MEDAM

Mercator Dialogue on
Asylum and Migration

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ON ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICIES IN EUROPE

Rethinking EU migration and asylum policies:

Managing immigration jointly with countries of origin and transit

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Preface

The arrival of more than one million asylum seekers in Europe in 2015 exposed serious flaws in the EU's asylum system. While the inflow of irregular migrants has long subsided, the political landscape and public debate in Europe have been fundamentally and permanently altered. Multiple efforts over the years to reform the European asylum system and to make it resilient to possible future surges in refugee movements have reached an impasse.

Since early 2016, the EU has implemented far-reaching agreements with neighboring countries to curb irregular immigration, including the EU-Turkey understanding, the closure of the Western Balkans migration route, and support for search and rescue operations by the Libyan coast guard and the return to Libya of individuals rescued at sea. However, the EU and its member states have not used the respite offered by fewer irregular migrants arriving in Europe to address important shortcomings: key provisions of the EU-Turkey agreement are not functional, especially for the return of migrants from the Greek islands to Turkey; asylum systems in Western Balkan countries are underdeveloped and would be overwhelmed quickly if migrant flows were to resurge; and the human rights of migrants in Libya are routinely violated.

In 2016—just after the peak of the so-called migration crisis—the Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration (MEDAM) was established to pursue two objectives: first, to improve our understanding of the interrelated challenges facing the EU and its member states in the areas of asylum, migration, and mobility; and second, to engage European policy makers and civil society in a broad and open debate about comprehensive, implementable solutions to these challenges.

Since then, MEDAM researchers have analyzed important features of the European migration system and mapped out their mutual interdependencies—including the drivers of migration in countries of origin, the decision making of migrants, popular attitudes towards immigration and immigration policies, EU and member states policies for asylum and regular immigration, and the living conditions and prospects of immigrants in countries of destination. Drawing on our own research as well as the existing body of literature, we have explored the resulting opportunities, challenges, and trade-offs and have embarked on a dialogue with stakeholders at EU and member state level on options for more effective internal and external policies.

A recurring theme in our research is that migration must be managed if it is to deliver benefits for migrants, countries of origin, and countries of destination. Furthermore, to manage migration to Europe effectively and share responsibility equitably for refugee protection, the EU and its member states must cooperate on equal terms with migrants' countries of origin and transit.

The new European Commission has an opportunity to start afresh to address the persistent challenges in asylum and immigration policies. We explain in this report how allowing EU member states greater flexibility in how they contribute to the common asylum system may be one way forward. Furthermore, non-EU countries of origin and transit have an overwhelming interest in expanding opportunities for their citizens to work in Europe legally. Cooperation in other areas, including containing irregular migration, would likely benefit from EU member states permitting more legal labor migration from non-EU countries.

As the first phase of MEDAM draws to a close, we thank Stiftung Mercator for making our work possible. We highly appreciate their continuing trust and support as we embark on the second phase of MEDAM (2020 to 2022) where we will focus on migration from Africa to Europe and on a more nuanced understanding of voter preferences regarding migration-related policies.

We hope that this 2019 MEDAM Assessment Report will stimulate and inform the crucial debate on how to protect refugees effectively and harness labor migration to benefit migrants, host societies, and countries of origin.

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Executive summary

The new European Commission will inherit an impasse in efforts to reform the European asylum system as well as concerns about practices in the management of the EU's external border that contradict humanitarian standards and may even be illegal. While the number of asylum seekers who manage to reach EU territory is now lower than in previous years, it may be low precisely because of those problematic practices, including abuse of irregular migrants along the Western Balkan route, limited search and rescue capacity in the Central Mediterranean, and EU cooperation with the Libyan coast guard even though migrants returned by it to Libya have been abused.

In this 2019 MEDAM Assessment Report, we present insights from MEDAM research and policy dialogue since 2016 to explain how closer cooperation among EU member states and with countries of origin and transit can improve outcomes for all stakeholders. Crucially, short of establishing a new Iron Curtain on the EU's external border or continuing to tolerate abuses, there is no way that either individual member states or the EU as a whole can insulate themselves from irregular migrants and asylum seekers. Yet, if crossing the EU border enabled all irregular migrants to remain in the EU for good, the integrity of EU visa and asylum policies would be undermined.

Thus, close cooperation with countries of origin for the return and readmission of their citizens who have no right to remain in the EU is crucial. Still, it is typically not in the interest of countries of origin to limit the mobility of their citizens. Cooperation between the EU and countries of origin must therefore cover a wide enough range of policies to ensure that all parties consistently benefit from the policy package and have a strong incentive to meet their commitments. We emphasize more EU support for refugees hosted by low- and middle-income countries and more legal employment opportunities for non-EU citizens in the EU.

Rethinking EU asylum and migration policies along these lines requires extensive consultations and negotiations among stakeholders in Europe and in countries of origin and transit. Our 'insights' are meant to inform and stimulate such conversations. However, sustainable reforms will come only as the result of stakeholders working out the details and developing a sense of ownership of the necessary reforms.

Our first set of insights relates to popular attitudes toward immigration and the structure of public preferences for asylum and refugee protection policies (section 2 of this report). Next, we explain how the EU and countries of origin and transit can all benefit from cooperating on border management, refugee protection, and expanding legal labor migration to the EU (section 3). Finally, we consider the implications for cooperation among EU member states and the long-standing plans for reform of the European asylum system (section 4).

What do the people want? Attitudes and policy preferences (section 2)

Insight #1: Attitudes to immigration have remained fairly stable across most European countries, but the perceived importance of migration as a public policy issue has increased.

Insight #2: Attitudes to immigration tend to be more positive in local areas with greater shares of migrants. However, this relationship is influenced by the socioeconomic context: as the socioeconomic conditions of local areas worsen (e.g., with higher unemployment rates and lower incomes per capita), the positive effects of the share of migrants on attitudes become smaller and they eventually disappear in the most deprived areas.

Insight #3: Europeans are generally committed to policies that provide protection for asylum seekers and refugees, but they express support for more policy controls, such as limits and conditions, in asylum and refugee policies. There is no evidence of widespread public support for highly restrictive policies that eliminate protection and assistance.

A key implication of these insights is that, contrary to the impression created in public debates in many European countries, it *is* possible to garner public support for asylum and refugee policies that provide protection and assistance. To achieve this, policy makers need to think carefully about *policy design* (e.g., when and how to use policy limits and conditions, and how to distribute refugees across geographical areas) and about how to *communicate* their policy ideas and objectives to the public. The design of policy needs to take into account what we know about the likely responses from the resident population to various different policy options. The communication of public policies needs to relate to the reasons behind the increasing salience of immigration as a policy issue, including concerns about a perceived lack of state control over immigration.

Cooperation with countries of origin and transit on border and migration management, as well as legal labor migration (section 3)

Insight #4: Limiting irregular immigration into the EU while safeguarding refugees' access to protection (either in Europe or in regions of origin) requires close cooperation not only among EU member states, but also with countries of origin and transit. Yet, countries of origin, transit, and destination may have diverging interests with respect to border and migration management. Therefore, cooperation needs to cover a sufficiently wide range of policy areas so that all parties can be sure to benefit, and the underlying agreements become politically sustainable and self-enforcing.

Insight #5: If the EU wants to enforce its visa policy and control the inflow of non-EU nationals into the EU, it needs to work with neighboring countries toward limiting access to EU territory to those non-EU citizens who have valid travel documents. Otherwise, particularly if there are no restrictions on irregular travel along the informal Mediterranean migration routes and on subsequent entry into the EU, large numbers of asylum seekers might overwhelm reception capacity in EU member states. Still, given the ongoing abuses at the EU's external border, it must be emphasized that border and migration management must be in line with humanitarian standards and migrants' rights.

Insight #6: Low- and middle-income countries host most of the world's refugees. As a matter of humanitarian principle and to discourage secondary migration to the EU, the EU should share actively in the responsibility for protecting these refugees through adequate long-term financial and technical support and by working with host countries to facilitate the refugees' economic and social integration.

Insight #7: Whatever the level of external financial support, small host countries may simply be overburdened by a large number of refugees. In such cases, the EU should participate actively in resettlement schemes for vulnerable refugees.

Insight #8: The integrity of the EU asylum system depends on effective procedures for the return and readmission by their countries of origin of non-EU citizens who have no right to remain in the EU. Yet, many countries of origin find it politically difficult to support the involuntary return of their citizens. Despite many agreements on the books, cooperation on return and readmission is often less than smooth in practice. The EU should explore with countries of origin how additional legal migration

opportunities, skill partnerships, study visas, etc., can make support for involuntary returns politically sustainable in countries of origin and provide a viable alternative to individuals who might otherwise contemplate irregular migration.

Insight #9: Contrary to earlier studies, our empirical research indicates that income growth in low- and middle-income countries of origin tends to reduce emigration, as does development assistance for better public services and social infrastructure. Nevertheless, the reductions in emigration due to higher income or development assistance are too small to render development cooperation an effective tool to manage emigration.

Thus, the new European Commission faces the key challenge of making a fresh start in its cooperation with countries of origin and transit, with a focus on listening to stakeholders and taking their interests on board. This is the first step towards negotiating self-enforcing agreements with partner country governments that lead to effective return and readmission of non-EU citizens, which remains a precondition for effective and humane management of the EU's external border.

EU and member state policies and cooperation (section 4)

Insight #10: The start of the new European Commission's mandate provides an opportunity to reconsider the approach taken towards the reform of the Common European Asylum System. The current package approach—whereby agreement is sought on all legislative files simultaneously—means that the contentious proposal for reforming the Dublin Regulation is blocking any further progress. Pursuing a file-by-file approach and moving forward on those individual legislative proposals where there is broad agreement among member states can break the present deadlock.

Insight #11: Only a few small EU member states are currently overburdened by a disproportionately high number of asylum applications (mainly Cyprus, Malta, and Greece). Given continuing disagreement over the feasibility and extent of a mandatory relocation scheme for asylum seekers, it should now be a priority to establish working procedures for a coalition of willing countries to relocate asylum seekers rescued in the Central Mediterranean. Such procedures would go a long way to relieve the few countries that are truly overburdened.

Insight #12: Negotiations on the EU's 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) offer an important window for strengthening financial sol-

idarity among member states with respect to asylum and immigration. A dedicated budget line that compensates member states for each asylum seeker received (possibly above a threshold) would be one effective tool to ensure more solidarity. The same mechanism could be used to support the voluntary relocation of refugees among member states.

Insight #13: The next MFF should also increase support for other important elements of European migration and asylum policies. The EU Asylum and Border and Coast Guard Agencies should be put in a position to provide additional assistance to member states as needed. Likewise, the EU budget should support programs aiding resettlement from third countries (insight #7), humanitarian visas (when warranted), and labor migration schemes (insight #8). Additional funding for refugees hosted by non-EU countries is also warranted on humanitarian grounds and to discourage secondary migration to Europe (insight #6).

Insight #14: To move the EU's asylum and migration policy forward towards more solidarity among EU member states and with non-EU countries that host refugees, we recommend that the new Commission establish a monitoring mechanism (or scoreboard) to collect information on each member state's exposure and contribution to all elements of asylum and migration policy (irrespective of area of competence). The scoreboard would support annual discussions on voluntary relocation and other instruments of solidarity.

In sum, efforts to reform the EU asylum system have been deadlocked since 2016. The new Commission can start afresh by adopting a new approach to asylum and migration policy that emphasizes the common interest of EU member states in managing the EU's external border effectively and humanely and helping to protect refugees world-wide as signatory states of the 1951 Refugee Convention. At the same time, this approach would allow member states to contribute to the common tasks in line with their capacities: Financial contributions would go through the EU budget and member state shares would be the same as for the overall budget. More flexibility would be allowed particularly in the hosting of asylum seekers, recognized refugees, or refugees resettled by UNHCR.

The proposed monitoring mechanism would encourage transparency and constructive debate among member states on how responsibility for implementing EU asylum and migration policies should be shared fairly; how member states should contribute to closer cooperation with countries of origin and transit, including by expanding opportunities for legal labor migration; and how member states should contribute to refugee protection worldwide through humanitarian and development cooperation and by hosting refugees resettled by UNHCR. Well-designed and carefully coordinated actions are required in these diverse policy fields to overcome the current deficiencies in the management of the EU's external border and build the capacity of the EU asylum system, both at the EU and member state levels, so that the EU can respond adequately to future refugee situations as they may arise.

1 Introduction

The new European Commission, like its predecessor, faces interrelated challenges in the areas of border management, irregular immigration to the EU, and asylum policy—all set within the larger context of EU relations with migrants' countries of origin in the European neighborhood and beyond. Although far fewer irregular immigrants are entering EU territory now than in 2015, this is in part the result of EU policies and practices in border management that may not be sustainable without significant additional effort (e.g., the EU-Turkey agreement) or may even be incompatible with humanitarian standards (e.g., the treatment of irregular migrants at some national borders in the Western Balkans).

Hence, the challenge remains of designing policies for border management and asylum that align with humanitarian principles, enjoy the support of European voters, and lead to a fair sharing of responsibility for refugee protection among EU member states and with host countries in the rest of the world. In this 2019 MEDAM Assessment Report, we identify and discuss key insights from our research and dialogue with stakeholders since 2016 to inform the design of policies under the new Commission. We emphasize the interdependence of policies in areas as seemingly separate as border management and refugee integration in low- and middle-income countries. Above all, we explain how cooperation with migrants' countries of origin and transit in different policy areas is key to effective and humane policies on asylum and immigration and on border management.

A process of rethinking asylum and migration policies in Europe must begin with conversations on a wide range of migration-related policies among stakeholders in Europe and, equally, in countries of origin and transit, especially in the European neighborhood and in Africa. The European Commission plays a key role in the design of many relevant policies and is therefore well placed to advance the debate. The insights that we present in this Assessment Report demonstrate how the current impasse in EU asylum and migration policies can be overcome and how politically sustainable, humane, and effective policies can be developed. In this process, while our 'insights' suggest directions, actual policies will be shaped by conversations and negotiations among stakeholders.

In this Assessment Report, we address three broad topics. First, what asylum and refugee policies do European voters want? Specifically, does the rise of right-wing, anti-asylum, anti-immigration parties in several EU countries indicate a broad shift by the EU population toward more skeptical attitudes on immigration and asylum? We paint a more nuanced picture that indicates a broad popular desire for state authorities to be able to control borders and the inflow of migrants, but also support for carefully regulated refugee protection (section 2).

Second, we discuss how control over the external EU border and immigration can only be exercised in close cooperation with countries of origin and transit (section 3). At the same time, it is often not in the economic or political interest of countries of origin and transit to help the EU restrict irregular migration—neither at the economy-wide and nor at the individual level. In the absence of legal migration opportunities, irregular migration may be better than no migration at all for migrants, the recipients of their remittances, and countries of origin. To address this conundrum, we discuss possible elements of a comprehensive approach to cooperation, which would extend not only to border management and the return and readmission of non-EU citizens who have no right to remain in Europe, but also to support for refugees in low- and middle-income countries, development assistance, and legal employment opportunities in the EU. We emphasize that effective cooperation must start by listening to the concerns of stakeholders in countries of origin and transit, and then jointly developing policy packages that benefit all parties and are therefore 'self-enforcing.'

