

**MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES:  
IMPACT AND FUTURE POLICIES.  
CASE STUDIES OF JORDAN, TURKEY,  
LEBANON AND GREECE**

Amman, 17 December 2015, Centre for Strategic Studies - University of Jordan

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 17 December, the Centre for Strategic Studies hosted a workshop in Amman as part of the activities of the EuroMeSCo working package dedicated to migration and refugee challenges in the Mediterranean. The authors of the Joint Policy Study presented their initial findings to other researchers of the network and practitioners who gave useful feedbacks. After a general introduction that highlighted some quantitative and qualitative features of the main flows, the discussion focused on the economic and social integration of migrants and refugees in three southern Mediterranean countries receiving the biggest number of refugees: Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. This was then compared to the situation of Greece, the main gate for refugees entering the European Union.



## 2. DETAILS OF THE FOUR SESSIONS

### 2.1 Patterns of Migration Flows

Berta Fernandez from the Institute for European Studies, University of Malta, described the main macro phenomena of global migration flows relating it to the geopolitical situation. The presenter focused on the need to investigate motives, habits, life expectations and general vectors enabling migrants' decision making in pursuing the need to move to further countries. A special attention was paid to the mechanisms leading migrants to choose a final destination and, in particular, how much personal networks were responsible in influencing such decision. Syrian refugees currently represent the core-issue since the number of their asylum applications in Europe has tremendously increased from 2011 until now. Asylum requests were mainly addressed to German and Sweden followed by Serbia and Hungary. Eurostat reveals that during the first 10 months of 2015 the most conspicuous part of asylum applications were submitted by Syrian citizens (180.000 requests registered by the end of October 2015). Sea routes play a key-role in driving such flows. The author described the migration corridors: the Western Mediterranean (from Morocco), the Central Mediterranean (from Tunisia, Egypt and Libya) and finally the Eastern route (from Turkey).

Building patterns of migration means to formulate key-models on which it is possible to intervene in a much more precise and well-targeted way by assuring efficacy and efficiency of the implemented policy. In this sense, understanding social and psychological mechanisms underlying migrants' motivation in migrating is important. Personal networks play a relevant role in moving the decision of migrating to other countries. Particularly bond ties (family, kinship, and friends) are determinants in creating rooted connections. Close networks (family and friends) at destination increase by 18% the probability of intention to migrate internationally. But close networks at origin reduce the likelihood of intention to migrate both internationally and locally. Broad networks (share of people from/in same country intending to migrate) explain 19% of probability of international migration intention, and 20% of local migration intention (Manchin, Orazbayev, 2015). Further role is played by social media that, by

facilitating the exchange of information, seem to increase illegal migration (Decker, Engbersen, 2014). In the long term, policies need to prevent illegal flows by focusing on the incentives that boost and drive them. Going beyond the scope of the first chapter of the study, the author also shared her views regarding various policy measures that should be considered to better tackle the refugee crisis.

### Feedback and discussion

- It was highlighted that the first part of the study should limit itself to describing the main migration and refugee patterns in the Mediterranean (e.g. the motivation and the decision-making process behind them, the push-pull factors) and should be better articulated with other chapters of the study.
- Applying to the whole study, another comment was made regarding the need of the study to serve practical purposes, e.g. highlight the need of Syrian refugees in view of the donors conference to be held in London in February 2016.
- Another comment was made regarding the need to check, monitor and broadly supervise migration flows inside European borders themselves by addressing the relocation as a serious and new solution for avoiding collapse. However, another participant pointed out that this issue was not to be addressed within this working package but may be addressed by the subsequent working package on migration.
- The need to carefully check the data and official estimations was pointed out. The situation had changed significantly since last August. Frontex could provide reliable data.
- There is also a change regarding the composition of the refugee population compared to a year ago. Migrants and refugees had ceased to be only young men.
- A number of comments were made regarding the reasons explaining the departure of migrants and refugees.
- Further participants required a more precise definition of trends in terms of social features (gender, age, motivations, and beliefs) and ways of connecting people between the hosting and the home country.

