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The Refugee Crisis: Perspectives from Across Europe and the Atlantic*

Newspapers across Europe and the United States have been dominated by images, both heartening and horrifying, of Europe's worsening refugee crisis. In reality, the crisis is not acutely European, but rather a global crisis felt most dramatically in Syria's neighbors. But as unprecedented numbers of migrants and refugees stream into Europe, the union has been confronted with a two-part challenge. The refugees are testing the infrastructural capacities of many of Europe's states, but also the idea of the EU and some of its core policies,

including open internal borders. The United States, too, is implicated in the crisis and invested in its resolution.

In this brief, GMF experts from across Europe examine the scope of the crisis and the different national reactions to it in France, Germany, Poland, Serbia, and Turkey — with the transatlantic view offered by the organization's Brussels office. The authors outline the diverse political challenges faced by these governments that have so far hindered a more pragmatic humanitarian response to the crisis.

Transatlantic Stakes in Europe's Migration Crisis

Ian Lesser, Executive Director, Transatlantic Center and Brussels Office

The United States is not an uninterested bystander in Europe's refugee crisis. If mishandled, the mounting flow of refugees and economic migrants from Europe's chaotic periphery will pose multiple challenges to U.S. interests and could prove a divisive element in transatlantic relations.

First, in the view of many Europeans, the United States is already implicated in the current crisis. In Brussels, it is not uncommon to hear that today's unprecedented refugee flows are the direct result of failed strategy toward Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and the Middle East as a whole. For those European political elites and publics who have been critical of U.S. policy

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in these areas, the flow of people from crisis-torn countries is increasingly seen as a new and tragic consequence of the inability to consolidate security after interventions, or in the case of Syria, the failure to intervene. Many Americans might agree with elements of this argument. But European policies have also failed to produce stability on Europe's southern periphery, and in the case of Libya, where the collapse of sovereignty has facilitated the trafficking in refugees and economic migrants, Europe is chiefly responsible.

Second, the United States cannot fail to be concerned about the consequences of a protracted migration crisis for the future of Europe. Successful integration of refugees from Syria and elsewhere, and a Europe more comfortable with multiculturalism, would more closely resemble the United States and could be a force for transatlantic convergence. By contrast, social tensions and a strident debate about borders, immigration, and European identity will bolster right-wing populists. These movements are already on the rise in Europe, and populists and nationalists — generally anti-American — will spell trouble for transatlantic relations. A closed and intolerant Europe will be a very uncomfortable partner for the United States. More broadly, deep divisions within the EU over migration and asylum policy, potentially far more significant than differences over the Greek debt crisis or Russia, could pose a grave challenge to the future of the EU itself. If we accept that the United States is a key stakeholder in a more concerted and active EU, the risks to U.S. interests are clear.

Finally, a spiraling migration crisis across Europe's 3,000-mile border in the Mediterranean (closer to 4,000 if

Turkey's borders are included) will add to the problems already facing NATO. U.S. and European allies are only beginning to grapple with security risks emanating from the south. The collapse of regimes and the spread of chaotic conditions that have encouraged the rise of the self-proclaimed Islamic State group (ISIS) have also created a vast human security crisis. This extraordinary instability, at the intersection of Europe and the Middle East, could characterize the strategic environment on Europe's periphery for the foreseeable future. If so, the United States' interests and engagement in North Africa, the Middle East, and even South Asia may be seen increasingly through the lens of European stability.

Europe's migration problem is set to become a more central part of the United States' transatlantic calculus. By most measures, the United States is one of the largest recipients of asylum seekers on a global basis — registering 121,000 claims last year and resettling a further 50,000. But given that it is receiving fewer claims than Germany in this current crisis, this reality may not impress European leaders and publics. The announcement from the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama that it is prepared to admit up to 10,000 Syrian refugees is a useful start. Defense spending should not be the only issue on the burden-sharing agenda across the Atlantic, and U.S. assistance on this front might help ease the contentious political debate on asylum within the EU. The clock is ticking on an effective response from Brussels, and the United States has a direct stake in the outcome.

