

ANITA ADAMCZYK

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2851-0200>

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The EU's migration policy and immigration/refugeeism in the EU in 2016–2018¹

This article discusses the activities of EU member states responding to the influx of immigrants. It presents an analysis of decisions taken at the EU forum and the size of immigration/refugeeism in EU countries. The timeframe analyzed here covers the period of 2016–2018. The author argues that the activity of EU countries had an impact on limiting the number of immigrants arriving in the EU, although this was not the only element reducing the number of third-country nationals crossing the EU's external borders. Several research questions are justified when examining the above issues, namely, what areas of migration policy did the EU cooperate on?; what decisions were made in 2016–2018?; how many immigrants crossed the EU's external borders after 2015?; in which countries did immigrants seek international protection most often? The interdisciplinary approach to the phenomenon investigated required various research methods to be employed, including the institutional-legal method, decision-making method and the statistical method.

Migrations are an inherent part of reality in the twenty-first century. They are one of the biggest challenges facing countries on all continents. They bring about changes at the cultural, social, economic and political levels. They are primarily triggered by political conflicts and crises, natural disasters and low incomes. The revival of migration is also inseparably linked to increasing globalization. According to experts from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), further migrations will be triggered by threats caused by soil degradation, which in turn may lead to social instability and aggravate conflicts. Researchers are of the opinion that this is due to high consumption, which continues to grow. Experts estimate that soil degradation and its consequences will force 50–700 million people to migrate by 2050 (mainly from Central America, South America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia) (*The assessment*, 2018, p. 10). Climate change is forecasted to be another reason that will cause famine and malnutrition and, consequently, illness, loss of livelihood, decline in economic development, conflicts and migration. The European Environment Agency argues that climate change has already had a significant impact on the level of population migration. Since the 1970s, displacements have increased

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by over 50 percent, due to climate change. It is also estimated that, on average, there have been 22.5 million climate migrants annually in the world since 2008 (*Climate*, 2017, p. 293). The World Bank report shows that climate change will trigger internal migrations in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America. This pessimistic scenario assumes the displacement of over 143 million people by 2050 (Rigaud et al., 2018, p. XXI). Internal migrations will then cause further displacements out of these regions. Migration pressure will further be exacerbated by other reasons, for example violation of human rights, population growth, especially in Africa, lack of prospects, lack of and work, and famine. In 2017, 821 million people were estimated to be suffering from malnourishment in the world (about 1 person in 9 in the world),² mainly in Africa, South America and Asia (*The State*, 2018, p. 2).

The number of migrants continues to go up. In 2017, it reached 257.7 million people (compared to 220 million in 2010, and 173 million in 2000). Over 60 percent of them lived in Asia (79.6 million) and Europe (77.9 million), followed by North America (57.7 million) (*International Migration*, 2017, p. 5). According to statistics from 2017, most immigrants lived in the United States, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates. Nine of the twenty most frequently chosen destination countries for migrants were in Asia, seven in Europe, two in North America and one in Africa and Oceania each (*Ibid.*, p. 6). By the end of 2017, 68.5 million people worldwide had been forcibly resettled (including 40 million internally displaced persons, and 25.4 million refugees) (*Global Trends*, 2018, p. 2). The countries that provided shelter most often included Turkey (3.5 million), Pakistan and Uganda (1.4 million each), Lebanon (998,900), Iran (979,400) and Germany (970,400) (*Ibid.*, p. 3). Sixty-eight percent of all refugees came from five countries: Syria (6.3 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million), South Sudan (2.4 million), the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (1.2 million) and Somalia (986,400) (*Ibid.*).

There are a multitude of reasons why people migrate and will continue to migrate. Migration is a permanent phenomenon, which makes it a topical issue for EU member states that were particularly affected by the influx of migrants in 2015. The crisis brought about by the displacement of over one million people sparked discussions and the search for new solutions in EU migration policy. This is an extremely important topic, because migrations are both a negative and a positive phenomenon. As the birth rate is dropping in EU member states, their populations will need immigrants to prevent economic stagnation. Therefore, a well-designed policy is required to keep migration under control.