Third, attempts to impose cooperation among EU member states on asylum and other migration-related policies by majority vote have failed in the past and, in our view, are unlikely to succeed in the future. Yet, refugee protection is in important ways a public good at the EU level and requires coordinated actions by the Commission and member states to be effective. We discuss how the new European Commission can make a fresh start on the long-standing legislative reforms of the European asylum system; how common actions in asylum and migration policy should be costed in the 2021–27 Multiannual Financial Framework; and how a monitoring system for member states' contributions to asylum policy can help to combine the necessary flexibility for member states regarding their contributions with the fundamental need for responsibility sharing and solidarity (section 4).

2 Public attitudes to immigration and asylum policy preferences in the EU

Lead Author: Martin Ruhs[1]

A key goal of MEDAM is to identify the opportunities for, and obstacles to more effective and sustainable common EU policy making in the area of asylum and migration. We argue that a better understanding of Europeans' public attitudes to immigration and asylum policies—how they vary across individuals and countries, how they have changed over time, and their causes and consequences—is of critical importance to promoting more cooperative and effective policy approaches among EU member states.

There are at least three interrelated reasons why it is important, from a policy perspective, to study public attitudes to migrants and public policy preferences vis-à-vis asylum and migration policies. First, public attitudes and policy preferences can—and often do—play an important role in the politics of migration, and in public policy making more generally. We know from existing research that migration and other public policies are not only determined by 'interests' (such as the economic interests of employers) and 'institutions' (such as national parliamentary systems and welfare states), but also by 'ideas,' including people's fundamental normative beliefs, values, and public attitudes. Understanding public attitudes is thus essential to help both explain current and past migration policies, and identify realistic opportunities for achieving more cooperative policies on migration across member states within the EU, and also between the EU and other countries.

A second and related reason stems from the political legitimacy and sustainability of public policies in liberal democracies. There can be many legal and moral reasons—such as the requirements of existing international laws or a perceived moral duty to offer protection to people in need—why public policies should not always follow public attitudes. It is also clear, however, that sustainable asylum and migration policies require at least a degree of public support. Misunderstanding the characteristics and causes of the public's support or opposition to different types of migration and migration policies, especially of their (alleged or real) changes over time, can contribute to policy responses that do not actually deal with the real issues driving public views and that, therefore, may ultimately prove unsustainable.

Many of the asylum and migration policy changes proposed or made in EU member states in recent years have been explicitly based on the argument that these new policies are needed because 'the public wants them' and 'they are necessary to win back public trust and confidence' in national governments. For example, the Austrian-Danish vision paper published in 2018 proposed to reduce radically opportunities to apply for asylum in Europe in order to restore public trust in government.[2] It is an important task for research to scrutinize these arguments made by politicians in different EU member states, and to provide greater clarity on what the available data on public attitudes do and do not say about public concerns related to migrants and refugees.

One specific issue that remains poorly understood, but which is particularly important for policy debates and policy making, is what people think about asylum and migration policies. All asylum and migration *policies* are multidimensional in the sense that they require multiple policy decisions, on different aspects of the overall policy package, at the same time. For example, asylum and refugee policies are not only about admitting 'fewer or more refugees' but also about other matters:

- how to regulate the assessment of asylum applications;
- what employment and welfare rights to grant to asylum seekers and recognized refugees;
- what to do with people whose applications for asylum are refused;
- whether and how to help first countries of asylum near conflict zones;
- the admission of refugees who are resettled directly from conflict zones; and
- the role of the EU in all these processes and decisions.

Most existing research focuses on public attitudes to migration rather than migration policies. As a consequence, we know very little about people's attitudes to the various different components of asylum and migration policies, which policy aspects generate the most support or opposition, or about how they would

view trade-offs and prioritize between competing policy objectives.

A third reason why a better understanding of public attitudes and policy preferences is critical to improved policy making relates to the challenge of designing sustainable *common* migration policy approaches across the EU. Almost five years after the large inflows of asylum seekers and other migrants during the so-called refugee crisis in 2015–16, member states remain deeply divided about how to reform and rebuild Europe's asylum, refugee, and migration policies. Some member states see the solution to the immigration challenge as lying in 'more Europe' (e.g., through centralization of the EU asylum system) and 'greater solidarity' among member states (e.g., through redistribution of refugees across countries). Other member states appear to have given up waiting on EU policy reform and instead pursued national or transnational policy responses, involving just a few 'like-minded' EU member states (e.g., joint measures by Austria and nine Balkan states in 2016 to help 'close down' the Western Balkan route,

and proposals by Austria and Denmark to limit severely the right to apply for asylum in Europe). This has further deepened divisions and raised profound questions not only about the meaning of 'solidarity' in Europe but also about the future of the EU and its ability to find common ground on a fundamental and, some would argue, existential policy challenge.

To find an effective and sustainable new EU policy approach to asylum and migration we need to understand how and why public attitudes to migration and migration policies differ across individuals and countries, and what role these differences play in the politics of migration across EU member states. Cross-country differences in attitudes that are due to underlying structural factors that cannot be changed in the short run can have notable implications for how to design common EU policies on asylum and migration. Arguably, policy debates in recent years have not paid enough attention to these potential variations across EU member states, or the implications for common policy making.

Figure 1 Average attitudes in EU member states included in all ESS waves, 2002–17

Source: Ademmer and Stöhr 2018a.

Notes: The sample is restricted to those states that are EU members as of 2018 and have been surveyed in each European Social Survey (ESS) wave to prevent EU averages from being skewed by the accession of new member states. Averages are calculated using ESS weights to control for the probability of being sampled for the survey within an individual country and the population size of the country. The averages are thus representative of the population distribution within the country and the population of EU countries covered here. The answer scale runs from 0 to 10, where 10 indicates the most positive assessment. Some EU countries are not covered in the graphs because the question has not been continuously asked in them.

◥ **Insight #1:** Attitudes to immigration have remained fairly stable across most European countries, but the perceived importance of migration as a public policy issue has increased.

There is a common perception in policy debates that the large increase in the numbers of asylum seekers and other migrants arriving in Europe during 2015 and 2016 has led to a marked change in public attitudes to immigration across EU member states, making them more negative. This alleged change in public sentiments toward migrants and refugees has frequently been used to justify changes to asylum and refugee policies at both national and EU levels.

There is no evidence to support the idea that Europeans have turned against immigration in recent years. Attitudes have been surprisingly stable and turned more positive toward migrants in many EU countries, with few exceptions. As shown in figure 1, survey data from the European Social Survey (ESS) for 13 EU member states suggest that Europeans assess the impact of immigration on their country and its economy and culture in a more positive light than they did in 2002—even in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee inflow. Hungary is a prominent exception. Public perceptions of the impacts of immigration vary relatively little across these EU member states.

On average, people are rather agnostic about the overall impact of migrants on their economies and societies.

While there has been no widespread turn against immigration, in some EU countries public attitudes have become more polarized. In other words, many people now hold stronger views about immigration and its impacts than they did in 2002. This is the case, for example, in Germany and Hungary (see figure 2).

Another significant change in attitudes to immigration that has occurred over the past few years relates to the salience of immigration as a public policy issue. Salience is not about positive or negative views on a particular issue, but about the relative importance of the issue to respondents. Public opinion data suggest a rapid increase in the salience of immigration during 2015–16 in many European countries and research suggests that this surge has positively affected electoral support for populist right parties (Dennison 2019; Dennison and Geddes 2018). The growing salience of immigration suggested by data on public attitudes is confirmed by MEDAM analysis of how migrants and refugees are discussed in social media. Social media is ever more used as a platform for immigration debates. The so-called refugee crisis dramatically multiplied the number of people discussing migration issues online (see figure 3).

Figure 2 Polarization within Hungary and Germany over time
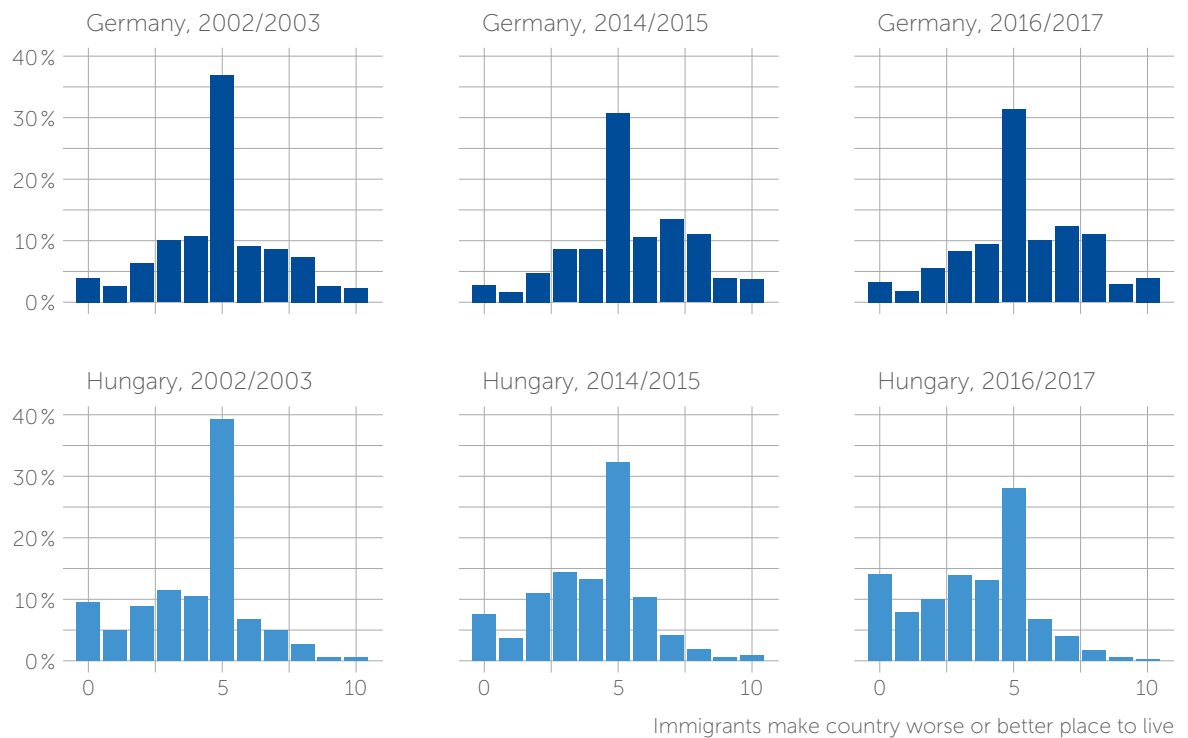
Source: Ademmer and Stöhr 2018a.

Note: Respondents were asked whether immigrants make a country a better or worse place to live in. The answer 0 indicates "much worse," 5 "neither worse nor better," and 10 "much better." Survey responses adjusted for sampling probability.

Figure 3 Facebook comments on migration-related articles in German regional newspapers, 2012–2017

a. Facebook user comments under articles on migration and asylum posted by German regional newspapers on Facebook
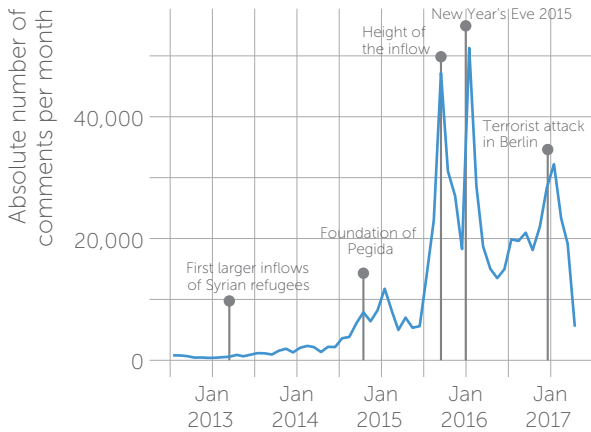
b. Number of unique Facebook commenters under articles on migration and asylum posted by German regional newspapers on Facebook

Source: Ademmer and Stöhr 2018b.

What are the implications of these changes for national and EU policies on asylum and refugees? First, although public attitudes to immigration have not become more negative in recent years, the increasing salience of the issue and the polarization of attitudes in many countries have compounded the policy constraints for policy makers. A basic but key implication is that, to respond effectively to changes in public attitudes over the past few years, policy makers need to be focused on the actual changes that have taken place, i.e., changes in degrees of polarization and salience rather than in sentiments toward migrants. In particular, there is an urgent need to consider the causes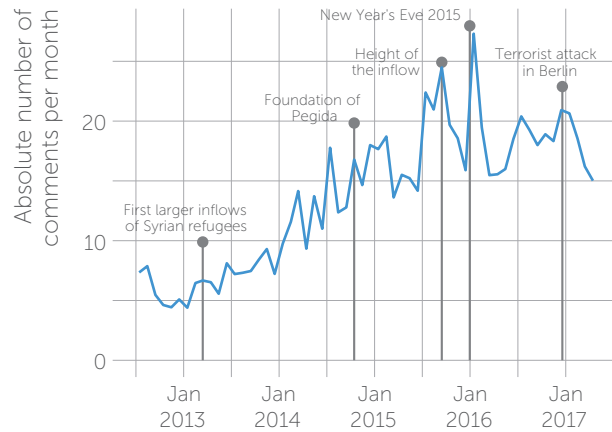 of the increasing salience of immigration as a policy issue, especially among those parts of the population with negative views on immigration. The rising scale of immigration is likely to be a factor, but so is the perceived loss of control over borders during 2015–16. It is also important to reflect critically on various processes of politicization of migrants and refugees in domestic policy debates.

A second, related implication concerns political narratives and communication. Politicians who wish to respond to the growing salience of immigration, including among people with negative views of migrants, need to use words and language that are relevant to the values and beliefs of people holding those views (see Dennison and Geddes 2018). Increases in the salience of immigration often coincide with periods when there is a perceived loss of control over immigration. Policy narratives need to include the language of 'control', but without suggesting that all aspects of immigration can be controlled (which would be an unrealistic

expectation and thus constitute a counterproductive policy strategy).

Insight #2: Attitudes to immigration tend to be more positive in local areas with greater shares of migrants. However, this relationship is influenced by the socioeconomic context: as the socioeconomic conditions of local areas worsen (e.g., with higher unemployment rates and lower incomes per capita), the positive effects of the share of migrants on attitudes become smaller and they eventually disappear in the most deprived areas.

How are people's attitudes to immigration linked to the share of migrants in the local population of a particular area? Does an increase in the physical presence of migrants—on the streets, in the neighborhoods, at work, on the bus, at school—exert a positive or a negative effect on how the majoritarian populations perceive migrants? These are important questions not only for research but also for public policy debates about, for example, whether and how asylum seekers or refugees should be distributed across different local areas within and across EU countries.