Germany: Welcoming but with Limits

Astrid Ziebarth, Migration Fellow, Europe Program

Germany has been at the forefront of the reception of refugees and migrants and is now feeling the strain that countries like Italy and Greece have felt for a long time. Last year, about 200,000 people filed for asylum in Germany overall. By just July of this year, 218,000 people had filed and official estimates for the whole year have been raised to as many as 800,000, if not a million. The top three countries of origin overall in 2015 (statistics from July) are Syria (44,000), Kosovo (33,000), and Albania (30,000). With Germany expecting to take up between 800,000 and 1 million people, it is one of the main countries to push for a

quota system among EU member states that would relocate and redistribute 160,000 people currently in Italy, Greece, and Hungary. The number of people coming to Germany increased substantially in September, especially after the dramatic weekend of September 5-6, when Germany decided to take in refugees stranded in Hungary. German Chancellor Angela Merkel received both praise and criticism for this decision, within and outside Germany. Critics said that this measure, even though it was originally deemed a one-time event, encouraged people to start moving toward Europe, and Germany in particular. Others

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praised her humanity in this situation. Both assessments are correct.

Yes, reinstalling temporary border controls over the weekend of September 12-13 can be seen as a direct consequence of Germany's openness. The pictures of friendly Germans welcoming refugees at train stations and helping them get situated and tabloids printing four-page special inserts in Arabic to help with the orientation for refugees in Berlin certainly did go around the world and even led some commentators to dub Germany a "hippie nation." But to say that Merkel has flip-flopped on the issue by reinstating border controls is not correct. She has defended her stance that there is a right to asylum in Germany, and that those that have a rightful claim will be able to stay. She always made it clear that those who do not have a rightful claim — mostly from the Western Balkans — will be sent home and banned from re-entering Germany.

However, she simply could no longer ignore the calls of German mayors and state governors from across the political spectrum who warned about a collapse of the system and asked for breathing space; the numbers of people entering Germany had increased too quickly. They needed a signal that she heard their concerns. These days, even a

few hours of breathing space can mean a lot. It can mean beds that can be organized, housing that can be found, and volunteers that can be recruited.

Those that criticize her now should have to answer the question of what alternatives she would have really had when the situation worsened and people started to march on the highways toward Germany from the Budapest train station. At that point, just three days after the world was shocked by the picture of drowned 3-year-old Aylan Kurdi, an immediate decision needed to be taken, and nations all around the globe had to hold up a mirror and question their stance on this humanitarian crisis. Reacting to criticism that the open-door policy had been a mistake, Merkel used an unusually direct tone: "Seriously, if we have to start apologizing now that we show a friendly face in emergency situations, then this is not my country." She could have tried to set up border controls as quickly as possible at that point, and yes, this may have kept law and order and a broken Dublin system in place. It would have probably also led to fingers pointed at the coldhearted Germans from around the world. But Angela Merkel made a decision, one that will make it into the history books, for better or for worse. For a brief time, she reminded us that in emergency situations, you help out as best as you can.

Refugees and Migration: A Tricky Issue in France

Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, Senior Transatlantic Fellow, and Director, Paris Office

French President François Hollande's recent decision to take in 24,000 refugees over the next two years as part of a Europe-wide quota plan is an about-face for France, after having said in May that quotas were "out of the question." France has been reluctant to open its doors to migrants and refugees, but the government shifted position after Berlin's push for a permanent and mandatory mechanism for distributing refugees across the EU.

The refugee crisis is testing intra-European solidarity and pushing France and Germany to advance joint responsibility-sharing measures at the European level, despite diverging national perceptions. But France is unlikely to offer the same kind of welcome Germany has given refugees, for several reasons.

