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Anna M. Winslow  
*University of Arizona*

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# Shifting Immigration Policies in Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis Across the European Union: A Case Analysis of Germany, Hungary, and Lithuania

## **Cover Page Footnote**

Without Dr. Eva-Maria Maggi, this paper would not have been possible. Because of the passion she displayed in her courses and the endless support and encouragement she granted me, I developed my own passion and motivation for studying European politics. Further, the countless hours helping me edit this article that were put in by Lisa Winslow, Kyle Goble, and Chris Grimes cannot go ignored. They ensured that wordy sentences and nonsense typos will never see the light of day.

# Shifting Immigration Policies in Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis Across the European Union: A Case Analysis of Germany, Hungary, and Lithuania

**Anna M. Winslow**

*University of Arizona*

## **ABSTRACT**

Over one million refugees have entered the borders of the European Union (EU) in 2015, forcing a discordant shift in the immigration policies of individual member states and upsetting the political stability of the region. This analysis answers the question of how immigration policies regarding asylum seekers in Germany, Hungary, and Lithuania specifically have changed recently and what these changes could indicate for the future of the European Union's own immigration legislation. This research primarily paper analyzes asylum policy before the onset of the refugee crisis and evaluates how policy interests in the three different governments have developed in responses to the crisis. The approaches of each country towards immigration and asylum policy are distinct, and it is important to recognize these developments in order to understand the vulnerability of the Schengen Agreement as well as the future of EU solidarity. This research would fit to panels on the EU's immigration and asylum policy, responses to the current refugee crisis, and the future of EU solidarity.

## **KEYWORDS**

immigration policy, Schengen, asylum policy

## **INTRODUCTION**

The European Union (EU) has seen over one million refugees enter its borders since the beginning of 2015. Commonly referred to as the Syrian Refugee Crisis, the growing number of asylum-seekers within European countries has brought new challenges not to the policies of the European Union, as well as the individual policies each member state has established. These challenges have triggered an evident shift in immigration policies, both in favor of and in opposition to the allowance of refugees into the EU. In order to better understand the policy and attitude changes, this research will analyze the asylum policies before the refugee crisis and in response to it in three EU member states: Hungary, Lithuania, and Germany. These three countries in particular have been chosen based on their levels of response to the refugee crisis. Germany has been most prominent in the news headlines for its “Open Door” policy and has been largely in favor of a common European immigration policy. Hungary, in stark contrast, has constructed numerous border fences, and has expressed its disinterest in burden-sharing solutions to the crisis. Lithuania serves as an interesting study for its general lack of independent asylum policy and its relatively neutral response to the crisis. The responses of the EU to the refugee crisis will also be analyzed in order to understand how the differences in country policies have impacted EU decision making. Through these analyses, this apparent lack of convergence on immigration policy will be better understood.

## **HUNGARY**

Hungary has been a member state of the EU since 2004 and has since made considerable efforts to agree to the standards set by the United Nations (UN) regarding refugees and asylum seekers, including the ratification of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHRC], 2012). The 1951 Convention, as it will be referred to throughout the remainder of this analysis, was approved by the United Nations and effectively set the precedent for treatment of refugees. The Convention not only defined what a refugee is, but also described the rights that refugees are guaranteed and also outlined the responsibilities of governments to refugees. Hungary has ratified this convention, but initially did so under the condition that only applicants from European countries would be accepted (Eurostat, 1998). This limitation has changed, but concerns are still persistent regarding Hungary’s humanitarian treatment of asylum seekers. The new Hungarian government under the conservative Fidesz party has considered asylum matters “primarily in the context of the fights against ‘illegal’ migration and perceived abuses of the asylum system” (UNHRC, 2012, p. 3). The onset of the current refugee crisis has seen this approach to immigration policy develop in a concerning direction.

Hungary’s approach to immigration policy has typically been in line with that of the European Union’s. In 2007, Hungary adopted the Law on Asylum which implemented an asylum policy that also incorporated the asylum policies of the EU (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2008). While Hungary did implement the Law on Asylum, its approach to adopting the 1951 Convention in 1989 was less satisfactory (Law-decree 15/1989). Legal guarantees that are asserted in the 1951 Convention are not confirmed in Hungarian law, specifically those of Article 31 (“Refugees unlawfully in the country of refuge”), Article 34 (“naturalization” related to the Status of Refugees) and Article 35 (“co-operation of the national authorities with the United Nations” related to providing statistics to the UNHCR upon request) (UNHCR, 2012, p. 5). The UNHCR has since recommended that Hungary

introduce such legal guarantees to fully co-operate with the articles of the 1951 Convention, but little progress has been seen. Compliance with the convention has been scrutinized, especially with the formation of the new Hungarian government in 2010. Once the government was in place, legislation was amended specifically regarding asylum and refugee policies. Most notable of these changes was the introduction of a new method, allowing asylum-seekers to be detained while their cases are pending (European Asylum Support Office [EASO], 2015). This controversial detention method included detaining families with children for up to thirty days (Government Decree 290/2010).