The issue of migration was the main topic of debates in the European Union for three years following 2015. At the end of 2018, the EU succeeded in restricting the inflow of immigrants to 121,755 people (*Mediterranean*, 2019), which was the lowest since 2014. Among other things, this was associated with activities undertaken in the EU that were primarily aimed at curbing illegal immigration and cooperating with the countries of immigrants' origin and transit. As part of this activity, for example, an agreement was signed with the Turkish government, cooperation with Libya was initiated, and the European Border and Coast Guard was established. The number of

² 777 million in 2015, and 815 million in 2016 (*The State*, 2017).

immigrants also dropped because the path to Europe was still difficult and dangerous. Larger financial resources were necessary. On top of that, after 2015, some EU countries modified their national immigration policies. This has been accompanied by a change in the attitudes of host societies towards foreigners. Right-wing groups, reluctant to new arrivals, have become more popular.

Agreements with third countries

Cooperation with migrant transit countries has become one of the EU's priorities. Among other things, this involved cooperation with one country on the Central Mediterranean route, namely Libya. Recently, most immigrants from North and Sub-Saharan Africa have been travelling to Europe via Libya. In order to curb the influx of illegal immigrants and to more effectively control the EU's external borders, on February 3, 2017, EU leaders signed a declaration at the Malta Summit. In the declaration, member states pledged to support Libya in resuming control over its land and sea borders, and combating groups of smugglers moving people across the border. To this end, EU member states decided to support the Libyan coast guard and other services (training their employees and providing equipment), to take action to destroy smugglers' networks, to help in the socio-economic development of local Libyan communities (especially those living in the vicinity of land and sea borders intersecting the migration routes), to ensure appropriate conditions for admitting migrants in cooperation with international organizations, to increase awareness among migrants in Libya about the activities of smugglers, to increase Libya's ability to manage its own borders, to support the Libyan authorities in monitoring smugglers' activities, to support initiatives of member states to cooperate with Libya, and to enhance cooperation with Libya's neighbors in the area of migration (*Maltańska deklaracja*, 2017).

The day before the European Council's summit in Malta, on February 2, 2017, the government of the Italian Republic and the Libyan Government of National Accord signed a Memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the fields of development, combating illegal immigration, human trafficking and fuel smuggling and reinforcing the security of borders between the State of Libya and the Italian Republic (*Memorandum*, 2017). By virtue of this document, Italy undertook to provide financial support to regions affected by illegal migration, and technical and technological support to Libyan institutions responsible for combating illegal migration. Additionally, the Italian and EU authorities pledged to support centers for immigrants (supply of medicines and medical equipment, treatment of infectious and chronic diseases, training of employees of these centers). Increased cooperation was also agreed to eliminate the causes of illegal immigration, support the countries of origin of immigrants, reduce poverty and unemployment, support the voluntary return of immigrants from Libya to their countries of origin and coordinate activities for the development of regions affected by illegal immigration (Art. 2). A bilateral committee was set up to ensure that the objectives of the memorandum were met (Art. 3). The Italian side took on the financing of the projects provided for in the document. According to Art. 8, the memorandum was signed for three years and is subject to an automatic extension on a contracting-out basis.

A joint task force on migration established by the EU, the African Union and the UN will serve to stop the influx of illegal immigrants from Africa, in particular from Libya, eliminate border crime, and develop and stabilize countries of origin and transit of migrants (*Joint*, 2017).

In addition to the above-mentioned measures aiming to reduce migration to Europe along the Central Mediterranean route, in June 2016, the European Council adopted a new framework for cooperation in the area of migration with the main countries of origin and transit of irregular migrants, i.e. Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia. It also indicated that agreements with Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia could be signed (*Komunikat*, 2016).