Migration remains a very tricky issue in France, where record high levels of unemployment and fear of terrorism have fueled anti-immigration sentiment. Home to Europe's

largest Muslim population, France is in the middle of an "identity crisis." The recent "migrant crisis" of Calais, which monopolized French media attention during the summer, has already highlighted society's sensitivity to the issue. Last January's terrorist attacks in Paris also help explain French fears. According to an opinion poll published by *Le Parisien*, 56 percent of French people interviewed believed that terrorists may be among the thousands of refugees heading into Europe, a fear that Germans do not share. The same poll revealed that 55 percent of French people surveyed were opposed to an easing of rules for asylum seekers, including for Syrians fleeing civil war.

It is this kind of fear and skepticism that Marine Le Pen's far-right Front National has helped to stoke in recent months. A number of French local authorities (mostly from the Front National and some conservatives from Les Républicains) oppose welcoming refugees in their

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cities, mostly for political and sometimes religious reasons (refusal to host Muslims). They also want more financial support from the government if they are to host additional refugees. At the same time, cities around France have also seen pro-refugee demonstrations, like in Nantes where more than 1,200 took to the streets to support welcoming refugees. More than a dozen towns, mostly with left-wing mayors, have offered to take in Syrians.

The refugee crisis has sparked fierce debate and profound divisions in France, with Le Pen leading opposition to opening the borders. Ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy, leader of the conservative opposition Les Républicains, called for detention camps to be set up in neighboring countries under EU control to filter migrants and refugees before they crossed the Mediterranean. He also repeated past calls for an end to the EU's Schengen zone of open border travel. In this context, Hollande sought to rally the public's support by focusing on the international dimensions of the migration crisis, and announced his resolve to get more involved militarily to combat what he considers to be the root of the problem: ISIS. This decision is broadly endorsed by

the French people and the political class. The same survey, conducted by the Odoxa polling institute, said 61 percent were in favor of France taking part in a coalition sending ground troops to Syria to fight ISIS.

Hollande also joined with Angela Merkel in drafting a *Joint Letter to European Leaders* on September 3, promoting common European asylum laws, a list of "safe countries of origin," and calling for an increase of the European aid to Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan in their efforts to welcome refugees.

Hollande said several factors — notably the foiled terrorist attack on a Paris-bound train in August and the shocking photo of the body of three-year-old Ayland Kurdi on a Turkish beach — influenced his decisions to heighten engagement in Syria and take in more refugees. However, France's poor economic performance, the mood of anxiety following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, and the influence of the far-right on the public and political debate, will continue to make migration a tricky issue for any French government. Only true political leadership and courage could help turn the tide.

Poland's Shifting Stand

Michał Baranowski, Director, Warsaw Office

For the past months, Poland has not been seen as part of the solution to the migration crisis in Europe. However, Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz this week signaled a greater flexibility and willingness to contribute. "Now the situation is much more serious — it's a real humanitarian crisis, therefore we are considering a very significant increase in our engagement," she said on September 9.¹

To date, Poland had agreed to accept around 2,000 asylum seekers. But according to the plan of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker presented in early September, Poland would have to accept over 11,000 refugees. So far, very few political refugees have made their way to Poland — this year Poland accepted only 250 asylum seekers. But this might change rapidly if the migration routes change, which could happen if Hungary completes its border fence. There is also a legitimate concern over a possible flow of refugees from Ukraine due to the conflict with Russia. Though the number of political refugees is very small, there are an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 Ukrainians

in Poland, including Ukrainians who received permits for short-term work and those working in the black market.

Domestically, the debate over migration could not come at worse time for the current government, led by Platforma Obywatelska. Poland will hold parliamentary elections on October 25, which the main opposition party, the right-wing Law and Justice (PiS), is poised to win. Migration is a new, difficult, and unpopular issue in Polish politics. The government finds itself between a rock and a hard place, with pressure from Brussels and Berlin to open up its borders, and an opposition that vehemently criticizes any move to cave to Europe and let in refugees. The election dynamics will make it hard for the government to join the European consensus. But the latest change of heart by Kopacz suggests that she decided to defuse the political bomb with the election still more than a month out, rather than facing an embarrassing defeat in the European Council, which will vote on the migration crisis solution right before the October elections. There is a clear understanding in Poland that opposing a common solution to the

¹ source: Rzeczpospolita

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refugee crisis would damage Poland's standing in the EU. Recently, the prime minister warned against a "breakdown of European solidarity" and asked what would happen if Poland needs to ask its European partners for solidarity in dealing with challenges coming from the east.