There have been concerns with applications submitted while asylum seekers are detained, as their access to asylum procedures can be significantly limited. For asylum seekers who fall under the Dublin Regulation specifically, Hungarian policy does not consider them automatically as asylum-seekers upon their return to Hungary, and must reapply (EASO, 2015). This method goes against what is set in place by EU law, specifically Council Directive 2005/85/EC and Council Directive 2003/9/EC. The former places the responsibility of completing review of the application for asylum on the member state while the latter states that the asylum seeker must be provided with documentation certifying their status as an asylum seeker while their case is pending.

As asylum applications increased, Hungary reacted with a change to its lists of safe countries of origin and safe third countries of transit. One of the largest sources of applicants represented are Serbian refugees and in 2015, Hungary amended its Asylum Law to include Serbia, as well as Macedonia on the lists (Government Decree 191/2015). Effective immediately, all asylum seekers entering Hungary through Serbia would have their applications declared inadmissible. The impact of this amendment was not ignored by the EU, as the European Commission (EC) moved forward with infringement proceedings regarding violation of EU asylum law by Hungary in late 2015. The EC stated that Hungary is “carrying out ‘possible quasi-systematic dismissal’ of asylum applications submitted at the border with Serbia” (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 2). The actions of Hungary have been reported upon regularly in EU and international media, as human rights groups have focused their attention largely on EU member states that appear to be violating the humanitarian standards set by the international community.

In later 2015, Hungary began the construction of border fences along the Serbia-Hungary border and the Croatia-Hungary borders. At the conclusion of 2015, an upwards of 175,000 asylum applications had been submitted in Hungary, with an estimated 64,000 applications presented by Syrian nationals (Eurostat, 2015). The number of asylum applications submitted does not reflect the number of refugees that had entered Hungarian borders without an application. Pressured economically and politically, Hungary pursued border control measures. The construction of a fence between Serbia and Hungary was completed in September 2015, while the Croatia-Hungary border fence was finished in October 2015, effectively closing the border between these countries. This established transit zones at the border-crossing points with containers that would “host actors in a refugee status determination procedure” (European Council on Refugees and Exiles [ECRE], 2016, p. 15). Following the completion of the Serbia-Hungary fence in September, only 185 asylum seekers were allowed to enter the transit zone in a single day. This action left hundreds more waiting in Serbia with no food, water, or shelter provided to them by either Hungary or Serbia. These actions came shortly after Hungary had allowed refugees to pass through open borders and provided them with transport closer to the Austrian border (Hungar-

ian Helsinki Committee, 2015). By doing this, Hungary effectively suspended the Dublin Regulation within its borders. Hungary has continued to close its borders, and is constructing a fence along its border with another neighboring EU state, Slovenia (ECRE, 2015). The construction of the fence on the Slovenia-Hungary border will be the first permanent breach of the Schengen Agreement, which will be discussed further when analyzing EU policy cohesively.

The policy response to the refugee crisis in Hungary has been fervent and nearly immediate. Similar to many EU member states prior to the refugee crisis, immigration policy with specifics on asylum seekers was often unsatisfactory or insufficient for actual implementation. With Hungary receiving a significant percentage (15%) of incoming refugees, the government quickly acted through the construction of border fences and controversial detention procedures (Hungarian Helsinki Committee [HHC], 2015). When discussions of the refugee crisis take place, Hungary is often cited as being one of the least receptive member states and one that is zealously opposed to the concept of burden-sharing. When comparing its responses with that of Lithuania and Germany, it becomes clear that Hungary has not shown reluctance to reacting independently of the European Union and the Dublin Regulation.