In theory, the impact of the presence of migrants on attitudes to immigration in a particular area may be shaped by two potentially competing forces. On the one hand, a higher share of migrants in the local population may promote greater contact with pre-existing residents and thus encourage mutual understanding and more positive attitudes toward immigration ('contact theory'). On the other hand, a higher share of migrants may create feelings of increased threat asso-

ciated with the development of different types of fears, such as intensified competition for jobs and more pressures on public services ('threat theory'). Given these potentially counteracting forces, the actual relationship between the concentration of migrants and attitudes to immigration is a central question for empirical research.

Most existing studies have found that individuals who reside in neighborhoods or small areas (i.e., provinces or small regions) with a higher migrant concentration have, in general, more positive views toward immigration compared with individuals who live in areas with a lower concentration. These findings are typically explained with reference to contact theory. Yet, with few exceptions, most of these studies have disregarded the complexities of the environment in which individuals live, including the socioeconomic context in which contacts with migrants occur.

It is important to ask whether and how the socioeconomic characteristics of an area might affect the relationship between the share of migrants and attitudes to immigration. In practice, contact and threat might coexist but the extent to which one of the two theories prevails is likely to be related to the conditions under which such contact or exposure occurs. While an increase of immigrants in poor areas does not necessarily mean that attitudes toward immigration will worsen, poor socioeconomic conditions may discourage the development of positive attitudes. Conversely, contexts where social exchanges occur with less competition for resources are more likely to enhance positive attitudes to immigration.

To shed light on these crucial questions, MEDAM research (Hoxhaj and Zuccotti 2019) has investigated whether and how the relationship between the presence of migrants and individuals' attitudes toward migrants is influenced by the socioeconomic characteristics of the area (as measured by local unemployment rates and income per capita). In line with the existing research literature, this new research finds that individuals who reside in areas with a higher share of migrants have, in general, a more positive attitude towards them (figure 4 illustrates the positive estimated effect of the migrant share when unemployment is low or per capita income high). However, this estimated effect is conditioned by the socioeconomic context: The positive marginal effect of the migrant share on attitudes decreases as socioeconomic conditions worsen.

Nevertheless, even in areas where one would expect threat mechanisms to occur to the greatest extent—i.e., areas with the poorest socioeconomic conditions, where competition for public services and jobs is probably the highest—an increase in the migrant share does not significantly worsen individuals' attitudes towards migrants: When the unemployment rate is above 12.5 percent (panel a) or log GDP per capita below 9.5 (€13,360; panel b), the 'zero line' lies within the boundaries of the confidence intervals around the estimated effects, meaning that the estimated effects are not statistically different from zero.

These new research findings have implications for national and EU debates and for policy making on migration, especially related to policies that aim to distribute asylum seekers and refugees across different

Figure 4 How are attitudes toward immigrants in Europe shaped by regional contexts?
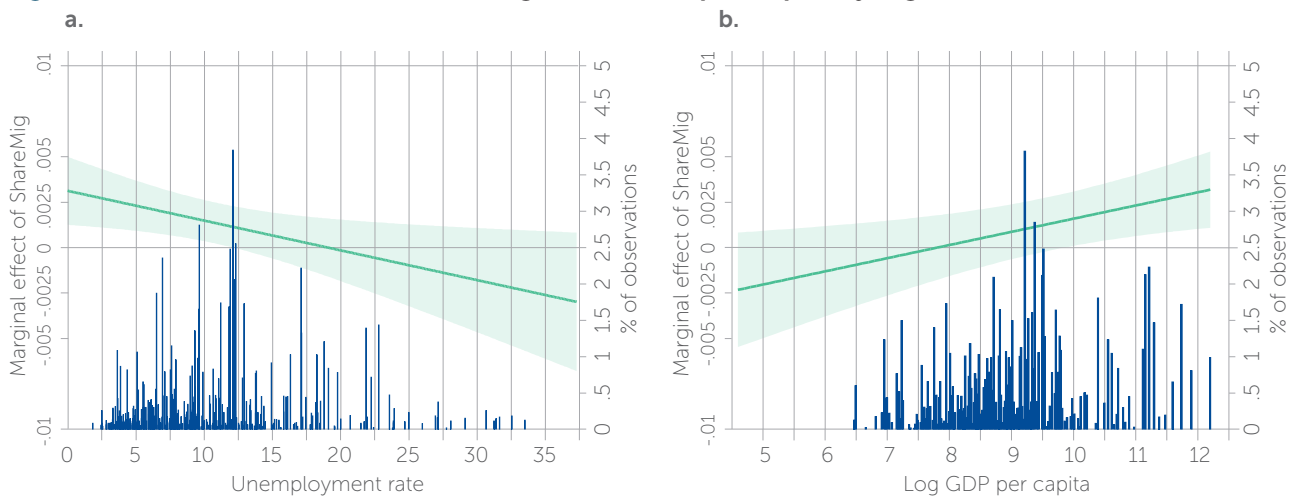
Source: Hoxhaj and Zuccotti 2019.

Notes: This figure shows how local socio-economic factors such as unemployment (Graph 1) and GDP per capita (Graph 2) influence the relationship between the share of immigrants and attitudes to immigration. The negative (positive) inclination of the bold line in Graph 1 (Graph 2) indicates that the worst the socio-economic conditions of the NUTS 3 area, the lower the positive effect of the immigrant's share on attitudes to immigration. The effect of socio-economic conditions is relevant mostly in better off areas (significance intervals presented by the dashed lines are both above the 0 line).

ShareMig = share of migrants in the local area population.

NUTS 3: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS), are standardized geographies that are often used for the elaboration and presentation of cross-national statistics in Europe The definition of NUTS3 includes areas with a size between 150.000 and 800.000 inhabitants.

local areas within countries, or among EU countries. One basic but important implication is that any policy promoting the spatial (re-)distribution of refugees should consider the socioeconomic characteristics of the areas in which they will reside. MEDAM research suggests that placing refugees in areas with better socioeconomic characteristics is more likely to promote migrants' acceptance by the local population than placing them in poorer areas (as many countries currently do).

▌ **Insight #3:** Europeans are generally committed to policies that provide protection for asylum seekers and refugees but they express support for more policy controls, such as limits and conditions, in asylum and refugee policies. There is no evidence of widespread public support for highly restrictive policies that eliminate protection and assistance.

Despite the growing prominence of asylum and migration in public policy debates in Europe, we know surprisingly little about the types of asylum and refugee policies that Europeans support or oppose. While there is a lot of research literature on public attitudes to immigration and individual immigrants in Europe and other high-income countries (e.g., Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014), there has been considerably less research on attitudes to asylum seekers and refugees (but see Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2016), and very limited work on asylum and refugee *policies* (exceptions include Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2017). A notable limitation of the existing studies that do deal with public preferences on asylum/refugee policies is that they focus on isolated policy questions rather than taking a comprehensive approach that considers the inherent multidimensionality of the policy issue. Consequently, we have a poor understanding of the policy features and changes that would generate the most public support or opposition to the overall asylum and refugee policy.

To address this gap in existing research, and to contribute to ongoing policy debates about how to reform national and common refugee policies in Europe, MEDAM researchers conducted a new study (Jeannet et al. 2019) that involved 'conjoint survey experiments' with 12,000 people across eight European countries, including Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Sweden (1,500 online survey interviews with a nationally representative sample in each country). Conjoint experiments are particularly useful for studying public attitudes toward multidimensional (policy) issues.

Rather than asking respondents to assess and rate certain policies independent of one another, conjoint experiments require respondents to make a series of constrained choices between pairs of policy options that differ across several 'dimensions' making up the overall policy. The methodology facilitates analysis of how specific policy features affect both support and opposition to the overall asylum and refugee policy.

The new MEDAM study defined an asylum and refugee policy in terms of six underlying policy dimensions that regulate the following aspects:

- the right to apply for asylum;
- the resettlement of already recognized refugees to the EU from non-EU countries;
- the return of asylum seekers whose applications for protection have been unsuccessful;
- family reunification for recognized refugees;
- the role of the EU in the governance of asylum and refugee issues; and
- financial assistance to non-EU countries hosting refugees.

Each of these six policy dimensions takes on two or three possible values, which are all listed in table 1 below.

The aim of the research is to establish what types of policy changes would generate the most public support or opposition. We concentrated on studying support and opposition to fundamental policy principles rather than very specific policy options. So, for example, we asked about 'annual limits' to asylum applications in order to explore support for moving away from the current status quo ('no limits'), not because we wanted to assess support for a very specific policy option. We used the idea of an annual limit as an example of a control measure in this policy dimension. The different values in the other dimensions should be considered and interpreted in a similar way, e.g., as illustrative examples of policy changes that would imply a fundamental change in the underlying policy principles.

The key results of the study are shown in figure 5. The figure shows the effects of changes within policy dimensions on the probability of accepting the overall 'asylum and refugee policy' relative to the reference category. In each policy dimension, the first value (i.e., the policy feature listed first) serves as the reference category. For example, introducing an annual limit on the number of asylum applications increases the probability that an individual would support the overall asylum and refugee policy by just over 5 percentage points, while not allowing any family reunification for recognized refugees reduces the probability of acceptance of the overall policy by just under 5 percentage points. In the context of a conjoint experiment, these effects are quite large.

Figure 5 shows that, compared with the respective reference categories within each policy dimension, introducing an annual limit on the annual applications for asylum, having a resource requirement for family reunification, and conditioning financial assistance to

Table 1 Possible values (or 'policy features') of the six policy dimensions that make up the overall asylum and refugee policy

Policy dimension	Randomly allocated values in experiment
Applications for asylum	1. Anyone can apply for asylum in [YOUR COUNTRY] with **no annual limits**. 2. Anyone can apply for asylum in [YOUR COUNTRY] until an **annual limit** is reached.
Resettlement of recognized refugees	1. **No resettlement** of United Nations-recognized refugees to [YOUR COUNTRY] 2. **Low resettlement** of United Nations-recognized refugees to [YOUR COUNTRY] (1 person per 10000 citizens per year, i.e. [country-specific population]). 3. **High resettlement** of United Nations-recognized refugees to [YOUR COUNTRY] (2 or more persons per 10,000 citizens per year, i.e. [country-specific population]). [country-specific population]: For Italy (60 million) in 1b) "6,000", in 2b) "more than 12,000"
Return to danger	1. Refused asylum seekers are **never** sent back to countries where they could face serious harm 2. **In some cases**, refused asylum seekers can be sent back to countries where they could face serious harm.
Family reunification for recognized refugees	1. A recognized refugee **can always** bring his/her spouse and children 2. A recognized refugee can bring his/her spouse and children **only if the refugee can pay for their cost of living** 3. A recognized refugee **cannot** bring his/her spouse and children
Decisions on asylum applications	1. Each EU country makes its own decisions on asylum applications within its territory. 2. A centralised European Union agency decides applications for asylum for all EU countries.
Financial solidarity	1. [YOUR COUNTRY] provides **unconditional** financial assistance to non-EU countries that host refugees. 2. [YOUR COUNTRY] provides financial assistance to non-EU countries that host refugees **only if** they help reduce asylum seekers coming to Europe. 3. [YOUR COUNTRY] provides **no** financial assistance to non-EU countries that host refugees.

Source: Jeannet et al. 2019.

non-EU countries hosting refugees on their efforts to reduce migration to Europe would *increase* Europeans' support for asylum and refugee policies.

On the other hand, public support would be *reduced* by a high rate of resettlement, sometimes sending failed asylum seekers (whose applications for protection have been unsuccessful) back to dangerous places (e.g., violating the principle of non-refoulement), never allowing family reunification for refugees, having an EU agency rather than national governments assess and decide on applications for asylum in Europe, and unconditional assistance to non-EU countries hosting large numbers of refugees.

While there appears to be a widespread perception that public attitudes to immigration and immigration policies differ considerably across European countries, the new MEDAM research finds that many of the key features of the public's preferred asylum and refugee policies are remarkably similar across countries. The

patterns of Europeans' policy preferences are broadly similar across different countries, although there are cross-country differences when it comes to resettlement, the role of the EU, and financial assistance to non-EU countries hosting refugees. For example, in Hungary both 'low' and 'high' rates of resettlement have negative impacts, while in Spain they both increase acceptance of the overall asylum and refugee policy. Italy is the only country where having a central EU agency assess and decide on asylum applications does not decrease public support.

Overall, this research suggests that Europeans support additional controls and conditions on various aspects of asylum and refugee policies. The results also suggest, however, that highly restrictive measures that would imply moving away from fundamental principles underlying current policies, such as sending people back to dangerous places (non-refoulment) and abolishing family reunification

Figure 5 Effects of changes in policy features on the probability of accepting the overall asylum and refugee policy (percentage points)
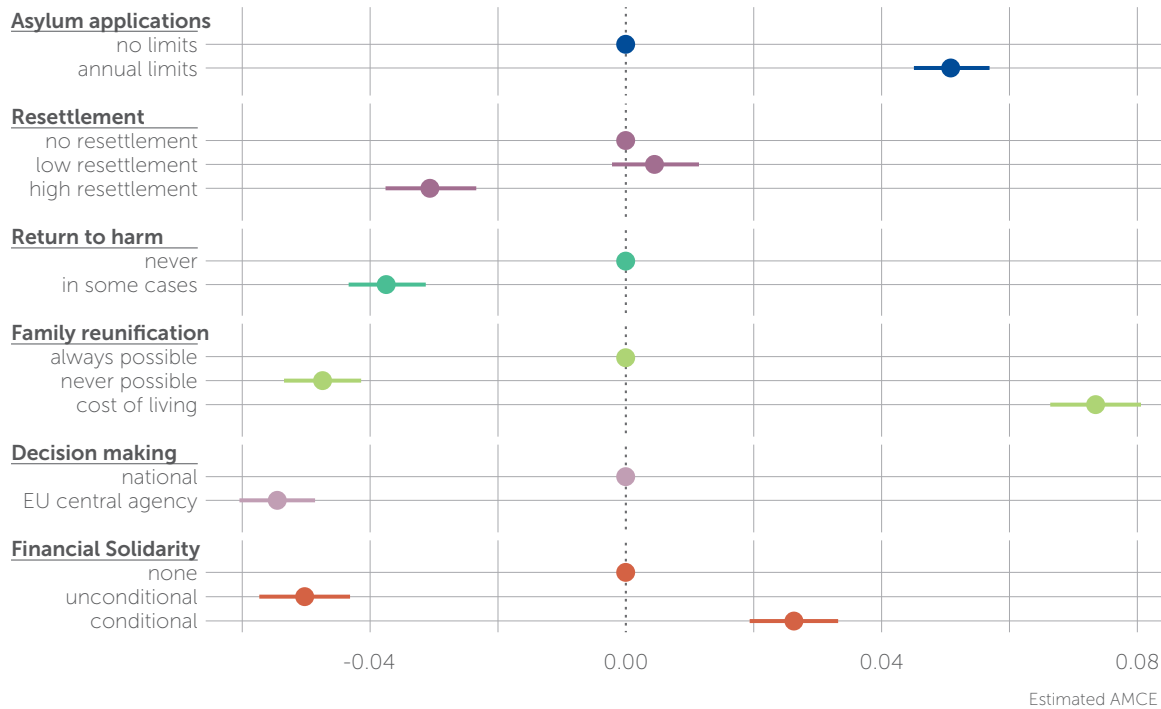
Source: Jeannet et al. 2019.
Note: This figure shows Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCEs). Dots indicate point estimates with 95 percent confidence intervals from linear (weighted) least squares regression. Those on the zero line without confidence intervals denote the reference category for each policy dimension. If a confidence interval cuts across the zero line, the change in the policy feature does not have a significant effect on an individual's support or opposition to the overall asylum and refugee policy.