The refugee and migration crisis has led to soul searching in Poland, as in the rest of Europe. The crisis has provoked a deeply emotional national debate not only among politicians, but also artists, writers, and the general public. It is a moral issue, it is an economic issue, it is a cultural and identity issue, and finally it is an issue of Poland's place in Europe. Public opinion is divided, but also shifting. A majority of Polish respondents (53 percent) believes that Poland has a moral duty to accept migrants, while 44 percent disagrees with this assessment. Twenty-two percent of Poles think that their country should not accept any refugees at all. Only 9 percent believe that Poland should take more than 10,000, as Juncker suggested this week.

In the period before the parliamentary elections, the Polish government will attempt to balance between demands from

its European partners and the pressure of the opposition. The government will push back on the compulsory quota — Kopacz stated that "Poland wants to have a control over who and how many people come."

Poland, as well as other Central and Eastern European countries, will need not only political pressure, but also concrete knowledge and logistical assistance in order to take on a larger refugee population. Poland only has the infrastructure in place to deal with 2,000-3,000 refugees. It also has little experience in dealing with migration from distant places, and even less with integrating these migrants or refugees into its still ethnically and religiously homogeneous society.

The issue of migration is with us to stay. A politically sustainable solution will have to account for differences among EU member states, but also to create mechanism to turn the migration crisis into a boon for an aging and shrinking Europe.

The Balkan Route and its Implications for the EU

Ivan Vejvoda, Senior Vice President for Programs

The thousands of migrants/refugees entering the European Union via Greece want to stay within the EU but in its north, in Germany or Scandinavia. To do this, they have to pass through the inner courtyard of geographic and political Europe: the Balkans. And the route takes them through states that are aspiring candidates for full membership in the EU, principally Macedonia and Serbia.

The next entry point into a full member state of the EU, after passing through those two countries, is Hungary. Its government, going against the grain of other EU member states and core values of the Union, has unilaterally built a barrier along its 175 kilometer-long border with Serbia, a 4 meter-high barb-wired "fence" that will allegedly be backed up by a planned stronger second barrier. Hungarian police have used tear gas and water cannons against refugees protesting the closing of the border. Orbán has also announced plans to erect fences on Hungary's borders to Romania and Croatia, which is already receiving a lot of the redirected refugees passing through Serbia.

Hungary is an exception to the rule in the way Europe's countries are reacting to the inflow of migrants and refugees. Four thousand people were waiting to cross the Macedonian border into Serbia this past Thursday, while about 3,000, mostly Syrians, are arriving daily on the island of Lesbos before heading for the Greek mainland, according to Greek police. From there, they too will likely traverse the Balkan route.

On Friday, the Bulgarian and Serbian prime ministers spoke on the phone to coordinate responses and practical measures, within an EU framework, and agreed to a three-way meeting with their Romanian counterpart in the latter part of the month. All three, as have other European leaders, have opposed the idea of building new walls in Europe and seek other ways to address the wave of mostly transitioning migrants.

This crisis has raised a number of issues for the region and its relations with the EU. For the Balkan region especially, there is the question of how non-member states can partake in a joint and coordinated EU response. At the

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Vienna EU-Balkan Summit on August 27, the day that the infamous truck with bodies of 71 migrants was discovered on a highway near Vienna, there was a clear statement that “strengthened cooperation and additional support” was needed in the effort to address the challenge.