#### **LITHUANIA**

In contrast, Lithuanian immigration policy has been less concrete and has only begun to take on a form of its own within the last decade. Lithuania joined the European Union in 2004 along with Hungary and has seen a slow development in immigration policy, with little response to the current refugee crisis. Lithuania ratified the 1951 Convention in 1997, and with it the government established the Law on Refugee Status (UNHRC, 2011). Prior to this, there was no distinction between asylum-seekers and illegal immigrants. As a result of this failure to define any difference, there were nearly 2,000 refugees detained between 1994 and 1996 for illegal entry (UNHRC, 2011). Most of these refugees were fleeing Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan, and were detained upon their entry to Lithuania. The ratification of the convention and its adoption into Lithuanian law successfully provided appropriate, distinguishing definitions for asylum-seekers and illegal immigrants, and allowed for Lithuania to adequately consider asylum applications from 1998 onward.

Following the 1951 Convention ratification, Lithuanian law saw little development in regards to immigration policy, aside from the necessary policy adoptions it required upon joining the Schengen area in 2007 (European Migration Network [EMN], 2009). In 2013, the Lithuanian government moved towards a defined immigration policy and agreed upon a comprehensive set of guidelines regarding immigration, specifically refugees and asylum seekers (EMN, 2014). The establishment of an immigration policy is parallel to the Common European Asylum System, which aims to simplify procedures and standards for granting asylum throughout the EU (EMN, 2014). Unlike other member states of the EU, Lithuania has worked towards adopting immigration and asylum policies that are complementary to those of the European Union (EMN, 2013). While EU law needs to be adopted by all member states, the method Lithuania is using is one that favors an EU immigration strategy over its own, independent policy. This initiative has allowed for more room regarding working in better cohesion with the EU, and likely was done so with the intention of making immigration matters easier to deal with rather than more complicated. This is demonstrated as the EU moves towards creating comprehensive policy regarding immigration,

such as the establishment of accommodation centers, such as the Foreigner's Registration Centre and the Refugees Reception Centre.

Lithuania received a considerably low number of asylum applications, with the government reporting 2,600 applications between 2008 and 2012 (UNHCR, 2011). Even with the onset of the refugee crisis, applications in Lithuania have not seen a significant increase, mostly due to its lack of appeal or notoriety to asylum seekers. Since June of 2015, there have only been an estimated 100 asylum applications submitted to the government. Notably, Lithuania's policy lacks an official safe countries of origin list that most countries throughout the EU maintain, such as Hungary and Germany (EMN, 2015). Lithuania does not have a predefined list and instead examines each asylum application individually. While the exclusion of such a list appears to be more beneficial to all asylum seekers, as it does not prevent anyone from seeking asylum based on their country of origin, the actual acceptance of applications in Lithuania has remained considerably low (EMN, 2014). In 2009, Lithuania granted international protection to 42 persons of 211 applications, and this number dropped to only 15 of 373 applications in 2010 (UNHCR 2011). This highlights that Lithuania has a significantly low acceptance rate (8%) of asylum applications and thus implies that if the government did have a list of safe countries of origin, that number might be even lower.

In response to the refugee crisis, Lithuania's policies have not seen a dramatic shift. No new legislation has been introduced that directly impacts the flow of refugees into Lithuania, but the Lithuanian government has been fairly eager to support the EU in its efforts to come up with a solution that encompasses European solidarity and humanitarian concerns. The most explicit of Lithuania's responses has been from the parliament, with a law passed on refugee settlement in November of 2015 (Agora Portal, 2015). The parliament amended the Law on the Legal Status of Foreign Nationals, which further defined the rights of asylum seekers and specified resettlement procedures. Prior to the adoption of these amendments, Lithuania had no law regarding the resettlement of refugees from other countries (UNHRC, 2015). This amendment allows for Lithuania to "transpose the EU directives on refugees into national law", which is significant considering the announcement of Lithuania to accept 1,105 refugees over a two-year period (Agora Portal, 2015, para. 1). Despite Lithuania's agreement to this resettlement, and its call for solidarity, the Lithuania government has expressed its opposition to a permanent resettlement mechanism. Lithuania's minister of interior, Saulius Skvernelis, has called for a solution that deals with the root causes of the crisis, instead of the mandatory mechanism the EU has been working towards (Xinhuanet, 2015). As the EU continues to work towards settlements that all member states can agree upon, Lithuania is increasingly showing more concern. Although no policy initiatives have been made on immigration directly, Lithuania, in coordination with Latvia and Estonia, is working to strengthen its external borders with Belarus (SBS, 2016). It is believed that with other paths to Europe being blocked, asylum seekers will use new routes through Belarus and Russia come the spring of 2016. Latvia and Estonia have begun to construct fences along their external borders with Russia, while Lithuania is mobilizing border guards in an effort to confront the likely influx of refugees arriving in 2016 along this new route.