(the right to family life), would reduce rather than increase public support.

A key implication of these three insights is that, contrary to the impression created in public debates in many European countries, it is possible to garner public support for asylum and refugee policies that provide protection and assistance, but to achieve this, policy makers need to think carefully about policy designs (e.g., when and how to use policy limits and conditions, and how to distribute refugees across geographical areas) and about how to communicate their policy ideas and objectives to the public. The design of policy needs to take into account what we know about the likely responses from existing residents to various different policy options. The communication of public policies needs to relate to the reasons behind the increasing salience of immigration as a policy issue, including concerns about a lack of control.

3 Cooperation with non-EU countries to manage migration to the EU

Lead Author: Matthias Lücke

3.1 The setting: Gaps in the global governance of refugee protection and diverging interests among countries of origin and destination

It is widely accepted that international migration should be safe, orderly, and regular in order to benefit all stakeholders.[3] Public concerns about immigration in EU member states relate often (though not always) to irregular immigration, particularly to the implied lack of state control (section 1). For example, in the presence of irregular immigration, the destination country can neither determine the number of immigrants overall, nor can it ensure that immigrants meet specific criteria to facilitate their economic and social integration into the host society (from not having a criminal background to possessing language and professional skills).

Irregular immigration occurs in many different forms: irregular immigrants (i.e., those without the required travel documents/visa) enter the EU via its external land border, arrive by boat on the Mediterranean coast, or overstay their (otherwise regular) EU visa. Most irregular immigrants apply for asylum in the EU, rather than live clandestinely in an EU member state; of all applicants for asylum, more than half were recognized as refugees in 2018[4] (protection ratios

vary substantially across countries of origin). Hence, while working to constrain irregular immigration is in line with good migration policy practice as defined by the Global Compact for Migration and with the wishes of European voters, EU member states need to be aware that potential irregular immigrants may have a valid claim to international protection and should have access to effective protection either in their regions of origin or in Europe.

When irregular immigrants apply for asylum after arriving in the EU, a host of policy questions arise that can only be answered satisfactorily by EU member states cooperating among themselves and with non-EU countries of origin and transit: First, which EU member state should be responsible (financially and logistically) for receiving the asylum seekers and conducting asylum procedures? Second, which EU member state should be responsible for hosting those who are recognized as refugees, supporting their economic and social integration? Third, how should EU member states and countries of origin share responsibility for the safe return of those who are not rec-

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[3] The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly on December 19, 2018, www.iom.int/global-compact-migration.
[4] See Eurostat, "Asylum Statistics: Statistics explained," Brussels (2019), 8, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/5777.pdf.

ognized as refugees? Effective return and readmission procedures are crucial for preserving the integrity of the EU asylum system and limiting irregular immigration into the EU by those not entitled to international protection.

Beyond these questions lies a more fundamental one: How should EU member states share responsibility for hosting refugees (financially and logistically) with countries of first asylum outside Europe? Most asylum seekers in the EU come from outside Europe (applicants from Turkey and Russia are notable exceptions). In the process of traveling to the EU, they typically transit at least one non-European country that hosts significant numbers of their compatriots; for example, while many refugees from Eritrea live in the EU, a large number also live in Ethiopia.[5] As a result, refugees who arrive in Europe represent only a small proportion of refugees globally and are distinguished by being physically robust enough and having access to sufficient financial resources to undertake an often strenuous and expensive irregular journey.

The global governance system for refugee protection offers little practical guidance on responsibility sharing among host countries. The logic of the 1951 Refugee Convention implies that the first safe country that an asylum seeker reaches is responsible for conducting asylum procedures and, if international protection is granted, for hosting the newly recognized refugee (Mysen 2017). While the Preamble of the 1951 Convention recognizes that some host countries may be overburdened, it merely calls for international cooperation in this case, without guidance as to how responsibility may be shared equitably.[6] At the same time, there is no presumption in the Convention that asylum seekers may freely choose their country of asylum; rather, Article 31(1) of the Convention states that illegal entry into a Contracting State is not to be penalized (only) if asylum seekers come "directly" from a territory where they are persecuted.

Without a mechanism to allocate asylum seekers to host countries (either globally or within the EU), potential host countries that are willing to offer decent reception conditions may be concerned they will receive an excessive number of asylum seekers, ending up overburdened. This concern is exemplified by the large inflow of irregular immigrants into several EU member states, including Sweden and Germany, while they kept their borders relatively open in the autumn of 2015. In this situation, potential host countries face strong incentives to deter asylum seekers by offering less and less favorable reception conditions (or to close their borders to refugees outright like Sweden at end-2015); ultimately, a race to the bottom may develop

among potential host countries in terms of reception conditions. The problematic treatment of irregular immigrants and asylum seekers at the external EU border by several member states (Strik 2019) and the ongoing controversies about search and rescue operations in the southern Mediterranean (Carrera and Cortinovis 2019) reflect attempts by EU member states to limit irregular immigration by whatever means are available to them.

This situation reflects the public goods nature of refugee protection: while all signatory states of the 1951 Convention and their citizens presumably value the fact that persecuted individuals have a right to be protected, they are perfectly content when other countries, rather than they themselves, provide the required protection and bear the associated cost (Hatton 2015). In this sense, a race to the bottom among potential host countries constitutes free-riding behavior that typically arises when the supply of a public good is insufficiently coordinated among producers.

Importantly, in low- and middle-income host countries where most refugees live, such detrimental incentives tend to be less pronounced. International humanitarian and development donors often fund a large share of the fiscal cost of hosting refugees. Given their limited administrative capacity, developing host countries may still find it challenging to ensure access to public services, such as schools and health care, for both refugees and residents. Enough investment in housing and public infrastructure may also be difficult to fund and implement. Yet, with sufficient international support for refugees and host societies, resident populations may even benefit economically from the presence of refugees through higher demand for locally produced goods and services and, consequently, higher real incomes for residents (Luecke and Schneiderheinze 2017). If refugees can live with dignity in their primary host countries, they also have less reason to undertake secondary migration to Europe (Kuschminder and Waidler 2019).

By contrast, individual EU member states face strong incentives to deter asylum seekers from entering their territories: member states are individually responsible for the hosting of asylum seekers and the economic and social integration of recognized refugees, with limited financial support from the EU budget (see section 4.2 below for our proposals for more financial responsibility sharing among EU member states). Furthermore, successive Dublin Regulations have allocated responsibility for receiving asylum seekers and hosting recognized refugees to the member state where asylum seekers first enter EU territory. As a result, southern European member states would

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[5] Reportedly, 174,000 Eritrean refugees lived in Ethiopia at end-2018 (*Zeit Online* 2018), out of just under 600,000 Eritrean refugees worldwide (UNHCR 2019, Annex table 2).

[6] See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees, UNHCR Communications and Public Information Service, Geneva (2010), 13, https://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html.

normally receive a disproportionately large number of asylum seekers, relative to their share of the EU's total population. While this has occurred in small member states, especially Greece, Cyprus, and Malta (see section 4.1 below), other member states have failed to properly register newly arriving immigrants, allowing them to move on to more desirable host countries within the Schengen area. There are also problematic interventions by some member states on the external EU border to deter irregular immigrants and poor reception conditions in other member states (see section 3.2, insight #5 below).

This analysis suggests that policies to limit irregular immigration into Europe while protecting refugees must be designed and implemented in close cooperation with countries of origin and transit. On the one hand, allowing irregular immigration to go ahead unrestricted would overburden those EU member states that would receive most irregular immigrants and asylum seekers. On the other hand, ongoing attempts by EU member states to limit irregular immigration by closing their external borders and ports to asylum seekers conflict with humanitarian standards and may not be sustainable in the medium to long run. Going it alone is simply not a viable strategy in border and migration management for the EU and its member states.

However, it may be politically costly for non-EU countries of origin and transit to cooperate with the EU, especially for the return and readmission of their citizens who have no right to remain in the EU. After all, irregular migration is often preferable to no migration at all from the point of view of irregular migrants (who would not migrate otherwise) and their countries of origin. Therefore, partner country governments will require meaningful compensation to cooperate with the EU in border and migration management. We argue below that in addition to development cooperation, legal migration opportunities to the EU are one promising area for such cooperation. In the end, the underlying agreements with countries of origin and transit (whatever their formal or informal nature) need to be 'self-enforcing': at all times, each party needs to find it in its own best interest to adhere to all provisions because not fulfilling a particular (inconvenient) commitment would lead to the collapse of the agreement, leaving all parties individually worse off.

Insight #4: Limiting irregular immigration into the EU while safeguarding refugees' access to protection (either in Europe or in regions of origin) requires close cooperation not only among EU member states, but also with countries of origin and transit. Yet, countries of origin, transit, and destination may have diverging interests with respect to border and migration management. Therefore, cooperation needs to cover a sufficiently wide range of policy areas so that all parties can be sure to benefit, and the underlying agreements become politically sustainable and self-enforcing.

3.2 Give and take: Areas of cooperation with countries of origin and transit, especially in Africa

As we have explained in the previous section, it is mainly the EU and its member states that are interested in stricter border and migration management at the EU's external border. To achieve this objective, active support from countries of origin and transit is essential. At the same time, supporting EU efforts to tighten border management is often unpopular in countries of origin and transit. Thus, the EU and its member states may need to make important concessions in other policy areas, including legal migration opportunities, to arrive at politically sustainable and self-enforcing agreements. In this section, we discuss five insights regarding possible dimensions of EU cooperation with countries of origin and transit, especially in Africa. In section 4 below, we discuss implications for cooperation among EU member states.

Insight #5: If the EU wants to enforce its visa policy and control the inflow of non-EU nationals into the EU, it needs to work with neighboring countries to limit access to EU territory to those non-EU citizens who have valid travel documents. Otherwise,

particularly if there are no restrictions on irregular travel along the informal Mediterranean migration routes and on subsequent entry into the EU, large numbers of asylum seekers might overwhelm reception capacity in EU member states. Still, given the ongoing abuses at the EU's external border, it must be emphasized that border and migration management must be in line with humanitarian standards and respect migrants' rights.

Allowing only travelers with valid documents to enter the EU may conflict with the safeguarding of access to protection for refugees: after all, some individuals without the necessary travel documents may wish to apply for asylum in the EU and may be recognized as refugees. This dilemma is rooted in the incomplete global system of governance for refugee protection. On the one hand, neither asylum seekers nor recognized refugees are allocated to particular host countries. Individuals can apply for asylum in any country in the world if they can physically reach it. As a result, without restrictions on incoming travel, destination countries with favorable reception conditions for asylum seekers would likely find themselves overwhelmed by large numbers of applicants (a case in point is Sweden in late 2015).

On the other hand, no one has the right to travel to any particular country unless that country allows them in. Accordingly, the most attractive destination countries for asylum seekers, including in the EU, have long sought to restrict incoming travel to individuals with valid travel documents. Visa applicants must convince a visa officer that they do not intend to remain in the destination country beyond the validity of their visa; if an applicant were to indicate that they plan to apply for asylum in the EU, they would almost certainly be denied a visa, irrespective of their individual circumstances.

Short of turning the external EU border into a new Iron Curtain, restrictions on access to EU territory can only be enforced through close security cooperation with neighboring countries and providers of international transport services (such as airlines). The latter face substantial fines if they transport individuals without valid travel documents to the EU (or to many other countries). Under the broad heading of European Integrated Border Management, many neighboring countries work with the EU to combat people smuggling and curb illegal border crossings at the EU's external land border or across the Mediterranean.

Some EU member states have attempted to strengthen control over their external EU borders through national measures, including by shutting search and rescue vessels out of Italian ports and artificially slowing down the processing of asylum seekers entering Hungary from Serbia and entering Poland from Belarus. In a similar vein, it has been proposed that the EU transfer all asylum seekers to 'disembarkation platforms' (reception centers) in non-EU countries, which (among other things) ignores the fact that most asylum applications are not filed by individuals who have arrived by boat. Some of these measures may not be compatible with humanitarian standards or international law (Strik 2019). They also threaten to undermine cooperation with partner countries by suggesting wrongly that existing challenges can be resolved by EU member states acting unilaterally. Rather, irregular migration, refugee protection, and the safeguarding of migrant rights, including along irregular migration routes, need to be resolved through cooperation and responsibility sharing among EU member states and with countries of origin and transit.

Based on these general principles, several specific challenges need to be addressed. The following three examples illustrate the underlying approach: First, while the closure of the Western Balkan migration route in early 2016 effectively reduced the number of irregular migrants traveling to Central Europe, a significant number of migrants were left stranded along the way without access to asylum procedures, subsistence support, or options for legal employment or assisted return home. There are also persistent reports of human rights violations by border guards when irregular migrants are caught attempting to cross borders. As most Western Balkan countries are candidates for EU accession, the EU is well placed to assist Western Balkan countries in establishing fully functional asylum systems and subsistence support for migrants.[7]

Second, EU cooperation with Turkey has been successful in that Turkey has reduced sharply the number of irregular migrants traveling from Turkey to Greece, while the EU and its member states have supported Turkey as it hosts more than three million refugees from Syria and elsewhere (European Stability Initiative, 2019b). For the EU-Turkey understanding to be sustainable, it will be important, inter alia, to strengthen the legal status of refugees in Turkey (including from countries other than Syria) so that rejected asylum seekers can legally be returned to Turkey from the Greek islands. In turn, this will require a reliable, long-term commitment by the EU and its member states to provide financial and technical support for the hosting of refugees in Turkey and for their economic and social integration (see also insight #6 below).