Another EU priority involved cooperation with countries on the Eastern Mediterranean Route, chosen primarily by Syrians and Afghans. This route led from Turkey to Greece. In connection with the mass influx of migrants in March 2016, the EU concluded an agreement with Turkey (*Oświadczenie*, 2016). Among other things, the agreement stipulated that (1) illegal migrants coming to Greece from Turkey after March 20, 2016 would be sent back to Turkey, in compliance with EU and international law; (2) in return for every Syrian sent back from Greece to Turkey, the EU would admit another Syrian national living in Turkey. Priority would be given to persons who had never before crossed the EU borders illegally nor made such an attempt; (3) Turkey would strengthen the protection of its borders and prevent the emergence of new routes of illegal migration to the EU; (4) if illegal crossing of the EU-Turkish border disappeared or was reduced, a program of voluntary admission for humanitarian reasons would be launched; (5) the EU would accelerate the disbursement of €3 billion from the Refugee Fund in Turkey and launch additional aid of €3 billion by 2018, once earlier resources were depleted, and if Turkey kept fulfilling its commitments; (6) the EU would accelerate work on the liberalization of visa regime for Turkish citizens; and (7) EU member states would cooperate with Turkey to improve humanitarian conditions in Syria. This agreement has brought measurable effects, reducing the illegal influx of migrants to Greece and mortality at sea. Despite this success, the number of people returned from Greece to Turkey is not large. EU member states agreed to launch a second tranche of financial aid of €3 billion in 2018 (*EU–Turkey*, 2018).

On September 19, 2018, discussing migration issues during an informal meeting in Salzburg, EU heads of state and government decided to strengthen cooperation with third countries, in particular with Egypt (*Informal Summit*, 2018). It was also agreed to organize a summit with the countries of the League of Arab States in Egypt on February 24–25, 2019. One year earlier Germany signed an agreement on migration with Egypt (*Dialogue*, 2017).

Cooperation with third countries, especially those in Africa and neighboring countries of the EU, also involves investing resources from the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD), which results from the EU's external investment plan. The regulation establishing the EFSD was adopted on September 25, 2017 (*Rozporządzenie* 1601, 2017). Using EFSD resources, EU member states want to stimulate economic growth and employment rates, develop small and medium-sized enterprises, strengthen the role of the private sector and thus increase living standards and reduce migration pressures. The EFSD guarantee fund, which will be the source of payments, will

consist of resources coming, among others, from the EU's general budget (€350 million), voluntary contributions from member states and other participants, and returns from the invested resources of the EFSD guarantee fund (Art. 14 of Regulation 1601, 2017). The fund, with an initial budget of €3.35 billion, will generate investments of €44 billion (Rada, 2017).

Strengthening external and internal borders

Irregular migration has also been reduced due to the establishment of the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) (Rozporządzenie 1624, 2016). The EBCG began operating on October 6, 2016. Its establishment was announced in the State of the Union speech delivered by President Jean-Claude Juncker on September 9, 2015 (*State of the Union*, 2015, pp. 10, 52). The institution was tasked with increasing the security of member states and improving the management of the EU's external borders. The EBCG carries out its tasks through the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and member state authorities responsible for border management (coast guards) (Article 3.1 of Regulation 1624, 2016). The tasks of the agency are set out in detail in Article 8 of the Regulation.

In order to control external borders more efficiently, the Schengen Information System (SIS) has been modernized, a new entry/exit system has been introduced for persons from outside the EU, as well as the European travel information system and travel permits (ETIAS).

The Schengen Information System was strengthened in November 2018 due to the adoption of three regulations that will allow the system to be modernized by 2021.³ Changes in legislation will facilitate combating terrorism, cross-border crime and illegal migration. Thanks to these changes, Europol and the Border and Coast Guard Agency will gain access to data in the SIS information system. In addition, the new legal provisions will allow facial images to be used for identification purposes (consistency of border control procedures) and to include the DNA profile in identifying missing persons, while prohibiting the use of other measures. The novelty in the Schengen Information System is additional types of entries, namely a set of data fed into the SIS regarding (1) the purpose of return (return decisions issued to illegally staying third-country nationals), (2) suspects or persons wanted in order to arrest and extradite them (introduction into the SIS of fingerprints or palm prints left at the crime

³ Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU, OJ EU L 2018.312.56; Regulation (EU) 2018/1860 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the use of the Schengen Information System for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals, OJ EU L 2018.312.1; Regulation (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of border checks, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, and amending and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006, OJ EU L 2018.312.14.

scene by the perpetrator), (3) persons who are missing or vulnerable persons who need to be prevented from traveling for their own protection, (4) persons and objects needed for the purpose of discreet checks, inquiry checks and specific checks, (5) wanted persons, whose presence is required in proceedings conducted by the judicial authorities, (6) objects searched for seizure or use as evidence of criminal prosecution (*System SIS*, 2018). The new legal solutions have also regulated the conditions and procedures for introducing and processing entries regarding third-country nationals who have been issued return decisions due to their illegal stay in the EU.

