

# **Eurodefense Deutschland**

## **Views about European Refugee Policy**

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„Refugees welcome“ or „Refugees not welcome“ - in one way or the other we see very frequently such slogans in our European countries, indicating that refugee policy has become a major concern for our people in their day-to-day life.

For our governments refugee policy is a top priority on the international agenda and needs encompassing resolve and thinking about European and individual European nations handling and measures.

*Eurodefense* as an international and Non-Governmental Organization of most experienced former civilian and military officials who had different responsibilities in security and defense related matters in their nations and in international organisations is worried about the evolving problems for our common security and the cohesion of the European Union.

*Eurodefense* is looking into the European refugee policy, developing some ideas and views to steer and to monitor the situation for the sake of the security of all parties involved.

No further elaboration on the reasons for refugees' leaving, and the international legal basis is needed for this essay; for ease of comprehension all people on the move or who are already in place in European countries are subsumed under the expression „refugee“ irrespective of their status as „asylum seeker“ or „migrant“/„illegal migrant“. Also, the principle of „non-refoulement“ (not to return a refugee to a country where at risk of persecution) applies and is not part of this essay.

### *Challenges*

- Since the early 2010's Europe is the primary target of refugees from the Near East and Northern Africa. Since then, in almost all European countries refugees are living in special areas or amongst the local population – most of them peacefully. But also part of them is turning to be more and more criminal and organize themselves in groups to undermine local/regional/national security by terror attacks. Such terror attacks like Stockholm, Berlin Christmas market, Barcelona, London Bridge, Manchester, Rouen, Nice, Charlie Hebdo. Examples are unfortunately numerous with hundreds of innocent people killed. Refugees also organize in groups to undermine the local security and commit crimes and robberies like the Cologne Sylvester attacks in 2015.

The refugee flow poses in many ways severe challenges for the European community, i.a.:

- Some refugees do work as cells for the „Islamic State“ or leaving countries which take after an attack responsibility to blame the hosting country.
- There are heavy burdens for the budgets and the infrastructure of the hosting countries to house and feed the refugees and often demonstrate the limits of national and EU policy to further reduce the flow of refugees.
- Integration of refugees with local inhabitants at day-to-day life is becoming more and more difficult because of the obvious cultural diversity and different social backgrounds.

The political climate in many European countries as „host countries“ is seen to turn

into extremist directions because of „the refugees“ - with possible repercussions on the willingness of those countries to contribute to common European security and take national actions of protection instead. But it has to be clear that refugee policy is a European Union affair and not only a national responsibility and that there is no distinction between internal and external security aspects – they are interrelated.

### *Resolution*

Some progress has been achieved on the national and the European level over the recent past to control the refugee movement and terrorist attacks. Therefore, some of the approaches as described may need reinforcement and full implementation.

The views about resolution as described do also apply accordingly to counter terrorist/racist attacks against refugees who are threatened in our European home.

## **1. To reduce refugee movement from outside Europe**

- The **Dublin system** is working but it overloads in particular Italy and Greece where most refugees arrive. We can make progress in reducing the number of refugees by reinforcing border control through the different agencies and surveillance means at sea and at land as a „deterrent“ , to be published in the different refugee countries.

- European nations and EU as a whole need to engage in **negotiations with the refugee countries** of origin to establish information/registration camps. The basic idea is that refugee countries would identify their nationals who are eligible for asylum, or they are free to identifying themselves. Nothing proves that this is going to be successful as in these countries state structures and administration are either non-existent or in a very poor condition. But the process has started with some African states and should be reinforced.

- It is to be considered to **create and subsidize industrial/agricultural bases** in refugee countries as part of future development policy programs to reduce unemployment of potential refugees and thus keep people in their homeland. „Brain drain“ thus may avoid collapse of the country as „failed state“. Therefore, we may discourage the people within their countries to leave and to assist those countries with other than military means – such as social, economic and infrastructural aid.

- **Agreements with transit countries** on the Balkans – Turkey is an example - should be reached to keep the refugees on a provisional basis before they are sent by consensus to European receiving states.

- There are **many specific mainly organizational areas** to be touched upon in order to control in an effective way the refugee flow into Europe, such as institutionalizing or making operational overlaps between constabulary and military task sharing. In this regard, the European Armed Forces under discussion may also have a special mission as a Special Force which is trained and equipped to execute refugee operations, and FRONTEX to act as the nucleus of a European Coast Guard.

**Establish Special EU Forces** with refugee related Force Goals and Rules of

Engagements and coordinate closely with NATO.

## 2. To handle the refugee movement within Europe

- **A comprehensive permanent official information policy** is necessary to inform the EU public about the refugee flow, its origins and understanding for its resolution. Such a policy must include the reasons why refugees are leaving their countries and why the receiving countries are obliged by international laws, politically, and because of humanitarian reasons to help the refugees in a decent and appropriate way to host them.
- **Intelligence sharing, being a national responsibility**, has to work properly and the different national security forces must be effectively coordinated, including:
- **Observation of the activities of imams and mosques** must be clandestinely pursued and reported to a European agency to coordinate precautionary terrorist measures.
- **Language and Western culture training** of the refugees needs special attention and reinforcement to avoid „clash of civilisations“.
- **Employment programs** in the potential refugee countries for the potential refugees in cooperation with the local economy as already practised sporadically is pertinent for immigration and should be reinforced.
- **Repatriation programs** including financial facilitation may be further pursued as already practised in some EU countries.
- Well proved agreements and regulations as the **Schengen agreement** are still in force and should be reinforced by EU or national means to contribute to the overall European task to solve the refugee problem commonly.
- **Draft immigration laws, aiming at ending up in national and homogeneous EU regulations** to monitor effectively the refugee flow in Europe on a common and comprehensive way.
- **Avoid competition of responsibility/competences** between the different national and EU agencies.

### *Conclusion*

We are witnesses of a situation in flux which will continue to challenge Europe for the next decade with unforeseeable impacts on our well-being and security as European citizens.

Well proved agreements and regulations to tackle the refugee movement are in force and should be reinforced to contribute to the overall European task to tackle the refugee problem commonly.

**But:** New measures should be taken to adjust to the upcoming situations. A high degree of information and persuasion has to be undertaken by the European institutions and the individual member countries and governments - in the democratic frame - to convince the EU inhabitants about a reasonable and convincing European refugee policy.

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