Third, in many African countries, interest in emigration is widespread,[8] especially among young

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[7] An early proposal by UNHCR and IOM aims for a regional approach for better refugee protection in the Western Balkans (UNHCR and IOM 2013).
[8] According to the Gallup World Poll (Esipova, Pugliese, and Ray, 2018), 33 percent of Sub-Saharan Africans responded affirmatively to the question: "Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move PERMANENTLY to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?"

people, and emigrants seek out a wide range of destination countries within Africa, in the Gulf region, and in Europe. For many, migration is a step-by-step process where objectives and destination countries may change over time (Crawley et al. 2016). Along the way, migrants not only encounter opportunities to employ their talents and fulfill their aspirations, but also require large amounts of information on alternative options to make good decisions (MEDAM 2018, section 3.1). The EU and its member states can continue to work with countries of origin and transit and international organizations to maintain migrant support and information centers along migration routes to provide objective information on the risks that migrants face as they move ahead, convey a realistic picture of the living conditions of irregular migrants in Europe, point out alternative options for legal migration in Africa or elsewhere, and arrange support for voluntary return home (typically through the International Organization for Migration, IOM) or, possibly, resettlement to non-EU countries (through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR). Experience shows that such support can be provided even in dangerous conditions such as Libya, where it represents a lifeline for migrants stuck in this conflict situation (MEDAM 2018, section 1.2).[9]

In sum, the EU and its member states cannot fill the gaps in the international governance of refugee protection by hosting all the refugees who would like to live in Europe (and have the financial means and access to people smuggling networks to travel to Europe irregularly). In the absence of rules on how asylum seekers and recognized refugees are allocated to host countries (at both the global and the EU levels), the EU and its member states need to negotiate with countries of origin and transit, especially in the EU's neighborhood, on how to share responsibility for curbing irregular migration while ensuring that persecuted individuals have access to protection and safeguarding the rights of all migrants irrespective of their legal status (as confirmed recently by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration).

🔖 **Insight #6:** Low- and middle-income countries host most of the world's refugees. As a matter of humanitarian principle and to discourage secondary migration to the EU, the EU should share actively in the responsibility for protecting these refugees through adequate long-term financial and technical support and by working with host countries to facilitate the refugees' economic and social integration.

If access to the EU for irregular migrants is reduced through joint border management with neighboring countries (see insight #5 above), this will have a two-fold effect on migrant flows: (i) emigration overall will be lower because one option—irregular migration to the EU—will become more costly and less attractive; and (ii) irregular migrants will be diverted from the EU to other destination countries. In particular, persecuted individuals who might be recognized as refugees if they could reach EU territory will remain in other host countries, which are often poorer than most EU member states (a case in point are Syrians now living in Lebanon or Turkey).

This is a problematic outcome because hosting large numbers of refugees presents several related challenges to developing countries with limited financial and administrative capacity: first, refugees typically require financial support for their subsistence until they are sufficiently integrated into the host economy to earn their own living; second, refugees may rely on public services (schools, health care) or infrastructure (water, sanitation, housing) that are already in short supply; and third, some residents may experience negative wage or price shocks due to labor market competition from refugees.

Importantly, responsibility for protecting refugees can be shared across countries not only by allocating refugees to particular host countries, but also through financial assistance from rich countries to poorer host countries. As discussed in section 3.1 above, adequate financial support would not only cover the subsistence of refugees, but also fund investment in public services and infrastructure. External support would benefit not only refugees, but also residents by generating additional demand for locally produced goods and services (as well as for imports) and raising residents' incomes in the process. The experience of many low- and middle-income host countries that receive external financial support demonstrates that the presence of refugees may even have positive economic effects overall on residents (Luecke and Schneider-heinze 2017).

Already, high-income countries provide substantial humanitarian assistance to refugees and their low- and middle-income host countries through international organizations, especially UNHCR. However, year after year, available humanitarian funding falls short of realistically defined needs. In 2018, funding was available for only 56 percent of total needs, which were calculated at just under US$25 billion (UN OCHA 2019, 8). Filling this funding gap would be equivalent to harvesting low-hanging fruits: working with other high-income countries, the EU should not find it especially difficult to raise a modest US$11 billion per year and enable many refugees to live with dignity who now exist in dire circumstances.

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[9] UNHCR (2019b) summarizes UNHCR resettlement of vulnerable migrants from Libya via Niger through end-May 2019; IOM (2019) reports on ongoing assistance to migrants in Tripoli through IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return program.

Beyond increasing humanitarian assistance, external financial support may also be provided on a long-term basis through development cooperation to ensure that public services, infrastructure, and economic opportunities are available to both refugees and residents. Most refugees live in "protracted" situations as defined by UNHCR: 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five consecutive years or more in a given host country (UNHCR 2019, 22–23). Thus, it is now considered good practice in refugee protection to permit and facilitate the full economic and social integration of refugees in their host country (MEDAM 2018, section 3.3). Even so, many developing countries have been reluctant, for fear of hurting residents and generating negative attitudes toward refugees, to allow refugees to fully integrate into the labor market (Zetter and Ruaudel 2016). Recent cooperation between the EU and low-income host countries, including Jordan and Ethiopia, for the full economic integration of refugees (Barbelet et al. 2018), appear promising and point the way toward enhanced engagement in the future.

Insight #7: Whatever the level of external financial support, small host countries may simply be overburdened by a large number of refugees. In such cases, the EU should participate actively in resettlement schemes for vulnerable refugees.

There may be circumstances when countries of first asylum are overburdened by a large number of refugees and no amount of external support can compensate, for example, for the lack of physical space for housing or the scarcity of other critical resources; Syrian refugees in Lebanon or Rohingyas in Bangladesh may be cases in point. In such situations, resettlement of particularly vulnerable refugees to the EU and other higher-income countries can provide relief. The number of individuals resettled through EU-coordinated programs has grown steadily to just under 25,000 in 2018.[10]

Since 2016, the EU has aimed to establish a permanent resettlement framework under its auspices, complementing a variety of efforts by member states, regional bodies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Coordinating resettlement efforts at the EU level is a promising approach because the number of slots for resettlement is quite small: for every refugee resettled, many more are bound to remain in the countries of first asylum. Therefore, resettlement may usefully be combined with policies to promote the economic and social integration of refugees in their host countries. To be effective, such policies must be based on joint efforts by host country authorities and the donor community. The EU is often in a better position than individual member states to negotiate the necessary agreements and ensure that all parties are committed to implementing them. By hosting some refugees, rather than only providing financial support, the EU becomes a more credible participant in such efforts.

Insight #8: The integrity of the EU asylum system depends on effective procedures for the return and readmission by their countries of origin of non-EU citizens who have no right to remain in the EU. Yet, many countries of origin find it politically difficult to support the involuntary return of their citizens. Despite many agreements on the books, cooperation on return and readmission is often less than smooth in practice. The EU should explore with countries of origin how additional legal migration opportunities, skill partnerships, study visas, etc., can make support for involuntary returns politically sustainable in countries of origin and provide a viable alternative to individuals who might otherwise contemplate irregular migration.

Even if the external EU border is managed well in cooperation with neighboring countries (see insight #5 above), some immigrants will enter the EU irregularly and apply for asylum. Still more asylum applications are filed by individuals who have entered the EU regularly. EU member states need an effective asylum system to respond to the needs of individuals facing persecution while ensuring that those applicants who are not recognized as refugees return to their countries of origin. In the absence of effective procedures for return, the filing of an asylum application would, in practice, allow irregular immigrants to remain in the EU indefinitely—which would defeat the purpose of EU immigration and visa policies.

In countries of origin, however, government support for the involuntary return of their citizens is deeply unpopular (e.g., Zanker and Altrogge 2019). At the individual level, families rely on remittances from emigrants irrespective of legal status. Economy-wide, remittances are an important source of external financing in many developing economies. A large-scale involuntary return of emigrants might also increase unemployment. Consequently, many countries of origin are slow to cooperate with requests for the readmission of their citizens irrespective of any existing agreements.

This state of affairs is unsatisfactory for all stakeholders not least because it has encouraged some EU member states to prevent irregular migrants from entering EU territory in ways that violate humanitarian standards and may be illegal (see the discussion

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[10] See European Commission, "Delivering on resettlement: World Refugee Day—20 June 2019," Brussels (2019), https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20190619_managing-migration-factsheet-delivering-resettlement_en.pdf.

of insight #5 above). A possible way forward lies in all stakeholders recognizing the legitimate interests of (i) EU member states in maintaining the integrity of their visa and immigration policies and implementing effective return and readmission procedures; (ii) countries of origin in not disrupting the inflow of remittances; and (iii) emigrants, irrespective of legal status, in not being uprooted from their host countries where many earn their own living and are well integrated socially and economically.

One approach to reforming relevant policies and practices in line with this logic would consist of these building blocks: first, applying new policies only to irregular migrants who arrive in the EU after a cut-off date (in practice, from now on) and regularizing the legal status of those irregular immigrants who will realistically never be returned to their countries of origin;[11] and second, conditional on active cooperation with return and readmission by each country of origin, expanding opportunities for legal labor migration to the EU with supporting measures to promote language skills and vocational training and to facilitate the social and labor market integration of new immigrants.

Additional legal migration opportunities would need to target low- to medium-skilled workers because high-skilled (university-educated) individuals already face few obstacles migrating to the EU. Under this approach, the purpose of additional legal migration opportunities would not be to address shortages of particular categories of workers in destination countries; rather, the main objective would be to create a political environment conducive to cooperation on border and migration management, especially return and readmission. Furthermore, legal migration opportunities might provide a viable alternative to irregular migration for some individuals—although experience shows that, in and of themselves, legal migration opportunities tend to reduce irregular migration only in a minor way (Barslund, di Salvo and Ludolph, 2019). Rather, legal migration opportunities would be a crucial component of a changed policy mix and irregular migration would be reduced mainly through more effective return and readmission practices.

Hence, programs for additional legal migration to EU member states would be designed with a view to ensuring (only) that immigrants are gainfully employed and provide for their own subsistence on a sustainable basis. A variety of approaches are conceivable and should be explored—from seasonal worker programs to skill partnerships for vocational training in countries of origin that may result in employment either at home or in the EU (Triandafyllidou, Bartolini and Guidi 2019). Given the potential for abuse and

exploitation, it will be important to design programs with appropriate oversight and involve employment agencies and similar bodies to ensure that migrants have access to relevant information, including to resolve disputes with employers, throughout their stay.

A somewhat similar program has been in place in Germany since 2016 (for at least until end-2020) for citizens of Western Balkan countries (Bither and Ziebarth 2018). It was established as part of an understanding with Western Balkan governments in 2015 that involved, among other elements, cooperation in curbing irregular migration to Germany and readmitting failed asylum seekers returning from Germany. Up to 20,000 new work visas are available annually for citizens of Western Balkan countries provided they have an employment contract—which is a much less stringent requirement than is normally applied to job seekers without a university education. The quotas have broadly been filled each year and asylum applications from Western Balkan countries (which are now also considered safe countries of origin by Germany) have declined sharply.

While such bilateral agreements (be they formal or informal) between individual EU member states and non-EU countries may work as intended, the EU has a potentially important role to play in coordinating national offers of slots for legal migration and negotiating on behalf of all member states with non-EU countries: the EU makes the ground rules for the European asylum system and plays an increasingly important part in securing the external border (witness the expansion of Frontex), migration policy, humanitarian aid, and development cooperation. Thus, the EU is involved in many elements of a possible framework for cooperation with non-EU countries on border and migration management (including involuntary return and readmission), vocational training (through development cooperation), and legal labor migration. Although it remains a power of EU member states to determine labor market access for non-EU nationals, the EU should provide guidance and coordination in negotiations with countries of origin and transit toward a shared understanding of the challenges and appropriate policy responses (Barslund et al. 2019).

Insight #9: Contrary to earlier studies, our empirical research indicates that income growth in low- and middle-income countries of origin tends to reduce emigration, as does development assistance for better public services and social infrastructure. Nevertheless, the reductions in emigration due to higher income or development assistance are too small to render development cooperation an effective tool to manage emigration.

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[11] The European Stability Initiative has made similar proposals with a focus on the Central Mediterranean migration route (European Stability Initiative 2018) and Gambia (European Stability Initiative 2019a).

Many contributors to the public debate on asylum and migration policies in Europe call for measures to 'combat the root causes of migration' in order to reduce irregular migration. The underlying assumption is that development assistance will reduce poverty and thus reduce incentives for irregular emigration. It is clear that this approach addresses mostly mixed migration flows, where many migrants are motivated by economic considerations, rather than forced migration that is mostly due to violent conflict.

The efficacy of this approach has been called into question because, when observed in a cross section of countries, emigration prevalence rises along with per capita income up to a maximum at approximately US$8,000 per year and then declines at higher income levels (a 'migration hump;' Clemens and Postel 2018). This observation has been rationalized on the grounds that very poor people may be too poor to afford the cost of migrating; only as their incomes rise can they begin to realize their migration intentions. This effect fades at higher income levels where improving living conditions mainly reduce incentives to emigrate and thus emigration prevalence.

If the 'migration hump' accurately describes the evolution of emigration prevalence over time, successful development cooperation that raises per capita income will increase, rather than reduce emigration prevalence because per capita income is below the crucial threshold in most developing countries. In this case, the notion that development cooperation can address the 'root causes' of migration and effectively reduce emigration prevalence would be misguided.

Recent research suggests a more nuanced picture (Lucas 2019, 17-19). Based on a dataset with a time-series as well as a cross-section dimension and controlling for other possible determinants of migration, Benček and Schneiderheinze (forthcoming) find that gross emigration flows consistently decline as GDP rises. Similarly, Lanati and Thiele (2018, 2019) find that higher development assistance is associated with lower emigration prevalence overall; this effect is larger when development cooperation is targeted at public services and social infrastructure rather than income growth and when the statistical analysis is restricted to 'transferred aid' (excluding, for example, support for refugees from developing countries hosted by the donor country). Once again, this effect is small: doubling development assistance would reduce emigration prevalence by only 15 percent.

This discussion suggests that development cooperation may be a useful tool to pursue other policy objectives, but it is not suited to managing irregular migration to the EU. Migration from low-income to high-income countries needs to be managed closely to ensure that migrants are well integrated into the labor market at destination and their presence benefits all stakeholders. Targeted measures like skill partnerships may be part of the institutional framework of development cooperation, but their usefulness would be based on the skills transmitted, rather than on their impact on per capita income. Development assistance would also not help to avoid the difficult decisions to be made in enforcing asylum decisions and visa policies, including the involuntary return of individuals who have no right to stay in the EU.

4 Implementing flexible solidarity

Lead Author: Mikkel Barslund[12]

International cooperation and solidarity are key ingredients in managing migration to and from EU member states and contributing to refugee protection world-wide. A number of policy tools are available that enable the EU and its member states to meet their humanitarian responsibility towards non-EU countries that host refugees. These include resettlement of UNHCR-recognized refugees to the EU, the provision of humanitarian visas in countries of origin or transit, and financial support to non-EU host countries and international organizations that assist refugees. Moreover, legal pathways for labor migration may provide alternative options for some individuals who would otherwise contemplate irregular migration, serve as an instrument for economic development, and become part of a more effective migration management framework in cooperation with countries of origin and transit (section 3).

This section details how the external dimension of asylum and migration policy should be complemented by reforms to internal policies under the EU's Common European Asylum System (CEAS) (section 4.1), and how further centralization and support are needed to enhance solidarity among member states.[13] We build upon the core arguments put forward in MEDAM (2017, 2018) to focus on two key elements: more financial support from the EU budget for member states as well as the international community (section 4.2), and an EU mechanism to monitor member states' contributions to border management and refugee protection (section 4.3). The monitoring mechanism would support a peer review by member states of how common and inter-connected tasks in asylum and migration policy are shared by individual member states in line with the principle of flexible solidarity.