The immigration policy of Lithuania has been rather moderate and slow to develop, making the country an interesting case study in comparison to the policies of Hungary and Germany. Even further, its decision to maintain an immigration policy more closely dependent on the European Union's rather than one of its own illustrates Lithuania as hopeful in

preventing disputes regarding its policies in the future. Lithuania has not seen strong changes regarding its immigration policy since the introduction of a clearer and more concise policy this decade. Its response to the refugee crisis has been muted, but with the new routes that potentially threaten the strength of its external borders, it is more likely that the Lithuanian government will bring its immigration policy into question, especially if it does not continue to align with those of the EU. Lithuania has shown strong willingness to negotiate with the EU in order to maintain solidarity, but should there be an increase in asylum applications this year, it would not be unanticipated for the Lithuanian government to respond with new immigration policy, such as the introduction of a list of safe countries of origin and reluctance towards any future resettlement mechanisms.

## GERMANY

Germany has been the focus of immigration discussion and Chancellor Angela Merkel has played a strong, pivotal role in EU negotiations for any attempt at a deal regarding the crisis. Immigration policy in Germany has been far more established in comparison to Lithuania and Hungary, and has seen timely changes in response to the developments of the refugee crisis. These responses have not been unexpected, given the estimation of upwards of 800,000 refugees seeking to claim asylum in Germany in 2015 alone (UNHRC, 2016). Germany experienced a similar influx of refugees in the 1990s, and this significantly influenced their approach to immigration not just domestically, but within the EU as well (Court of Justice of the EU, 2013).

Much of Germany's current immigration policies are remnants of policy changes that occurred in 1992 in response to large numbers of asylum applications being submitted. Still considerably low compared to the numbers from 2015, Germany received an estimated 438,000 applications in 1992, with nearly 70 percent of the applications accepted (Nuss, 1992). This astonishingly high acceptance rate was a result of a guarantee in the German Constitution that affirmed an absolute right to asylum. Concerned with the likelihood of the numbers of asylum applications continuing to escalate, Article 16 of the German Constitution was amended in 1992 and modified the absolute right to asylum (Hailbronner, 1994). The individual right to asylum was maintained in the changes, but amendment 16A introduced the restriction of unfounded asylum applications, particularly concerning those from safe countries of origin. Following the reform of asylum procedure, also known as the *Asylkompromiss* (Asylum Compromise), there was a steady drop off in asylum applications submitted, with numbers falling below 100,000 applications per year after 1999 (Green & Paterson, 2005). These reforms are significant to understanding Germany's immigration policy today and an interesting parallel can be drawn regarding calls for solidarity. Germany's chancellor during this time, Helmut Kohl, called for an EU-wide asylum policy in response to growing concerns around the numbers of refugees entering Germany (Green, 2007). Before making domestic policy changes, Chancellor Kohl called to the European Union for such a policy that would effectively lessen the burden falling onto Germany. The call was largely ignored, as less affected member states opposed the implied idea of burden sharing. Without the support of the EU, Germany instead turned towards their own domestic reforms that would attempt to curb the number of applications being submitted.

From 1992 until the onset of the refugee crisis, the German government had not made significant changes to immigration policy regarding asylum seekers and refugees, but has remained known as a "de facto immigration country" (Adam, 2015, p. 450). Instead, reforms



have focused on requirements for visas or citizenship, integration, and family reunification (EMN, 2010). In 2014, Germany received roughly 173,000 asylum applications (Eurostat, 2016). This number increased by 155 percent in 2015 to 442,000, with these numbers only counting the registered applications (Eurostat, 2016). These figures do not include refugees that have entered Germany and not yet submitted applications for asylum. Following the beginning of the refugee crisis, the German government has proposed and adopted new immigration policies concerning asylum directly in response to the crisis. The first asylum package (*Asylpaket I*) was introduced in midst of the crisis in October 2015. The second (*Asylpaket II*) was announced in January 2016. The most notable legislative changes made by both *Asylpakets* were those to the secure country of origin list. The first added Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro while the second listed Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. By classifying these countries as “secure”, Germany has been able to immediately curb a significant number of asylum applications from North Africa. With these changes aside, Germany has been labeled as having an “Open Door” policy in response to the refugee crisis, vis-à-vis its decision to suspend the Dublin regulation (Trauner, 2016, p. 319). While there have been efforts to deter asylum seekers from North Africa, Chancellor Merkel has expressed that Germany will not be closing its borders to refugees fleeing war-torn countries. Comparing this approach to that of the *Asylkompromiss* in 1992, the tone of Germany is far different. Germany is not making an effort to prevent asylum seekers from entering its borders as it began to do in 1992, but rather is attempting to amend their legislation to accept asylum seekers in a more practical, manageable way.