Addressing issues of border control, cross-border crime fighting, counter-terrorism, and the migration challenge requires a fully coordinated approach of EU and non-EU member states. Only such an approach can produce minimally satisfactory results.

Serbia Struggles Admirably to Assist Refugees

Gordana Delic, Director, Balkan Trust for Democracy and Belgrade Office

Serbia is situated along the preferred route through the Western Balkans for refugees/migrants from the Middle East and Asia on their way to asylum in Europe. The majority are from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. According to UNHCR data, the number of those registered as *intention to seek asylum* averaged 1,290 people per day in Serbia. By September 7, a total of 112,630 persons were registered in 2015, but only 500 requested asylum. The rest passed through Serbia and crossed into Hungary.

Serbia has been doing a good job providing humanitarian assistance and registration documents to the refugees/migrants. A One-Stop Center and a Refugee Aid Point (RAP) have been opened close to the Macedonian border where refugees/migrants are provided with the appropriate documents, food, emergency medical care, and a place to rest. A third temporary reception center was opened in August close to Serbian-Hungarian border. In central Belgrade, about 1,000 to 2,000 refugees/migrants are camping in a park near the main bus station. Usually they stay 24 to 48 hours, and they receive aid from government institutions, international organizations, NGOs, and volunteers.

Before winter, Serbia will have to create more accommodation, primarily in Belgrade, so it is a positive development that Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić recently announced that the government plans to build a temporary reception center in the city. Vučić said “Serbia can’t close its eyes like others in Europe have. Refugees are safe and welcome here. Some will stay, although we know they want to go to more developed countries. If they want to stay, we have no problem. These are good, hard-working people.” At Serbia’s border to Hungary, there have been clashes, protests, and hunger strikes by refugees since Hungary closed off its side. But Serbia is continuing to provide support, and the refugees have already begun to be rerouted to Croatia.

Serbian society has responded positively to this difficult situation. Even the Serbian Orthodox Church has called on the

public to help migrants. A right-wing politician’s suggestion to build a wall at Serbia’s border with Macedonia was immediately dismissed by both government and opposition.

An emergency plan to respond to the current migration crisis was adopted last week. It is not yet publicly available but apparently the plan foresees two new directions of refugee/migrant movement: toward Romania and toward Croatia. New locations for accommodation of refugees/migrants will be established on these routes. However, Serbia is highlighting both the need for a joint response of all EU countries to this situation and its readiness to follow the EU approach. The government of Serbia is also asking the European Union and the international community for financial assistance.

Juncker has called for reform of disparate immigration policies in the EU and for European states to accept binding quotas to resettle 160,000 refugees. But there are still no concrete proposals regarding the role and responsibilities of countries outside of the EU, like Serbia, related to “burden sharing” of refugees/migrants processing.

Before winter, the Serbian government, in cooperation with governments in the region, the EU, and relevant international actors should define following mid-term solutions:

- First, we need a common definition of the status of the refugees (who is a refugee, and who is a migrant), and a uniform regional approach to their rights and benefits.
- Second, in cooperation with the EU and regional governments, Serbia too, should take part in the quota system, and take on a certain number of refugees. In that context, Serbia will have to develop integration policies in cooperation with civil society and international actors.
- Finally, we should establish better facilities near borders that could assess the persons on the move and initiate the appropriate procedures such as asylum, readmission,

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victims of trafficking, and a procedure for vulnerable groups.

Europe's Small Taste of Turkey's Refugee Crisis

Özgür Ünlühisarcıklı, Director, Ankara Office

The Syrian refugee crisis has accelerated Turkey's already ongoing transition from a country of emigration to a transit and host country. With a 911-kilometer land border with Syria and an open border policy toward refugees from its southern neighbor, the official number of Syrian refugees Turkey hosts has reached 1.7 million as of September 2015;² unofficial figures go as high as 2 million. Two-hundred-sixty thousand of these refugees live in 25 "temporary protection centers" located in ten cities across Turkey; the others have chosen to live outside these centers. Turkey has spent \$5.6 billion on Syrian refugees since the beginning of the crisis.