4.1 Moving forward on the Common European Asylum System

Since the number of asylum applications multiplied in 2015, following the war in Syria, reform of the EU's asylum and migration policy has been one of the main policy challenges for the EU. Central to the efforts to reform the CEAS is a package of seven proposals—some of which update existing legislation—initially tabled by the European Commission in 2016.[14]

The seven legislative proposals aim at increasing harmonization of asylum procedures and reception conditions, responsibility sharing among member states, and EU technical capacity. The first part of

the package includes a proposal for the reform of the Dublin Regulation (the 'first country of arrival' principle); amendment of the Eurodac Regulation in order to increase, harmonize, and better share information among member states; and establishment of an EU asylum agency, to replace the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) with a fully-fledged EU agency. The second part of the package includes a proposal for reforming the Reception Conditions Directive, to harmonize reception conditions across member states with the aim of limiting secondary movement; a new qualification regulation and a new asylum procedure

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[12] The team writing this chapter included Mikkel Barslund, Andreas Backhaus and Mattia Di Salvo.

[13] The interdependent nature of internal and external migration policies is laid out in MEDAM (2017, 2018). An effective EU asylum and migration policy requires both dimensions to be well functioning.

[14] See European Commission, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Union Resettlement Framework and amending Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council," COM(2016) 468 final, Brussels (July 13, 2016), https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160713/resettlement_system_en.pdf; see also MEDAM (2017, 2018) and European Commission, "Managing Migration in all its aspects: progress under the European agenda on migration," COM(2018) 798 final, Brussels (4 December 2018), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/eu-communication-migration-euco-04122018_en_1.pdf, and other references herein.

regulation, to set common standards for granting international protection and define the relevant procedures; and, finally, an EU resettlement framework to complement the national programs.

Making progress on the legislative agenda

Insight #10: The start of the new European Commission's mandate provides an opportunity to reconsider the approach taken towards the reform of the Common European Asylum System. The current package approach—whereby agreement is sought on all legislative files simultaneously—means that the contentious proposal for reforming the Dublin Regulation is blocking any further progress. Pursuing a file-by-file approach and moving forward on those individual legislative proposals where there is broad agreement among member states can break the present deadlock.

There is broad agreement on five of the seven proposals, which have reached the trilogue negotiations between the Council, the European Parliament, and the Commission, though none of them has been finally adopted.[15] The two remaining proposals, for reform of the Dublin Regulation and the Asylum Procedures Directive, have led to well-known controversies and the Council has been unable to reach a common position.[16]

In our second MEDAM Assessment Report (MEDAM 2018, section 1.1), we emphasized the need for progress on harmonizing member states' asylum systems by adopting the agreed part of the current reform package as well as the need for faster and more effective asylum procedures. The key arguments are that protracted and differentiated asylum procedures not only lead to differential treatment of similar asylum cases and increase the risk of onward movement from the country of first arrival (absconding) if asylum prospects are perceived to be better in another EU country; they may also hinder integration for individuals who need protection, as well as return to countries of origin for people without a valid claim for legal residency in the EU (Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Lawrence 2016).

There are no legal or technical barriers to adopting each proposal on its own.[17] Apart from enhancing the harmonization of asylum systems (and asylum application outcomes), the proposals on the transformation of EASO and the European resettlement framework are also important for the wider application of solidarity, both within the EU and with non-EU countries hosting refugees: The asylum agency will improve support to member states temporarily overburdened by applications, while the resettlement framework will enable centralized, EU-level cooperation with non-EU countries on resettlement, for example, in connection with people evacuated from Libya to Niger (see section 3.2, insight #7, and MEDAM 2018, section 1.1).

While there is scope for agreeing on the majority of the files in the CEAS reform package, we remain cautious as to the political feasibility of reforming the Dublin Regulation toward mandatory relocation among EU member states—mainly because member states continue to be deeply split on this issue. Various member states have tabled variants of the initial proposal during their presidencies of the European Council, but there are few signs that the Council has moved closer to adopting a common position over the last three years; differences in viewpoints may even have widened since 2016.

Given these realities, to make progress on the CEAS the next European Commission should abandon the 'package approach' and focus its efforts on those files where there is already substantial agreement among EU member states and progress can be made. The Commission should embed any reform of the Dublin Regulation into a wider framework of flexible solidarity with voluntary relocations (see below and section 4.3). A shift in priorities will also leave more energy and room to pursue a flexible framework for voluntary relocations, which would help to address the current situation involving rescued migrants in the Mediterranean.

A flexible solidarity approach to reforming the Dublin Regulation

Reform of the Dublin Regulation is often seen as a magic bullet in establishing a common EU migration and asylum policy. Yet, agreement on any one version of the Dublin reform that have circulated in recent years would not make a fundamental difference on the ground in terms of where asylum seekers are hosted, except for the small Mediterranean countries of Greece, Malta, and Cyprus. In general, according to one measure of how asylum applications are dispersed among member states, asylum applications are now more equally shared among EU member states than at any point in time over the last 20 years (figure 7). Given the current distribution of asylum applications, any relocation mechanism that redistributes asylum

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[15] These five proposals are the amendment of the Eurodac Regulation, the new qualification directive, the Reception Conditions Directive, the new European agency for asylum regulation and the new EU resettlement framework.
[16] See MEDAM (2017, 2018) for more detailed accounts.
[17] See European Commission 2018, ibid.

Figure 6 Number of asylum applications per 1,000 inhabitants and their dispersion among EU countries (coefficient of variation), 1999–2018
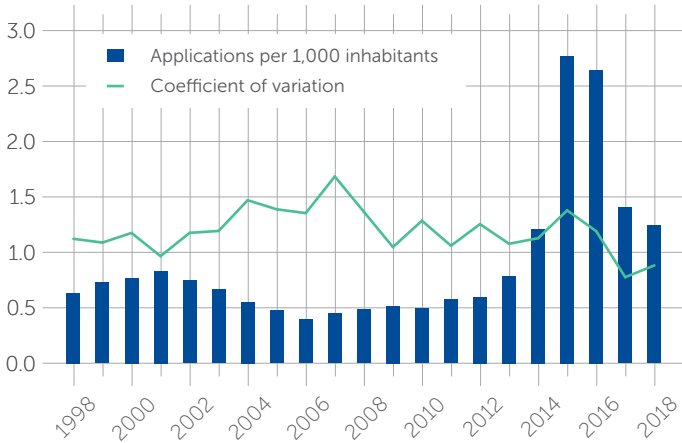
Source: Own calculations based on data from Eurostat.
Note: The coefficient of variation is the standard deviation of number of applications divided by the number of applications per 1,000 persons.

seekers more equally among larger member states would imply asylum seekers being relocated from Germany to Poland, Romania, or Italy – countries that currently receive few applications relative to the size of their populations. With the divisiveness sown by the initial proposal for reforming the Dublin Regulation, it is difficult to imagine such an arrangement running smoothly;[18] furthermore, it might lead to more irregular secondary migration (MEDAM 2018, section 1.1).

Greece, Malta, and Cyprus continue to receive a disproportionately large number of asylum applications relative to their populations. For Malta and Cyprus, the number of individuals applying is small in absolute numbers—8,000 applications combined in 2018—whereas the problem for Greece is the lack of returns to Turkey following the EU-Turkey agreement. The situations in Malta and Cyprus can be handled as part of a wider framework for voluntary relocation (as discussed below).

A total of around 64,000 people applied for asylum in Greece in 2018. A small share (less than 10 percent) was transferred to other EU countries under the Dublin Regulation for family reasons (European Stability Initiative 2019b).[19] However, hotspots on the Aegean Islands continue to fill up beyond capacity, and it is well documented that the conditions are appalling (AIDA and Greek Council for Refugees 2019). The

situation in Greece is further complicated by the increase in arrivals across the land border with Turkey (18,000 in 2018). These individuals are not covered by the EU-Turkey agreement and a third of them are Turkish citizens.[20]

Improving conditions for asylum seekers on the Greek islands requires efforts by the Greek government to improve accommodation on the islands as well as the effectiveness of the Greek asylum system. It also requires support from member states in terms of assisting EU agencies, notably EASO, in helping Greek efforts. EU institutions need to work to improve returns of asylum seekers to Turkey under the EU-Turkey agreement and to facilitate credible commitments to relocate recognized refugees from Greece to other EU member states under a framework of flexible solidarity (MEDAM 2018, section 1.1).[21] Finally, full implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement also involves the relocation of Syrian refugees from Turkey to the EU in return for Turkey taking back asylum seekers from the Greek islands.

A long-term approach to addressing irregular crossings of the Mediterranean has to rely on international cooperation on a number of issues: (i) who undertakes search and rescue of people at sea; (ii) access to proper asylum procedures for those rescued, acknowledging that in the past most people crossing were not eligible for protection (Barslund, Di Salvo, and Ludolph 2019); and (iii) the difficulties of returning individuals not in need of protection once they are in the EU (discussed in section 3.2, insight #8).

Regarding search and rescue operations (i), if non-EU countries are not able to fulfill their commitments or EU member states request help in fulfilling theirs, the Border and Coast Guard Agency can offer extensive EU-level support. Regarding access to asylum (ii), individuals arriving in the EU from across the Mediterranean should have their asylum applications processed by the member state of arrival with support from the new asylum agency and assistance with the return of unsuccessful applicants to their countries of origin (iii) from the Border and Coast Guard Agency (MEDAM 2017). As would be the case for all other member states, if a country on the Mediterranean shore is overburdened, relocation among a coalition of willing member states should be pursued, following a systematic process.

With a long-term strategy to reduce irregular immigration through better border management together with neighboring countries, faster return of unsuccessful asylum applicants, expanded opportunities

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[18] By the same token, the so-called crisis resilience argument for mandatory relocation, i.e., that mandatory relocation would work well should the EU have another spike in asylum seekers, is not particularly robust.
[19] Very few transfers are executed toward Greece.
[20] See Frontex, "Risk Analysis for 2019", 20 February 2019 (Warsaw), https://frontex.europa.eu/publications/risk-analysis-for-2019-RPPmXE
[21] See European Commission, "Managing migration in all its aspects: Progress under the European Agenda on Migration," COM(2018) 798 final, Brussels (2018) and European Commission, "Progress report on the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration," COM(2019) 126 final, Brussels (2019).

for regular labor migration to Europe, and more slots for resettling refugees directly from non-EU countries (section 3.2), the large Mediterranean countries are unlikely to receive a disproportionately high number of asylum applications relative to many other EU countries (see also MEDAM 2018, sections 1.1 and 1.2 for a more in-depth discussion).

Insight #11: Only a few small EU member states are currently overburdened by a disproportionately high number of asylum applications (mainly Cyprus, Malta, and Greece). Given continuing disagreement over the feasibility and extent of a mandatory relocation scheme for asylum seekers, it should now be a priority to establish working procedures for a coalition of willing countries to relocate asylum seekers rescued in the Central Mediterranean. Such procedures would go a long way to relieve the few countries that are truly overburdened.

Flexible solidarity means more solidarity

A common, well-managed migration and asylum policy at the EU level has benefits for all EU member states, along with migrants and asylum seekers. At the same time, mismanagement in this policy area by individual member states can have negative consequences for other member states in the form of more irregular crossings into the EU and subsequent secondary movements. The Schengen area, which appears to be valued by all member states, implies in principle that the EU's external borders are shared by all member states. Moreover, because international cooperation is important, there is value in acting together as a bloc, as was the case with the EU-Turkey agreement.

Moving forward on a common asylum policy without mandatory relocation does not imply a need for less EU involvement in migration and asylum policies, nor the need for less solidarity. However, because of differences in geography, history, cultural ties with non-EU countries, and ingrained preferences toward migration, member states are bound to play different roles in asylum and migration policy. At the same time, member states should share the fiscal burden of hosting refugees fairly, even if their roles differ. This calls for EU financial and technical support for those member states that bear a disproportionate fis-

cal burden, even if member states remain responsible for managing their own asylum systems because centralization at the EU level is legally and politically difficult. Moreover, our research on attitudes towards EU asylum policy suggests that centralizing decisions on asylum application in an EU agency would reduce public support for asylum and refugee policy (section 2).

For optimal management of the external border, we have welcomed a stronger role by an EU institution in protecting external borders, as is foreseen with the build-up of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. The agency is also expected to assist member states in carrying out the return of individuals who have been asked to leave EU territory. For an effective migration policy, the importance of being able to return individuals not found to be needing protection is discussed in section 3 (insight #8) and a previous MEDAM report (2018, section 1.2).

Discussions of solidarity often center around the distribution of spontaneous asylum seekers (i.e., those entering the host country at a land border, airport or seaport after being rescued at sea). Yet, a comprehensive approach to migration management entails a broader view also covering legal migration, resettlement of refugees from non-EU countries, and emergency evacuations using humanitarian visas (section 3; MEDAM 2018). This approach calls for financial support from the EU budget not only for member states hosting spontaneous asylum seekers or those relocated within the EU or refugees resettled directly from non-EU countries, but also to support labor migration when it furthers the goals of the overall migration policy of the EU.

Financial solidarity is most easily attainable through the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Adequate funding for the Border and Coast Guard Agency and the proposed asylum agency is imperative. Adding more support from the EU budget toward the costs of integration of recognized refugees is also important, as is more support for non-EU countries hosting refugees and cooperating with the EU on migration management (section 3). In some instances, EU institutions will also have to rely on member states for physical or human resources, such as equipment for the Border and Coast Guard Agency or staff for asylum hotspots on the Greek islands.