In order to strengthen external borders, counter irregular immigration, improve the management of migration flows and prevent terrorist and other offenses, a new Entry/Exit System (EES) has been introduced. The relevant regulation was adopted in November 2017. The EES aims to shorten waiting time for border checks, strengthen the control of the EU's external borders, more accurately identify persons exceeding their authorized stay, and strengthen internal security and thus combat terrorism and crime. It will allow third-country nationals to be identified who (1) have the right to stay for a short period,⁴ (2) are family members of an EU national and who do not have a residence card, (3) are family members of a third-country national who enjoy the right of free movement equivalent to that of Union citizens under an agreement between the Union and its member states on the one hand and a third country on the other, (4) do not have a residence card provided for in Directive 2004/38/EC or a residence permit provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1030/2002, (5) have been refused entry for a short stay in the EU (Article 2 (1), (2) Regulation 2226, 2017). A system will be created that will record data on entry, exit and refusal of entry into the EU of third-country nationals admitted for a short stay (EES system). This system calculates the duration of authorized stay (Article 1 of Regulation 2226, 2017). It stores information about identity and travel documents as well as biometric data. The European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice is responsible for the development of this system and the operational management of EES (Item 14 of Regulation 2226, 2017). This system is to be fully operational by 2020. The amount of €480,241,000 has been earmarked for its implementation from the EU budget (Article 1 of Delegated Regulation, 2018).

In addition to the EES, another system was also implemented at the same time, namely the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS), established on the basis of Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Rozporządzenie 1240, 2018). This regulation applies to third-country nationals who are exempt from the visa requirement (1) crossing the external border of the EU for intended stay of a duration of no more than 90 days in any 180-day period, (2) and are family members of an EU national, and (3) enjoy the right of free move-

⁴ A stay that does not exceed 90 days in any 180-day period (Article 3(1)(8) of Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011, OJ EU L 2017.327.20 (version dated 9 October 2018, pending act).

ment equivalent to that of Union citizens under an agreement between the EU and its member states on the one hand and third countries on the other; (4) and they do not hold a residence card (Article 2(1) of Directive 1240, 2017). These new regulations enable consideration of whether the presence of those third-country nationals in the territory of the member states poses a risk to the public order, internal security or international relations of any member state. Data gathered will also enable identification of illegal migrants and persons posing a risk to public health (Article 1(1) of Directive 1240, 2017). The above-named third-country nationals are required to submit an online application in order to enter the Schengen area. A fee of €7.00 is charged for a travel authorization (not applicable for applicants under 18 years or above 70 years of age at the time of the application) (Article 18(1), (2) of Directive 1240, 2017). This is to facilitate border checks, minimize red tape at border crossings, reduce the number of entry refusals issued at border crossings and align the assessment of risk posed by a third-country national (*Unia bezpieczeństwa*, 2018).

As was the case with the previous system, the European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice is in charge of developing the ETIAS Information System and its technical management (Article 6(1) of Directive 1240, 2018).

Upon a request from the Commission, in the interests of internal borders, on May 11, 2017, the EU Council recommended that temporary internal border controls be extended due to exceptional circumstances (for the third time) (*Decyzja wykonawcza*, 2017). This decision concerned Austria (Austrian-Hungarian border, Austrian-Slovenian border), Germany (border with Austria), Denmark (land border and ferry connections with Germany), Sweden (Swedish ports in the southern and western police region and on the bridge over the Strait of Norway) and Norway (Norwegian ports and ferry connections with Denmark, Germany and Sweden) (*Schengen area*, 2017). The introduction of temporary border controls in the above-mentioned countries was related to the recommendation of the EU Council of May 12, 2016, which, by virtue of Article 29 of the Schengen Borders Code – in exceptional circumstances that threaten the general operation of the Schengen area – may introduce border controls for a period of 6 months and extend them to a maximum of 2 years.

In addition to the above activities, a comprehensive and operational set of measures has been prepared for improving the response to migrant smuggling networks (*Sprawniejsze*, 2018) and the reform of the asylum system has been agreed on.