In addition to hosting these refugees, Turkey is also a transit country for most of the refugees heading to the EU. Transit flows of Syrian refugees through Turkey to Europe have led to public and political debates on burden sharing and humanitarian issues. The picture of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, found lying dead on a beach after the boat in which his family was trying to get to the Greek island of Chios capsized, caused international sorrow. French President François Hollande phoned Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and some European leaders after the images of Kurdi emerged in the world media and said that "the picture must be a reminder of the world's responsibility regarding refugees."

In an article published by the *Guardian* on September 9, 2015, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said "Turkey, traditionally a transit country for irregular migration, is now also a top destination. The Turkish people have made huge sacrifices in hosting more than 2 million Syrians and Iraqis. By so doing, we have damped the mass influx to the EU and effectively become a buffer between chaos and Europe. Meanwhile, EU member states account for ridiculously low shares in the global resettlement rates."

The Syrian refugee crisis has also accelerated legal and institutional reforms regarding migration: a law on foreigners and international protection that brings Turkey in line

with international standards was adopted in April 2013 and a temporary protection regulation to create a system to provide Syrian refugees with satisfactory protection and humanitarian assistance was enacted in October 2014.

The Turkish public is not overwhelmingly positive about the refugees. According to Transatlantic Trends Survey 2014 findings, 77 percent of Turks surveyed were worried about refugees and 66 percent wanted more restrictive refugee policies. However, at least for the moment, the issue is not being politicized and the opposition parties have not made a big issue out of it either. With the exception of some isolated incidents, there has not been a significant backlash against the refugees.

While Europe is facing the dramatic consequences of the Syrian refugee crisis this year, Turkey has been quietly adapting since the beginning of the conflict in Syria. However, Turkey still has room for improvement and there are ways Europe can help. Turkey needs to decide whether the Syrians on its soil are guests, as they are officially called, or future citizens, which may be the hard truth. The answer to this question would play a large role in determining the appropriate set of policies. European countries have an interest in helping Turkey deal with this crisis, including financially. The approximately \$400 million that the international community has so far provided to help the refugees in Turkey falls short of lightening Ankara's almost \$6 billion burden. Without more help, Europe is bound to see an even greater number of refugees traveling through Turkey to its borders and beyond.

² Source: Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Disaster & Emergency Management Authority

A European and Transatlantic Policy Response

Astrid Ziebarth, Migration Fellow, Europe Program

It is clear that there is no one solution to “solve” the refugee crisis, and that obvious pragmatic responses face significant political hurdles in the current European Union. There is no easy, and no perfect, fix but the EU must move ahead in one direction instead of circling around and around. There are four steps that need to be taken.

First, **Europe needs to agree on quotas** for relocating people with a substantiated need for protection who are currently in Italy and Greece. The numbers are almost insignificant, and thus some see the discussion about quotas as futile, especially if it is a one-time measure. But to agree on quotas or some form of distribution mechanism at this point is also about showing that some EU solidarity exists. Or to paraphrase Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, that Europe is an idea worth keeping.

Though the relocation of 160,000 people is not going to solve the problem, the hope is that if a quota deal has been struck once, it could serve as a blueprint for next relocation rounds. At their meeting on September 14, however, interior ministers only agreed in principle to this initial relocation, but not on how they would be distributed (except for 40,000 of the 160,000). In his plan from September 9, Commission president Juncker proposed that countries could temporarily opt-out of the relocation plan if they have an emergency situation and would pay a contribution to the EU’s Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. These details are still being hotly debated, but the plans are reasonable.

What is more, the quota discussion is also an important building block for the hotspot mechanism, which is already underway, to work. The hotspots are centers currently being set up with EU support in EU border states, for now in Italy and Greece. The main aim is to guarantee an orderly identification, registration, and fingerprinting of persons entering the EU, to help relocate those that have a substantiated need for protection, and to return those that do not. If there is no agreement on how to relocate those people being processed with a need for protection among EU member states, then Greece and Italy will again be left with an outsized burden, regardless of EU financial support.