4.2 An EU budget to support needed change

Negotiations on the upcoming MFF for the period 2021–27 were officially launched in May 2018 when the European Commission presented its proposal for the next long-term EU budget. The Commission's budget proposal includes several items related to asylum and migration policy. We discuss them in this section and propose new items to support and strengthen the principle of solidarity in this policy area.[22]

The Commission proposal for the Asylum and Migration Fund and European Social Fund+

The current Commission proposal envisages that overall, the funds dedicated to the management of external borders, migration, and asylum will reach nearly €33 billion, compared with €13 billion in the MFF 2014–20.[23] An overview of the proposed changes in comparison with the expiring MFF can be found in table 2. These funds do not include either *EU external actions* in general or *EU humanitarian aid* in particu-

lar, part of which will be used in the area of migration and asylum, as explained below. Despite the increased attention on asylum and migration, funds for asylum, migration, and borders only make up 3 percent of the total forthcoming proposed MFF (Westerby 2018a). Of the total €33 billion for these items, only €11.3 is allocated to the *management of migration and asylum*, most of which is earmarked for the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF) and the rest for the decentralized agencies.[24]

Notably, in the proposed MFF 2021–27, the AMF focuses on short-term actions related to migration and asylum (such as the initial reception and registration of asylum seekers) as well as the *initiation* of integration measures (such as language courses). Funding for the medium- to long-term integration of non-EU nationals in general and refugees in particular is instead foreseen under the European Social Fund+ (ESF+), which, under the current proposal, will merge several existing funds.[25] While the Commission allocates a total budget of €101.2 billion to the ESF+, and the socioeconomic integration of non-EU

Table 2 Budgetary changes in the MFF 2021—27 compared with the MFF 2014—20
(€, billion)

External borders				Migration and asylum			
MFF 2014—20		**MFF 2021—27**		**MFF 2014—20**		**MFF 2021—27**	
Internal Security Fund (borders and visas)	2.7	Integrated Border Management Fund	9.3	Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund	6.9	Asylum and Migration Fund	10.4
Decentralized agencies	2.9	Decentralized agencies	12	Decentralized agencies	0.45	Decentralized agencies	0.9
Total	**5.6**		**21.3**		**7.35**		**11.3**

Source: European Commission, "Migration and border management," Migration and border management—legal texts and factsheets, Brussels (2018), https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6dea386a-5269-11e8-be1d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

[22] Negotiations on the next MFF are still ongoing and various European institutions and stakeholders continue to submit their comments and proposals. Recently, the European Parliament passed an extensive legislative resolution on the proposed Asylum and Migration Fund (see European Parliament, "European Parliament legislative resolution of 13 March 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Asylum and Migration Fund," (2019), http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0175_EN.pdf). To what extent the Commission will pick up the proposed changes and amendments remains to be seen.
[23] See European Commission, "Migration and border management," Migration and border management—legal texts and factsheets, Brussels (2018), https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6dea386a-5269-11e8-be1d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.
[24] These are the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), EASO, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA), Europol, and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). See European Commission, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Asylum and Migration Fund," Brussels (2018), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:4ea760be-6f0d-11e8-9483-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF.
[25] The ESF+ is intended to merge the existing ESF, Youth Employment Initiative, Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived, Employment and Social Innovation Programme, and EU Health Programme.

nationals is listed as a specific objective of the ESF+, the current proposal for the fund does not ring-fence financial means exclusively for this purpose (Lecerf 2019; Westerby 2018a).[26]

Funding for EU border agencies, external actions, and humanitarian aid

The EU budget for the *management of external borders* is to see an even stronger boost. The marked increase in the budget for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency is intended for the creation of a standing corps of 10,000 border guards. The EU agency for asylum will replace EASO.[27]

Regarding the *EU's external actions,* the MFF 2021–27 envisages the creation of a "Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument" (NDICI). A corresponding regulation has been proposed by the Commission.[28] The instrument will bring together nine separate instruments and funds from the current MFF, as well as part of the European Development Fund, which was outside the MFF 2014–20 (Immenkamp 2019). The Commission proposes a total budget of €89.2 billion for the NDICI in the new MFF, which represents an increase of 11 percent compared with the expiring MFF. The bulk of this budget is foreseen to cover programmed cooperation with neighborhood and all other non-EU countries, while smaller amounts are earmarked for thematic issues of a global nature or political flagship initiatives, and for crisis management, conflict prevention, and resilience building. The remaining funding forms an additional flexibility cushion for emerging challenges and priorities. Importantly, the proposal for the NDICI foresees a horizontal spending target of 10 percent for tackling the root causes of irregular migration and creating conditions for legal migration and well-managed mobility. In addition, the rapid-response and the flexibility cushion could be used to mobilize short-term responses to critical situations related to migration.[29]

The next MFF further foresees an increase in the budget for EU humanitarian aid by 30 percent to €11 billion. EU humanitarian aid will continue to go to vulnerable people exclusively through the EU's humanitarian partners, such as United Nations agencies, NGOs, and international organizations, but not gov-

ernments. While no funds are explicitly earmarked for migration and asylum, *EU humanitarian aid* provides emergency assistance to refugees and displaced persons in various conflict zones around the globe.[30] For example, in 2017 the EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid program gave more than €2 billion, or 90 percent of its annual budget, to projects for forcibly displaced persons and their host communities in 49 countries.[31]

Reactions to the Commission proposal

A central line of criticism from stakeholders in European asylum and migration policy is the intended allocation of short-term reception and early integration measures to the AMF and the delegation of the medium- to long-term socioeconomic integration to the ESF+. Stakeholders object that integration policy may not easily be reduced to a series of chronological steps, which is why the intended split may put the effectiveness of the resource allocation at risk (ECRE and PICUM 2019). Others fear a gap in funding for medium- to long-term integration due to the ESF+ not explicitly earmarking funds for the socioeconomic integration of non-EU nationals (Westerby 2018b).

Another concern refers to the future involvement of civil society and local authorities in integration efforts. Statistics on disbursements of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund as part of the MFF 2014–20 show that the involvement of these actors differs strongly across member states (Westerby 2019). National governments that tend to oppose actions on integration might be able to preempt NGOs and others from receiving funding from the AMF and ESF+ (ECRE and PICUM 2018), while the necessity for funding recipients to obtain co-financing might serve as an additional barrier to small and nongovernmental actors (Westerby 2018b).

Recommendations regarding the split competencies of the two funds involve promoting the earmarking of specific percentages of the funding directly managed at the EU level for civil society actors and local authorities, while simultaneously limiting the allocation of national EU asylum and migration funding to state authorities and agencies (ECRE and PICUM 2018; Westerby 2019).

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[26] See also European Commission, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)," Brussels (2018), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-european-social-fund-plus-regulation_en.pdf.

[27] See European Commission, "Proposal on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)," (2018).

[28] See European Commission, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument," Brussels (2018), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-neighbourhood-development-international-regulation_en.pdf.

[29] See European Commission "Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)," Neighbourhood and the world—legal texts and factsheets, Brussels (2018), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-neighbourhood-development-cooperation_en.pdf.

[30] See European Commission, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument," Brussels (2018), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-neighbourhood-development-international-regulation_en.pdf.

[31] See European Commission, "EU humanitarian aid," Neighbourhood and the world—legal texts and factsheets, Brussels (2018), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-humanitarian-aid_en.pdf.

In all likelihood, the potential problem of vague competencies for integration being shared by the two funds cannot be fully addressed within the proposed MFF 2021–27, as neither will the funding for the AMF be increased so much as to cover the entire integration process, nor will the competencies for integration be fully transferred to the ESF+. Focusing on effective monitoring and improving the availability of statistics on disbursements and recipients is hence a more feasible way forward.

A compensation mechanism for flexible solidarity

◣ **Insight #12:** Negotiations on the EU's 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) offer an important window for strengthening financial solidarity among member states with respect to asylum and immigration. A dedicated budget line that compensates member states for each asylum seeker received (possibly above a threshold) would be one effective tool to ensure more solidarity. The same mechanism could be used to support the voluntary relocation of refugees among member states.

In MEDAM (2018), we envisaged a centralized system of financial burden sharing resting on the principle of flexible solidarity. Such a mechanism would pay financial compensation to member states that receive more applications for asylum than foreseen by a distribution key (i.e., rather than relocating asylum seekers in line with the distribution key). Similar to that envisaged by the European Commission, our proposed distribution key for financial compensation would give equal weight to each member state's GDP and population relative to the EU total in the computation of a 'target' number of asylum applications for each member state. A one-time compensation of €10,000 would be disbursed for every additional application accepted above the designated number of applications. This proposed compensation amount is in line with the Commission proposal for a Union resettlement framework, which foresees compensation of €10,000 from the EU budget for each refugee resettled by an EU member state participating in the framework.[32] A compensation of that order would go some way in covering initial costs of reception after arrival.

The proposed amount would follow the individual in the case of relocation to another EU country. To support relocation, it may be preferable to introduce further compensation on top of the €10,000. However, for simplicity, we leave this out of the calculation below.

Table 3 Financial compensation based on flexible solidarity

Year	Compensation (€, billion)		Major recipients (>10% of total compensation)	
	Trigger at 100%	**Trigger at 150%**	**Trigger at 100%**	**Trigger at 150%**
2012	0.84	0.66	SE, AT, BE, FR	SE, AT, BE
2013	1.05	0.67	SE, DE, HU	SE, HU, AT
2014	1.77	1.77	SE, DE, HU	SE, DE, HU
2015	5.42	5.39	SE, DE, HU, AT	SE, DE, HU, AT
2016	5.31	5.17	DE	DE
2017	1.70	1.00	DE, EL, IT	EL, IT
2018	1.35	0.63	EL, DE, FR	EL, CY
2019	1.33	0.56	DE, EL	EL
2020	1.28	0.60	EL, DE, FR	EL
Total	**20.06**	**16.44**		
Total 2017–2020	**5.67**	**2.78**		

Source: Eurostat.
Note: Own calculations based on the number of asylum applications; figures for the years 2019 and 2020 are extrapolated; AT=Austria; BE=Belgium; CY=Cyprus; DE=Germany; EL=Greece; FR=France; HU=Hungary; IT=Italy; and SE=Sweden.

[32] See European Commission, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Union Resettlement Framework and amending Regulation (EU) No. 516/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council," COM(2016) 468 final, Brussels (2016), https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160713/resettlement_system_en.pdf.

In table 3, we present hypothetical compensation payments based on our proposed mechanism. For the period 2012–18, our calculations are based on Eurostat statistics for first-time applications for asylum,[33] while we extrapolate the corresponding numbers for 2019 and 2020 as a simple moving average of the two previous years. Choosing a compensation payment above €10,000 per applicant would lead to a proportional increase in the amounts in table 3.

Assuming that the compensation mechanism would kick in if a member state accepted more than 150 percent[34] of its designated first-time applications, compensation payments would have been €0.6 billion in 2018. By far the largest share (85.7 percent) of these payments would have been allocated to Greece, with Cyprus and Malta also being among the beneficiaries. For 2017, Italy would also have received significant compensation, which, even with lower compensation for Austria, would have raised the total compensation payments to close to €1 billion for that year. Our projections for 2019 and 2020 indicate a funding need of less than €0.7 billion per year. Notably, our backward-looking calculations for the years 2012 and 2013 preceding the latest migration crisis are very close to our projections for the last two years of the current MFF. However, if the compensation mechanism was activated at 100 percent instead of 150 percent, it would double the funding requirement in 2017–20. This is due to first-time applicants being more spread out across member states during this period in comparison with 2015 and 2016. As a result, more member states would exceed the 100 percent threshold than at the peak of the migration crisis.

In view of the total financial envelope for migration and asylum in the MFF 2021–27 outlined above, we consider these sums to be both financially and politically feasible. Unsurprisingly, the implied compensation would quickly escalate in the course of a new inflow of asylum seekers at the level of 2015–16 if imbalances in the distribution of first-time applications remained at present levels. Both the Commission's proposition for a mandatory relocation of asylum seekers and our conception of flexible solidarity in terms of financial compensation would be stretched to their respective limits in such a situation.

Insight #13: The next MFF should also increase support for other important elements of European migration and asylum policies. The EU Asylum and Border and Coast Guard Agencies should be put in a position to provide additional assistance to member states as needed. Likewise, the EU budget should support programs aiding resettlement from third countries (insight #7), humanitarian visas (when warranted), and labor migration schemes (insight #8). Additional funding for refugees hosted by non-EU countries is also warranted on humanitarian grounds and to discourage secondary migration to Europe (insight #6).

In table 4, we present a projection of the costs and beneficiaries of our proposed compensation mechanism for flexible solidarity, as well as other frameworks that are already being prepared or debated and might hence become relevant for the areas of asylum and migration in the MFF 2021–27. For the flexible solidarity mechanism, we assume an annual compensation amount of €700 million based on our projection of total compensation of €2.8 billion for the years 2017–20. The projected €4.9 billion provided for flexible solidarity over the MFF 2021–27 translates into coverage of 490,000

Table 4 Potential financial compensation in the MFF 2021–27

Item	Compensation (€, billion)	Arrivals per year	Individuals covered
Flexible solidarity for asylum seekers	4.9	70,000	490,000
Union resettlement framework	3.5	50,000	350,000
Union humanitarian visa framework	0.7	10,000	70,000
Legal pathways to EU labor markets	7.0	50,000	350,000
Total	**16.1**	**180,000**	**1,260,000**

Source: Own calculations.
Note: For the development of legal pathways to EU labor markets €1 billion annually (€7 billion for the full 2021-2027 MFF) is foreseen in order to provide training and training facilities for around 100,000 potential labor migrants per year. Of these, 50,000 is estimated to arrive in the EU to take up a job. The remainder will use their training for employment in their country of origin.

[33] Due to missing information on the number of first-time applicants for asylum in Austria in 2012 and 2013, and in Hungary in 2012, we use instead information on the total number of asylum applications from Eurostat.
[34] This threshold mirrors the threshold that would trigger the relocation of asylum seekers in the reform of the Common European Asylum System proposed by the European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/examination-of-applicants_en.

asylum seekers over the same period. Regarding the proposed Union resettlement framework, we assume 50,000 as the number of refugees to be resettled annually. This number is based on the fact that the current temporary EU resettlement scheme intends to resettle 50,000 refugees from December 2017 to October 2019. We expect a fully elaborated framework to be more ambitious.

Given the aforementioned compensation of €10,000 per resettled refugee, our projection foresees a budget of €3.5 billion for the Union resettlement framework in the MFF 2021–27. In addition, potential EU initiatives for humanitarian visa schemes have recently been discussed (Backhaus, Barslund, and Nannerini, forthcoming). Covering 10,000 asylum seekers annually who arrive in the EU on humanitarian visas at the per capita compensation rate of €10,000 would result in budget needs of €0.7 billion. Finally, future EU migration policies will likely invest in schemes for legal labor migration from developing countries to Europe. A proposal for an EU-Africa partnership along these lines has recently been formulated by Barslund et al. (2019). They suggest that a genuine labor mobility partnership for 50,000 people per year entering European labor markets would need funding in the range of €1 billion annually.

The proposed measures to increase solidarity via the EU budget are ambitious. All together they are projected to cost more than €16 billion over the 7 years of the MFF. Changing any of the suggested parameters regarding the size of compensation payments or the thresholds at which compensation would set in, could alter the total cost substantially. Thus, while these projections only indicate approximate orders of magnitude, it is clear that total funding needs would be large compared with the Commission's proposed MFF allocation to the Asylum and Migration Fund (€10.4 billion) and even with the broader category of expenditures on External Borders, Migration and Asylum (€33 billion; table 2 above). In other words, if the EU is to play an appropriately large role in fostering financial solidarity among member states in the implementation of more effective asylum and migration policies, then funding needs will be substantially higher than provided for by the current Commission proposal for the next MFF.

4.3 Monitoring implementation of flexible solidarity

Insight #14: To move the EU's asylum and migration policy forward towards more solidarity among EU member states and with non-EU countries that host refugees, we recommend that the new Commission establish a monitoring mechanism (or scoreboard) to collect information on each member state's exposure and contribution to all elements of asylum and migration policy (irrespective of area of competence). The scoreboard would support annual discussions on voluntary relocation and other instruments of solidarity.

As they implement the principle of flexible solidarity, EU member states would contribute to European efforts to provide humanitarian protection and enhance the global governance of migration through a variety of instruments. To ensure that, overall, member states share in these responsibilities equitably, the contributions from member states must be compared with their capacities in the different areas of asylum and migration-related policies. This raises the questions of (i) how to monitor member states' contributions and (ii) which activities should be viewed as making a relevant contribution to European efforts.

