disagreement over the countries that should or should not be on the list, the list is barely used in practice. European Commission (2015). "An EU 'safe countries of origin' list".

29 Relevant here is to further examine the current so-called neighbourhood policy, which the European Union has been pursuing with sixteen neighbouring countries, including Lebanon, Libya, and Syria, but also Belarus, since 2004. The aim is to strengthen the prosperity, stability, and security of all, with emphasis on human rights and the rule of law. For example, Ukraine has a free trade agreement and an association agreement (far-reaching economic and political collaboration) with the EU. As a quid pro quo, the EU offers free trade in exchange for strengthening democracy and independent justice. The success of this neighbourhood policy varies: the EU often determines the conditions (to its advantage) and its policy is seen as a geopolitical choice. Emerson (2004). *European Neighbourhood Policy*.

30 According to the European Stability Initiative, an agreed date is crucial in agreements with safe countries of origin. With a fixed 'Day X', these countries should take back, without delay, their citizens accommodated by the EU since that specific date without a chance of being granted asylum. This would not only provide clarity, but also serve as an incentive for these home countries, since they would have to re-admit only the citizens who emigrated from their country since that date and not those who left at an earlier stage. European Stability Initiative (2017). *A Rome Plan for the Mediterranean migration crisis*.

31 An example of such a vanguard approach at the local level is the so-called 'Solidarity Cities': an initiative by the mayor of Athens to follow a common asylum policy together with (medium) large cities in Europe, including Amsterdam, and the European Commission, on the basis of shared responsibility and solidarity. Its backbone as summed up in their EUROCITIES statement: 1) information and knowledge exchange, 2) more involvement between and direct funding for cities to improve refugee accommodation, 3) technical and financial support and 4) a 'relocation promise' to spread migration evenly. EUROCITIES (2016). *Refugee reception and integration in cities.*

32 The Dutch Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs advises that extra EU funds should be made available to compensate member states that increase their own asylum capacity or offer assistance to other member states in accommodating asylum seekers. ACVZ (2015). *Delen in verantwoordelijkheid: Voorstel voor een solidair Europees asielsysteem*. [Sharing responsibility: Proposal for a solidary European asylum system.] Pp. 57. Empirical research found that rewards are often more effective than sanctions. Especially in the case of collective problems, positive incentives encourage more cooperation than negative ones. See for example: Rand et al. (2009).

"Positive interactions promote public cooperation". Pp. 1272–1275.

33 This proposal builds on the current EU Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF). Since 2014, it has required member states to spend a minimum amount on asylum and migration policy and provides grants for projects relating to asylum and accommodation, integration and return assistance.

34 In the example of Hungary, it now even takes years before sanctions are imposed. This member state is considered not to comply with EU asylum legislation relating to the deportation of illegal refugees, for instance. The European Commission launched an infringement procedure against Hungary in December 2015. In May 2017, the Commission sent a second reminder. In July 2017, the European Court ruled against Hungary, as well as against Slovakia, following an appeal to the European Court on a distribution mechanism of migrants across Europe. Until now, this has not worked either. At the time of writing, the European Commission's criminal proceedings against Hungary are still pending. "Commission follows up on infringement procedure against Hungary concerning its asylum law". EC. 17 May 2017.

35 Faure, Gavas and Knoll (2015). Challenges to a comprehensive EU migration and asylum policy. Pp. 22.

36 Sude, Stebbens and Weilant (2015). *Lessening the risk of refugee radicalization: Lessons for the Middle East from past crises*. Data on the average stay in a refugee camp are difficult to establish. Estimates range from 10 to 17 years. UNHCR (2004). *Protracted refugee situations*; Devictor and Quy-Toan Do (2016). *How many years have refugees been in exile?*

37 Statistics Netherlands (2018), *Uit de startblokken* [Off the starting blocks].

38 As of 1 July 2017, the signing of the participation declaration is an obligatory element of the integration programme. All residence permit holders and others required to integrate must sign it within one year of their settlement in a municipality and thereby declare that they have familiarised themselves with certain Dutch values and wish to contribute to society.

39 These exceptional cases include people who have joined the military force of a hostile country or an organization that threatens the security of the Netherands.

40 See for instance the lecture of the prominent politician for the VVD party, Edith Schippers: "De paradox van de vrijheid". [The paradox of liberty.] H.*J. Schoo-lezing*, 5 september 2016. Amsterdam.

41 Statistics Netherlands (2018), "11 procent van de statushouders heeft werk." ["11 Per cent of resident permit holders have a job"]

42 Godfried Engbersen ea. (2015). WRR-Policy Brief 4. Geen tijd verliezen: van opvang naar integratie van asielmigranten. [No time to lose: From asylum migrants' reception to integration.]

43 Most EU countries focus on teaching asylum seekers the language of the relevant country once they have been granted a residence permit. If asylum seekers want to take language classes before the end of the asylum procedure, they are usually dependent on particular initiatives, like in Sweden. See: "Teaching refugees languages: 'No specific skills required, just a desire to help and a friendly smile'". *The Guardian*, 11 September 2015.

44 In the Netherlands, approximately 2.5 million people aged 16 or older have either or both literacy and numeracy problems. They are not illiterate and can read, write and calculate, but only at EQF levels 3 at best. Two-thirds of this group was born in the Netherlands. Buying a train ticket, reading information about healthcare, and completing tax returns are just some of the obstacles they face. Zie: Bijlsma ea. (2016). *Regionale spreiding van geletterdheid in Nederland*. [Regional distribution of literacy in the Netherlands.].

45 WRR (2017). *Weten is nog geen doen*. [Knowing is one thing, doing is another.]

46 For examples of activities, especially in the area of employment, see: SER (2016). Signalering: Nieuwe wegen naar een meer succesvolle arbeidsmarktintegratie van vluchtelingen. [New ways towards refugees' more successful labour market integration.]

47 When it comes to accessible work experience places, it is not only up to companies to ensure that these are available. The role of governmental agencies and organisations here is just as important.

48 Liebig and Tronstad, 2018.

49 Joyce, 2015.

50 Joyce, 2017.

51 UIM, 2017,

52 Enes and Wiggen, 2016, Norway Government 2017 and 2018.

53 Non-EU migrants are entitled to full social welfare payments after seven years of residence.

54 Joyce, 2017.

55 IMDi, 2018.

56 UIM, 2017.

57 Asylum seekers can apply for this programme and will be accepted if they come from countries where the majority of applications are granted.

58 IMDi, 2018.

59 Bonfanti and Nordlund, 2012.

60 Blom and Enes, 2015.

61 UIM, 2018b.

62 Arendt and Pozzoli, 2013 and Zhang, 2016.

63 LG Insight 2015.

64 Saco, 2015.

65 UHR, 2014.

66 Arbetsförmedlingen, 2018b.

67 Kohlenberger et al (2016): *Human Capital, Values, and Attitudes of Persons Seeking Refuge in Austria in 2015*.

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Colophon