Germany’s willingness to accept refugees has become a key point of contention in the EU’s discussion of immigration policy. With 35 percent of the applications being registered in Germany, there has been a similar call to that made in 1992 for EU solidarity (Eurostat, 2016). Germany has been open to accepting refugees, but acknowledges that the burden should not be that of Germany’s alone. Germany has been a leader of negotiations during the crisis, seeking solutions that attempt not only to build solidarity throughout the EU, but also to redistribute refugees and secure the external borders of the EU. Efforts have considered both long term and short term agreements, although the focus of Germany is primarily on long term solutions, whereas member states like Greece and Spain are pushing for short term solutions. And as more member states attempt to deal with the crisis through domestic means, Germany drives harder for decisions to be made at the EU level. The modifications to asylum policy made by Germany are unlikely to be further amended unless it is a result of an EU agreement, or there is change to leadership in the German government. Solidarity and a common solution have become the goal of Germany once again, but it is not one shared by all of Europe.

## EUROPEAN UNION POLICY AND RECENT RESPONSE

As evidenced throughout the analyses of these three countries, European Union immigration policy has been established, but it grants the member states significant freedom in developing their own policies. The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) first introduced in 1999 has spearheaded the asylum policies of the EU and its member states. Under the CEAS, there are multiple provisions that must be incorporated into each member state’s national law. Included in CEAS is the Dublin Regulation, which specifies that the responsibility of processing an asylum application falls onto the member state in which the asylum seeker first enters (Council Regulation [EC] No 343/2003). While the CEAS

includes other, equally important provisions for asylum procedures, such as reception conditions and methods for improved application decisions, the Dublin Regulation has become the primary source of contention. Implementation of the Dublin Regulation first began to falter at the external borders of the EU, particularly in Greece and Hungary. As numbers began to increase, member states began to suspend the Dublin Regulation in favor of allowing refugees to pass through their borders and onto more idealistic EU countries, such as Germany or Sweden. Although it is stated in the regulation that asylum seekers may be returned to the member state that was its first point of EU entry, Hungary refused to accept the return of the asylum seekers that had traveled through its borders in June 2015. A sovereignty clause included in the regulation has allowed for Germany to assume responsibility and to review applications for asylum seekers entering their borders, instead of the responsible member state. Just by observing the differences in policies, it is clear that the EU has struggled to come to terms with its harmonization of asylum and immigration policies. With each state left to determine their own interpretation of the Asylum Law, there is evidence that the EU is failing to harmonize asylum policy as well as it has others, such as agricultural policy. The suspension of the regulation and what it means for the member states is one of many challenges to EU immigration policy, with concerns also growing in the debate over the Schengen Agreement.

The Schengen Agreement has been a major focal point of the EU, for not only being economically beneficial but also conveniently beneficial to member states of the EU and visitors alike. The treaty was quickly established in 1985 and developed over time to remove border controls and provide free movement of people and goods. The benefits of the agreement have been so apparent that non-EU states – Norway, Iceland, and Switzerland – have joined Schengen. However, the benefits have since lost their appeal with the intensification of the refugee crisis. A Europe without internal border checks, in addition to the suspension of the Dublin Regulation by multiple member states, has allowed for essentially unrestricted movement of refugees. Schengen allows for states to reinstate border controls for up to 10 days, and may do so immediately out of concern for national security (European Commission, 2015). Depending on the circumstances, the border controls can be extended anywhere from six months to two years under the Schengen Borders Code (Regulation [EC] No. 562/2006). Since the refugee crisis, member states have begun to introduce internal border controls of varying levels. Germany began securing its border with Austria, and Denmark and Sweden started to police their borders with Germany. Following terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, France introduced border controls with its neighboring countries. Hungary has introduced the most severe border control against an EU, Schengen member state thus far with the construction of a fence on its border with Slovenia. These actions have called the validity and future of Schengen into question, particularly as the idea of European solidarity becomes harder to obtain. Should Schengen continue to remain vulnerable, the status of the European Union will also become vulnerable. However, the EU has yet to officially approach the topic in favor of essentially ignoring it overall. As long as Schengen continues to operate to the best of its abilities, debate regarding its future seems dilatory. The member states themselves are instead seeking other solutions to the refugee crisis, although such solutions have proven to be controversial.