Second, we need a more global response to these crises. As long as peace in Syria is not in hand, **humanitarian**

aid and resettlement programs need to lead the way. The situation in the camps and host countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey is severe, and will ultimately lead to further movements. Just to put the strain on those countries into perspective, the number of registered refugees in Lebanon would be equivalent to 22.5 million people coming to Germany and 88 million arriving in the United States. Currently, the UN Humanitarian agencies are unable to meet even basic needs; they had to cut food rations, and about 600,000 school children are not in school. Only 43 percent of the required funding is in place for the Syria regional refugee response plan. So far, the United States has been the single largest donor, at more than \$4 billion in humanitarian assistance since the start of the conflict in March 2011. The EU has mobilized more than €3.9 billion.

Resettling more people from Syria and camps in neighboring regions is another pressing issue. Europe’s plan to resettle 20,000 is insufficient, and the United States should also accept more than the 10,000 U.S. President Barack Obama recently agreed to. The United States should also share its experience with resettlement processes, practices, and challenges with its European counterparts, since the United States has resettled more than 3 million refugees since 1975. Canada, Australia, and the rest of the developed world need to help as well, and make commitments that go beyond the current crisis.

Integration is a third measure to focus on. Those who have fled conflict need opportunities for a meaningful livelihood. This requires strong investments to provide job opportunities and language training and integration courses. Many refugees, including Syrians, will likely not be able to return to their home country for years, if ever. States need to start to help them integrate on day one. This requires support for communities, especially in those countries with less experience with major immigration. Communities should start sharing examples of best practice local integration measures and offer immediate capacity-building assistance in areas that have not dealt with large numbers of asylum seekers before.

Finally, **think and act for the long term**. The EU needs to figure out two systems: one that allows for coordinated emergency responses reacting to a refugee crisis in times of

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conflict, war, or natural disaster, and one that proactively manages mixed migration flows instead of a reactive system ruled by ad-hocism handicapped by a lack of political will. The past few months have seen the EU Commission move much faster and be more engaged on these issues than in the past, but now political will is needed from all ends.

This also includes answering uncomfortable questions about what functioning border control means. Juncker rightfully states that we need to control the EU outside borders in order to keep borders open within Europe, but this will mean addressing tough questions on fences and increased patrolling. This entails agreeing on how and where to best manage the screening process to determine whether applicants are eligible for asylum and how those whose claims are rejected can be returned quickly, safely, and in an orderly fashion. Currently, hot spots for such processing are being set up within the EU, but it remains to be seen how efficient they will be. Discussions are underway regarding which other countries outside the EU would be willing and suitable to host such centers, among them potentially Serbia. How to guarantee European legal standards, avoiding potential unintended consequences, and making sure that those who are not eligible to enter the EU will not simply carry on, especially if such centers are close to EU borders, should all be thought through beforehand.

None of these issues are new, but so far political will was missing to find difficult solutions. Now it is time to think

about systems that work and to implement the Common European Asylum System as it is written on paper. The political and societal constraints inhibiting governments from agreeing on common policies cannot be wished away. But the thousands of refugees making the dangerous trek to Europe every day have made it impossible for leaders in Europe and the United States to continue to ignore them. Migration challenges are not limited to this crisis, and are not going away.

The views expressed in GMF publications and commentary are the views of the author alone.

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The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF contributes research and analysis and convenes leaders on transatlantic issues relevant to policymakers. GMF offers rising leaders opportunities to develop their skills and networks through transatlantic exchange, and supports civil society in the Balkans and Black Sea regions by fostering democratic initiatives, rule of law, and regional cooperation. Founded in 1972 as a non-partisan, non-profit organization through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has offices in Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, Bucharest, and Warsaw. GMF also has smaller representations in Bratislava, Turin, and Stockholm.