The European Pillar of Social Rights as a possible model

The framework employed for monitoring the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) could be applied to this context as well. Both, social policy and asylum and migration policy differ across member states in terms of historical roots and experiences, while achieving progress is considered a shared political commitment and responsibility among EU member states.[35]

The European Semester provides a suitable set-up for monitoring national policies in this context as it accounts for differences across countries while struc-

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[35] See European Commission, "Monitoring the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights," Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee, SWD(2018) 67 final, Brussels (2018), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/staff-working-document-monitoring-implementation-european-pillar-social-rights-march2018.pdf.

turing collective efforts.[36] Throughout the European Semester, there are steps for debating and amending policy recommendations at both the EU and member state levels, with active involvement by the European Council, which ultimately issues country-specific recommendations.

One main element for monitoring implementation of the EPSR is the Social Scoreboard.[37] Built on 94 indicators grouped under three main categories,[38] the scoreboard enables analysis of trends over time as well as cross-country differences, providing evidence on existing gaps and supporting EU-wide and country-specific recommendations. Besides the monitoring of individual indicators, evidence collected across a scoreboard can help identify relationships between indicators and contribute to targeted analysis as exemplified by the thematic factsheets produced by the Commission.[39]

The Social Scoreboard developed for the EPSR follows an approach that is also used in other policy domains. For instance, within the European Semester itself, the Alert Mechanism Report identifies member states' macroeconomic imbalances based on evidence collected from a scoreboard of 14 indicators, among other information. Internationally, scoreboards are used for monitoring implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as under the World Trade Organization's Trade Policy Review Mechanism.

What dimensions to consider?

Similar to the Social Scoreboard under the EPSR, a scoreboard for EU flexible solidarity on asylum and migration would monitor member states' efforts and contributions vis-à-vis overall EU objectives (Box 1). Indicators could be grouped into three main dimensions:

1. current pressure on EU member states due to asylum applications: number of arrivals, first-time applications, and the rate of return of individuals ordered to leave;
2. member state contributions to EU policies through expanding legal opportunities for migration: resettlements, humanitarian visas issued, number of first-time residence permits issued to non-EU nationals for education and professional purposes; burden sharing via intra-EU relocations;
3. member state contributions to funding refugee protection: external funds like the EU Trust Fund for Africa; EU initiatives like the Border and Coast Guard, including by providing personnel; support for the integration of refugees in other member states or non-EU countries.

Ideally, member states would not contribute exclusively to one specific dimension (or even worse, to only a specific indicator of a dimension) as such cherry-picking would make it less likely that, between them, member states cover all relevant dimensions of asylum and migration policy. Helpfully, the set-up of the European Semester allows for several rounds of consultations and provides multiple opportunities to bring to bear moral suasion and peer pressure on any member state whose contributions fall unreasonably short of what is needed.

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[36] See European Commission, "Monitoring the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights," SWD (2018) 67 final (2018).

[37] For details, see https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/social-scoreboard/#about.

[38] The indicators include equal opportunities and access to the labor market, dynamic labor markets and fair working conditions, and public support/social protection and inclusion.

[39] For details, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/thematic-factsheets_en.

Box 1 An example scoreboard for EU flexible solidarity on asylum and migration

The heat map in table B1.1 is proposed as an example of a stylized scoreboard. It reports indicators related to dimensions 1 and 2 in the main text, with member states' positions relative to the EU average: The scale applies six intervals with a 50-point range up to values within 150 percent of the EU average, and then progressively increases the range to capture outliers on the right-hand side of the distribution. For a meaningful comparison, the values have been scaled to *per capita* terms.

The indicators displayed in the heat map have been grouped according to the main policy areas: asylum, irregular migration, regular pathways. Across these dimensions, the heat map immediately identifies member states that are subject to disproportionate pressure vs. those that are positioned consistently below the EU average and presumably could increase their contributions in solidarity with other member states. At the same time, a low value relative to the EU average (e.g., below 50 percent) might also capture a limited capacity to carry out a specific task (e.g., processing asylum applications and enforcing returns). In other words, the heat map might in this case identify task-specific inefficiencies rather than a lack of political will to contribute to European policies.

The scoreboard also has a time dimension (in our example, 2017 vs. 2013) that would naturally evolve into a useful tracking device if the monitoring exercise were conducted annually. The system of indicators also lends itself to being extended to quarterly or monthly data, allowing the information to be used as a basis for short-term policy adjustments or interventions.

This is just a stylized example and a complete scoreboard should have a more comprehensive set of indicators that includes member state contributions to refugee protection world-wide (dimension 3). However, even this small example is informative. Countries like Greece, Sweden, and Germany have been disproportionally exposed to inflows of asylum seekers (i.e., first-time applications and first instance decisions). By contrast, member states diverge rather less on the acceptance rate for asylum applications, with only Italy and Sweden going above 150 percent of the EU average in 2013. For other indicators, the distribution of member states is skewed, such as for resettlement, for which Sweden is a positive outlier. A low return rate combined with a high number of orders to leave (e.g., France and Italy) points to possible difficulties in carrying out mandatory returns.

Table B1.1 Stylized scoreboard for EU flexible solidarity in asylum and migration

(Percentage of the EU average)

		AT		DE		EL		ES		FR		HU		IT		PL		SE	
		2013	2017	2013	2017	2013	2017	2013	2017	2013	2017	2013	2017	2013	2017	2013	2017	2013	2017
Asylum	First-time applications																		
	First-instance decisions																		
	Positive decisions %																		
Irregular	Non-EU nationals ordered to leave																		
	Non-EU nationals returned																		
	Return rate %																		
Regular pathways	Resettlement																		

Legend: 0–50% · 51–100% · 101–150% · 151–250% · 251–500% · > 500%
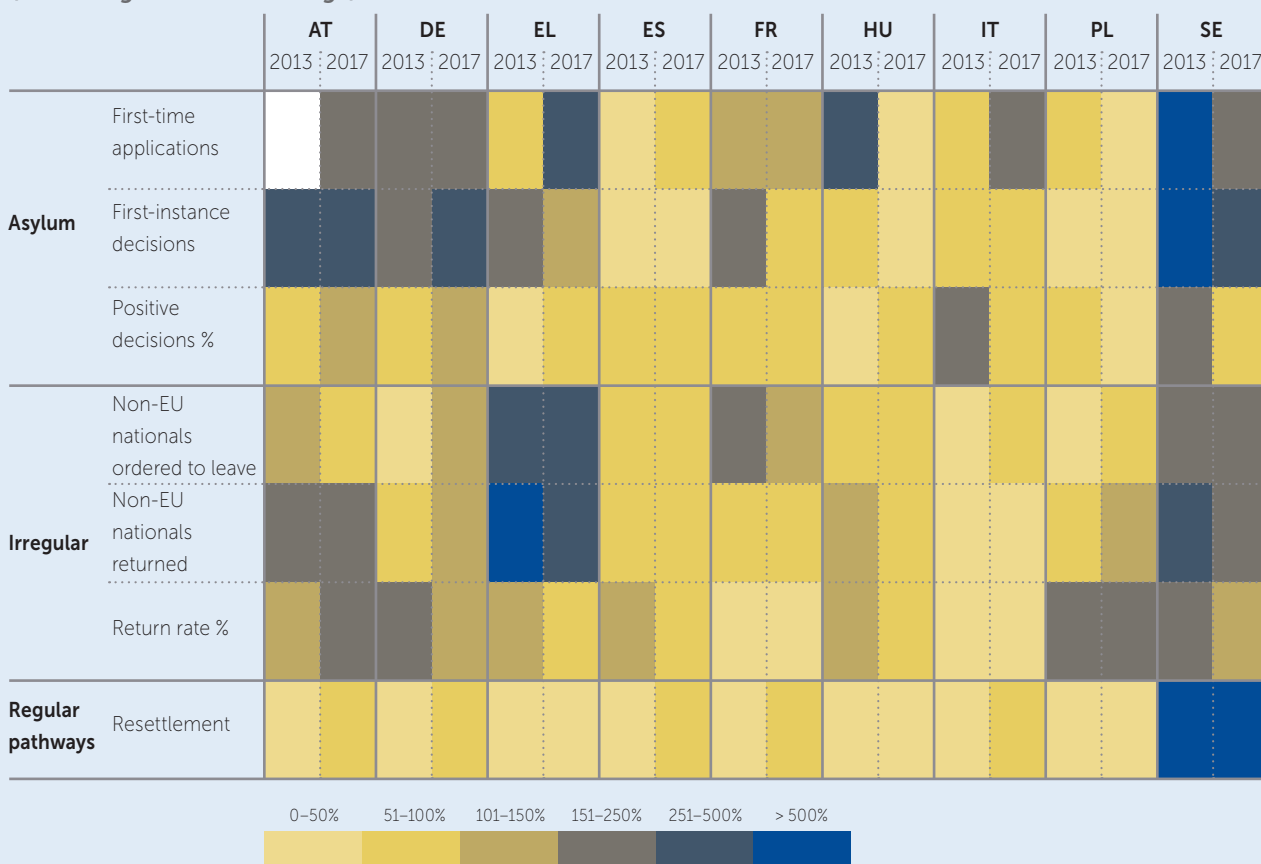
Source: Own elaboration based on Eurostat—Asylum and Migration [migr].
Note: AT=Austria; BE=Belgium; DE=Germany; EL=Greece; ES=Spain; FR=France; HU=Hungary; IT=Italy; PL=Poland; and SE=Sweden.

5 Conclusions

In this Assessment Report, we have explained how the new European Commission and the EU member states can work with migrants' countries of origin and transit to manage the external EU border more effectively and reduce irregular immigration while creating more regular employment opportunities in Europe for non-EU citizens. More and better-managed immigration can benefit all stakeholders and help to maintain public support for policies under which the EU and its member states contribute adequately to refugee protection world-wide and manage immigration in line with their capacity to provide for the social and economic integration of immigrants. The following key points can inform conversations with stakeholders in Europe and in countries of origin. From these discussions and negotiations, a comprehensive strategy can emerge that is 'owned' and implemented by all stakeholders.

First of all, most voters tend to support the presence of immigrants in their countries, the hosting of refugees under certain conditions, and certain forms of financial support for poor countries that host refugees. At the same time, voters want their governments to exercise greater control over immigration and processes related to asylum and refugee protection.

Second, control over immigration is also key to safeguarding the integrity of EU visa and asylum policies. Most immediately, this includes keeping in check unauthorized entry into EU territory at official border crossing points or by boat. Furthermore, it is crucial that immigrants who have no right to remain in the EU (because they have entered irregularly or overstayed their visa) can be returned and are readmitted by their countries of origin.

Third, effective and humane border management along with return and readmission require close cooperation with countries of origin and transit. However, such cooperation often runs against the economic and political interests of these countries: for example, when countries of origin help to curb irregular migration by their citizens to the EU, they deprive themselves of potential migrant remittances; in addition, migrants' families lose the money that they invested in emigration. Similarly, when low- and middle-income countries prevent refugees from moving on irregularly to the EU (e.g., Syrians seeking to move from Turkey to the EU), the primary host countries remain responsible for hosting these refugees and for the associated fiscal costs.

Therefore, fourth, cooperation between the EU and countries of origin and transit cannot be limited to border management and return and readmission.

Rather, agreements need to package a wide range of policies to ensure that the agreements benefit all parties consistently over time, rendering them 'self-enforcing' (i.e., each party would hurt itself by not fulfilling its obligations under the agreement). In many instances, agreements may be not be international treaties, but rather declarations by the parties involved (like the EU-Turkey 'agreement'), setting out policies that they commit to pursue. The EU, member states, and partner countries would be party to such informal agreements to the extent that they are responsible for the policies covered.

Specifically, to render cooperation in border management and return and readmission attractive for countries of origin and transit, we have argued that the EU needs to strengthen its ongoing efforts in two important areas. In the field of refugee protection in low- and middle-income countries, more financial support for refugees and more humanitarian and development cooperation with host countries would help to share responsibility for these refugees more fairly and effectively. The economic and social integration of refugees in their host economies and investment in public services and infrastructure to ensure that residents and refugees do not compete for scarce resources are areas of particular concern.

Regarding labor migration, we have argued that many countries of origin will only support curbing irregular migration to the EU if EU member states offer substantial opportunities for regular migration and employment in Europe. Such offers may usefully be coordinated and supported by the European Union. Legal migration opportunities would not be driven only by labor demand in EU member states, but also by the political need to find employment opportunities for country-of-origin citizens where they can support themselves, rather than depend on the welfare state. Development cooperation in the form of skill partnerships may sustain growth in legal migration opportunities in the long run.

Finally, overcoming the current impasse in the reform of the European asylum system will require a new approach to cooperation among member states. Refugee protection is a public good at the European level in important respects and joint action by member states is required to address it adequately. Still, member states differ substantially in their living standards, how they are affected by irregular immigration, and in their capacity and willingness to receive asylum seekers and host recognized refugees. Thus, we suggest that the common asylum policy should be based on 'flexible solidarity' among member states: member

states would contribute to border management and the hosting of refugees in line with their capacities and political preferences, while the joint financing of asylum policies through the EU budget and the peer review of member state contributions would ensure that responsibility is shared fairly.

With a more flexible approach, the ongoing revisions of seven legal texts that together codify the European asylum system would no longer have to be treated as a single undertaking; uncontroversial files could move ahead, while other files might be reconsidered in the light of flexible solidarity. In particular, long-standing (but never agreed-upon) proposals for a mandatory relocation of asylum seekers across EU member states could be replaced by a voluntary system of assistance to the few small member states that received a highly disproportionate number of asylum seekers. In the cases of Malta and Cyprus, voluntary relocation to other EU member states should be feasible because there are only relatively few asylum seekers involved. By contrast, assistance to the Greek authorities could usefully focus on fully implementing the agreement with Turkey to return those asylum seekers from the Greek islands to Turkey who were already protected there.

Solidarity among EU member states will be strengthened to the extent that funding for asylum and migration-related policies in the 2021 to 2027 Multiannual Financial Framework is increased so that a larger slice of the costs of border management and refugee protection is shared among EU member states, rather than borne by the member state that implements a particular action. A peer review of member states' contributions to refugee protection can serve as a basis for sharing responsibility among member states for the management of the external EU border, the reception of asylum seekers, the hosting of recognized refugees, and their social and economic integration.

Overall, moving toward more effective policies on asylum and migration will require extensive consultations among stakeholders in Europe and in countries of origin and transit, and carefully calibrated decisions in several policy areas. The insights in this report can help to guide negotiations toward a policy framework for refugee protection and labor migration that improves outcomes for all stakeholders.

Abbreviations

AMF	Asylum and Migration Fund
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EPSR	European Pillar of Social Rights
ESF+	European Social Fund+
ESS	European Social Survey
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NDICI	Neighbourhood, development, and international cooperation instrument
NGOs	Nongovernmental organizations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Research partners are the Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW), the Migration Policy Centre (MPC) at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence and the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), a think tank in Brussels.

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