Scale of migration, including refugees to the EU

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency reports that, in 2017, the number of people illegally crossing EU external borders (between border crossing points) dropped, amounting to 204,719 (60 percent less than one year before, when 511,047 people illegally crossed EU borders, and 89 percent less compared to 2015) (*Risk Analysis*, 2018, p. 43). Syrians were among the nationalities that most often decided to come to the EU against the law in 2017 (19,447 people, compared to 594,059 in 2015), alongside Nigerians (18,309 compared to 23,605 in 2015) and nationals from

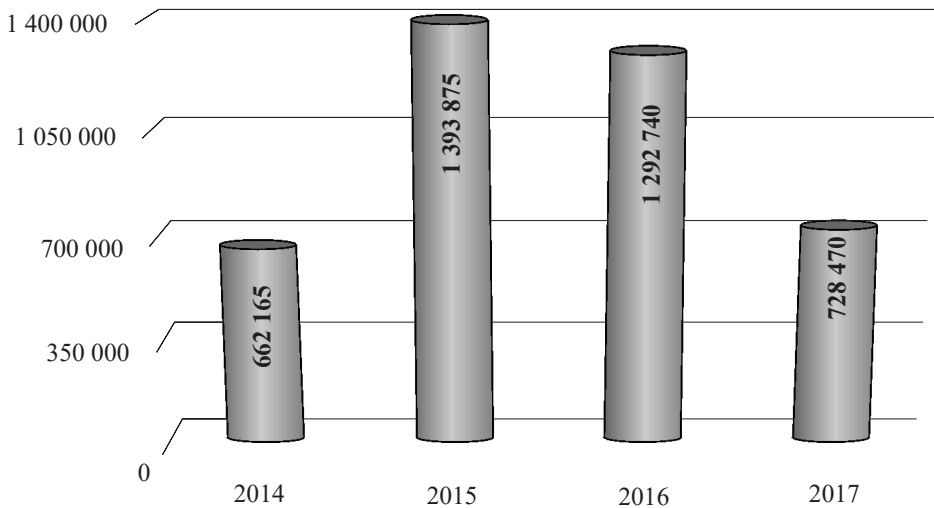
Cote d'Ivoire (12,913 compared to 5,010 in 2015) (Ibid., p. 45). Immigrants crossed the EU's external borders illegally, both on land and at sea, but the latter was more frequent, accounting for as much as 86 percent in 2017 (compared to 71 percent in 2016 and 57 percent in 2015) (Ibid., p. 44). Taking the sea route was very dangerous and some migrants never made it to Europe. In 2016, 5,096 people died or went missing on the Mediterranean Sea, in subsequent years this number dropped to 3,139 in 2017 and to 2,262 in 2018 (*Mediterranean*, 2018).

Despite this downward trend, pressure on external borders continues to remain high. A drop was recorded on the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkan routes. As regards the former, the number of illegal crossings fell from 182,277 in 2016 to 42,305 in 2017 (these were mainly nationals of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan), while on the Western Balkan Route their number shrank from 130,261 in 2016 to 12,178 in the following year (nationals of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq). A drop in the number of illegal border crossings was also recorded on the Central Mediterranean Route, though it was not as spectacular as on the above routes. In 2017, there were 118,962 detentions compared to 181,376 the year before. This route was chosen primarily by nationals of Nigeria, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. The downward tendency did not apply to the Western Mediterranean Route, where an increase in illegal crossings of the EU's external borders was recorded, from 9,990 in 2016 to 23,143 one year later (citizens of Morocco, Algeria, Cote d'Ivoire) (*Risk Analysis*, 2018, p. 43). Summing up the statistics for 2017, it should be stated that the Central Mediterranean Route was the most busy illegal path across the EU's borders, accounting for 58 percent of all illegal crossings.

In recent years, third-country nationals have come to EU member states seeking international protection, work and better living conditions. In 2016, a total of 4.3 million people immigrated to EU member states, including 2 million third-country nationals (*Migration*, 2018, p. 1). In the period concerned, the largest numbers of immigrants came to Germany (1,029,900), the United Kingdom (589,000) and Spain (414,700) (*Immigraton*, 2016). The highest rate of migrants in relation to the population of the country was reached in Luxembourg (39 immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants) and Malta (38 immigrants per 1,000), followed by Cyprus (20.4 immigrants), Ireland (17.9) and Sweden (16.4) (*Migration*, 2018, p. 3). There were 4.6 immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants in the whole of the EU. This level was similar to the figure in Poland where there were 5.5 immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants in 2016.