In March 2016, the European Union reached a comprehensive agreement with Turkey that aims to make a safer, legal route to the EU for asylum seekers through Turkey. As explained by an announcement by the European Commission, the agreement states that:

“all new, irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands will be returned to Turkey; and for every Syrian returned to Turkey from Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU” (2016, para. 3). This agreement serves as a direct attempt to relieve Greece amid continued efforts by refugees to enter EU borders through the country. Additionally, the humanitarian effort hopes to see a decrease in numbers of refugees using dangerous methods to reach Greece, which will hopefully see fewer refugee deaths as a result. Consequently, Turkey will be receiving significant financial assistance in order to effectively implement the plan. Furthermore, plans to lift visa requirements for Turkish citizens in 2016 have been accelerated and a new chapter on Turkey’s accession to the EU will be opened. This compromise serves only as a minor, short term solution for Greece and does little to ensure solidarity throughout the EU. With multiple countries adamantly opposed to quota systems and the phrase “burden sharing”, the EU will have to look elsewhere. The method the EU is pursuing currently, working instead with a third, non-EU country will not provide a suitable solution. Christina Boswell has referred to this strategy as the “external dimension” of EU policy, which is specific to the EU addressing migration management by cooperating with the countries that these refugees are coming from, as well as the countries refugees are traveling through to reach EU borders (2003, p. 620). Boswell classifies this as a preventative strategy. However, it is limitedly preventative in this specific case, and will not prevent refugees from pursuing routes other than that from Turkey to Greece.

Currently, the immigration policies of the EU and its individual member states are not cohesive. While EU policies must be adopted by the member states, developing specific and more efficient EU policies has been difficult to achieve. Florian Trauner warns of the problems that are likely to arise from the ever-widening gap in EU asylum laws, especially as the EU attempts to “add new layers of policy” in response to the crisis (2016, p. 322). As a result, convergence has become an almost unattainable goal with the harmonization of country policies proving to be unlikely (Hatton, 2015). This difficult obtaining convergence was evident in a study published in 2005 that suggested an increase in reluctance to adopt supranational immigration policy regulations (Lahav & Messina). Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) were noted as strongly agreeing that immigration was a pressing issue, but are increasingly in favor of national immigration policy. The study does not associate the domestic impulse with growing securitization concerns, but rather with the “deterioration of their country’s cultural, economic, political, or social environments” (Lahav & Messina, 2005, p. 871). To some, the relevance of this study might have faded because of time and as a result of recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels renewing security concerns, but that makes the study even more relevant. Europe in 2005 felt similar terror, with the 9/11 attacks and the London bombings still fresh in the minds of its citizens and governments. Even with those apprehensions, European government officials were less concerned with security matters and more so with economic and political ones. As refugees continue entering the European Union, this notion will be important to consider, especially when in discussion of Schengen and the future of the EU’s borders.

## CONCLUSION

The three countries analyzed here do not in any way represent the asylum policies of the European Union member states in entirety, but they do provide valuable insight on how the policies in the various blocs throughout Europe are being organized. Wealthier, more

appealing member states like Germany have maintained a willingness to accept refugees, but believe that the burden should be shared proportionally throughout the EU. Small, poor nations that have recently acceded to the EU, such as Lithuania, are interested in European solidarity, but not at their own expense. Others, like Hungary, who are receiving high numbers of asylum seekers but are economically poor have been voicing their frustration, even if it means singling themselves out from the other EU member states. The responses to the refugee crisis have been remarkably different, and some have threatened the vulnerability of core EU laws such as Schengen and Dublin. Even more, the weaknesses of the EU and its institutions are becoming prevalent, and makes the future of the EU appear as clouded as ever. It is not possible to determine the exact future of these laws as a result of member state domestic policies and opinions, but whatever decisions are made will not be done lightly or without fervorous contention.

#### **AUTHOR'S NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Without Dr. Eva-Maria Maggi, this paper would not have been possible. Because of the passion she displayed in her courses and the endless support and encouragement she granted me, I developed my own passion and motivation for studying European politics.

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