Statistics show that, as of January 1, 2017, 21.6 million nationals from non-EU countries lived in EU member states, accounting for 4.2 percent of the EU population (Ibid., p. 8). The largest number of immigrants lived in five member states, accounting for 76 percent of the total number of immigrants in the EU. The five countries were Germany (9.2 million people), the United Kingdom (6.1 million people), Italy (5 million people), France (4.6 million people) and Spain (4.4 million people) (Ibid., p. 9).

Immigrants who arrived on the territory of EU member states included people seeking international protection. According to data from the European Asylum Support Office, a total of 728,470 applications for international protection were submitted in EU countries in 2017, which was significantly lower than in previous years (*Annual Report*, 2018, p. 222). The number of applicants in 2017 decreased by 44 percent compared to the previous year.

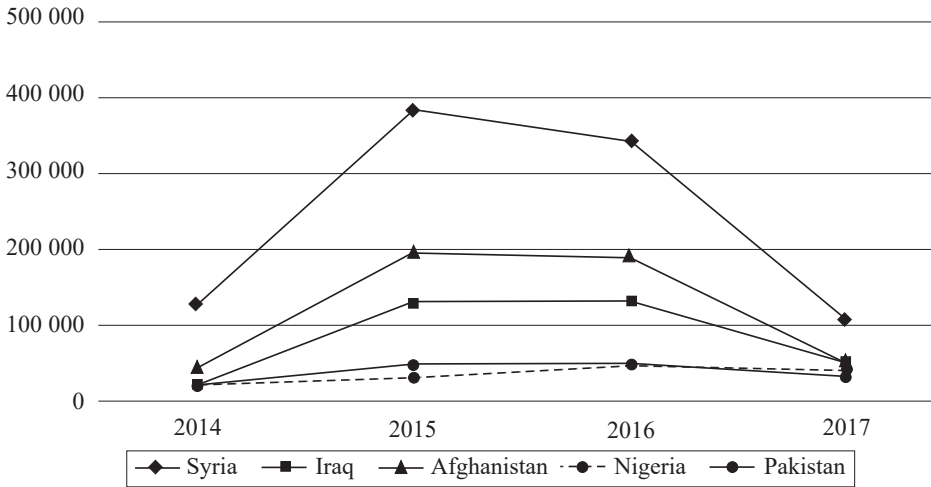
Graph 1. Applications for international protection in the EU, 2014–2017

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of *Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2017* (2018), European Asylum Support Office, p. 222, <https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Annual-Report-2017-Final.pdf>, January 2, 2019.

In 2017, the applicants were mainly Syrian citizens (108,040 applications, which accounted for 15 percent of the total number of applications submitted that year), Iraq (52,625 applications – 7 percent) and Afghanistan (49,280 applications – 7 percent) (Ibid.). Among the fifteen nations that submitted the most applications in 2017, the number of applications dropped in 2018, with the exception of nationals of Turkey (increase by 43 percent), Guinea (by 28 percent), Cote d'Ivoire (by 25 percent) and Bangladesh (by 21 percent) (Ibid.).

Like before, also in 2017, most applications were submitted in Germany, where 222,560 people submitted their applications, which is 70 percent less than in 2016. The majority of applicants were Syrian citizens, who accounted for 23 percent of all applicants for international protection in Germany in 2017. Germany was followed by Italy – 128,850 applications (increase by 5 percent compared to 2016, including 20 percent of Nigerian applicants), France – 99,330 applications (increase by 18 percent compared to 2016, including 12 percent of citizens of Albania among the applicants), Greece – 58,650 applications (increase by 15 percent compared to 2016, 28 percent of applicants from Syria), Great Britain – 33,780 (decrease by 15 percent compared to 2016, including 10 percent of Iraqi applicants) and Spain – 31,120 (increase by 98 percent compared to 2016, including 33 percent of Venezuelan applicants) (Ibid.). Analyzing statistics on the numbers of applications for international protection submitted in the territory of EU member states, it can be noted that Hungary (–88 percent), Bulgaria (–81 percent), Germany (–70 percent), Poland (–59 percent), Denmark (–48 percent) and Austria (–42 percent) recorded the largest drops in the numbers of applicants in 2017 compared to 2016. The numbers of applicants increased in Romania (+156 percent), Spain (+98 percent), Cyprus (+56 percent), Ireland (+31 percent) and Portugal (+20 percent) (Ibid.).

Graph 2. Applications for international protection in the EU submitted by citizens from the five countries with most applications in 2014–2017



Source: Own elaboration on the basis of *Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2017* (2018), European Asylum Support Office, p. 222, <https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Annual-Report-2017-Final.pdf> (retrieved on January 2, 2019).

In 2017, EU countries issued a total of 996,685 decisions on international protection in the first instance, which was 13 percent less than in 2016. Fifty-three percent of them were issued in Germany. Positive decisions were most often received by Afghan citizens (21 percent). In addition to Germany, protection was also most often granted in the first instance in France (110,945 decisions, which accounted for 11 percent of all decisions issued in the EU), Italy (78,235 decisions – 7.8 percent), Sweden (61,065 decisions – 6 percent) and Austria (56,285 decisions – 5.6 percent) (Ibid., p. 231).

In 2017, 43 percent of positive decisions issued in the first instance were received by the citizens of three countries, namely Afghanistan (184,265 decisions, an increase by 68 percent compared to 2016; most decisions were issued in Germany – 60 percent), Syria (152,330 decisions or 63 percent less than in 2016, 63 percent of decisions were issued in Germany) and Iraq (101,110 decisions, 2 percent less than in the previous year, most positive decisions were issued in Germany – 63 percent) (Ibid). In 2017, the number of positive decisions increased the most with respect to the citizens of Turkey (+310 percent), Guinea (+105 percent), Iran (+95 percent) and Afghanistan (+68 percent) compared to 2016 (Ibid).

The problem of migration is extremely important for EU member states. Finding appropriate solutions will affect the future of the EU. However, this is not only a regional but also a global issue, therefore steps taken to limit migration will require a global dimension.

The migration crisis has already divided EU societies and countries, making it difficult to find common solutions, and maintain cohesion and an appropriate level of security within the EU. Member states will have to tackle the issue of migration, nevertheless, because the EU will continue to be an attractive place for third-country nationals.

In addition, immigrants will be needed given the population decline and the ageing of EU populations. Economic migrants with appropriate qualifications will be in demand. This means that the focus will have to be finding solutions for legal migration.

Since migration cannot be stopped, one has to learn to manage it. Therefore, it will be necessary to develop mechanisms to control illegal migration as well as to implement integration policy. However, EU countries must face their internal political crisis in the first place, which manifests itself in their inability to develop a coherent migration policy, among other things.

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Summary

The purpose of this article is to analyze the European Union's response to the influx of immigrants in 2016–2018. The author argues that the activity of EU countries had an impact on limiting the number of immigrants arriving in the EU, although this was not the only element reducing the number of third-country nationals crossing the EU's external borders. In order to verify the above, an analysis of activities was conducted regarding agreements with third countries (Turkey, Libya) and the protection of internal and external borders. The article also shows how the numbers of immigrants/refugees to EU countries fluctuated after the 2015 migration crisis.

Key words: European Union, immigrants, refugees, border protection

Unijna polityka migracyjna a zjawisko imigracji/uchodźstwa do UE w latach 2016–2018

Streszczenie

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza działań Unii Europejskiej będących reakcją na napływ imigrantów. Obejmuje on lata 2016–2018. W artykule postawiono tezę, iż aktywność państw unijnych miała wpływ na ograniczenie przyjazdów imigrantów do UE, choć nie był to jedyny element mający znaczenie dla zmniejszenia liczby obywateli państw trzecich przekraczających zewnętrzne granice unijne. W celu jej zweryfikowania przeprowadzono analizę

aktywności m.in. w zakresie zawieranych porozumień z państwami trzecimi (Turcją, Libią) oraz ochrony granic wewnętrznych i zewnętrznych. W artykule pokazano także jak zmieniał się poziom imigracji/uchodźstwa do państw unijnych po kryzysie migracyjnym z 2015 roku.

Słowa kluczowe: Unia Europejska, imigranci, uchodźcy, ochrona granic