- Regarding the pull-factors, a participant noted that latest surveys were indicating that humanitarian assistance in transit and destination countries were not a decisive issue.
- Similarly, it was not the expected economic gains in the destination countries that were driving decisions to go but rather the lack of any perspective in the origin country.
- Shifts in migration patterns and routes should also be analysed. Smugglers were often ahead of policy makers in terms of detecting trends.
- Importance to review the link between the global/macro phenomena with the local dynamics of origin countries.
- A key recommendation for policy makers could be to invest more on information centres in origin countries.

## **2.2 Economic and Social Integration of Migrants and Refugees (with a focus on Jordan and Lebanon)**

Musa Shteivi from Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan, highlighted and compared successively the main features of Jordan and Lebanon as two largest recipients of Syrian refugees, the policies implemented in both countries and the socio-economic impact of the presence of Syrian refugees.

*Main features:* The Jordanian Government estimates the number of Syrians in Jordan at 1.4 million (with 632.225 registered with UNHCR). Unlike Lebanon, Jordan has three refugee camps that host approximately 150.000 refugees which amounts to about 15% of the total Syrian refugees in the country. Syrian refugees account for a substantial proportion of the overall populations in Lebanon and Jordan (approximately 25% and 17% respectively). The peak in terms of asylum requests occurred in 2013. 309.720 Syrian refugees officially entered Jordan in 2013. In 2015 the total number of Syrian refugees' official arrivals corresponds to 27.205 persons. There is no evidence of gender unbalance between the Syrian refugees population since 49% of them are women, while about 51% are men. The most conspicuous part of them represented by 29% of the total belongs to the working age ranging from 18

to 35 years old. The gap in terms of higher education between the hosting community and the Syrian refugees in Jordan is clear. Jordanian citizens are averagely doubly higher educated than the Syrian hosted communities. Most of Syrian refugees entering Jordan come from Southern areas of the country and they tend to settle in northern Jordan (i.e. Mafraq).

By 2015, over 1.1 million registered Syrian refugees had entered **Lebanon** with official estimates at over 1.5 million, over a quarter of Lebanon's estimated 4.3 million native residents (ILO 2015). Asylum request registrations also reached a peak in 2013. Contrary to the Jordanian case, Lebanon did not set out camps as a solution for welcoming Syrian refugees. They are almost equally distributed around the country. In particular, 34% of them live in Beqaa Area, 28% in North Lebanon, and finally Beirut and Mount Lebanon (26%). Syrian refugees settled in Lebanon tend to be relatively younger than in Jordan. More than half are below the age of 18. Educational attainment of the refugees is generally low; one out of three is either illiterate or never attended school, 40% have a primary education, and only 3% achieved university education. In terms of school attendance in Lebanon, a large share of Syrian school age children remain out of school, with the enrolment rate estimated at only 31%. Syrian refugee students face multiple obstacles (inability to afford school fees, school accessibility, and *curriculum* and language differences).

*Implemented policies:* **Jordan** is one of the signing countries of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but it is not among the signatories of the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees nor its related 1967 protocol (same situation for Lebanon). There is no specific law to address refugee-related issues in Jordan. Refugees are treated as foreign nationals. Syrian refugees in Jordan have access to public health services, children can be completely enrolled in schools and in order to assure their education double shifts are guaranteed. They are included in the food voucher program and finally they are eligible for the cash assistance program. Syrian refugees are not allowed to work in Jordan and are not entitled to work permits from the Ministry of Labour. Their impact on the hosting country is always massive since provision for their

needs has heavily affected Jordan public finances leading to an increase of Government expenditures on subsidies, public services and security, while further it compounded the negative economic consequences of regional instability. The presenter outlined the main components of the Jordanian Response Plan 2015 that adopts a resilience-based approach to respond and mitigate the effects of the Syria crisis on Jordan and Jordanian hosting communities. The JRP 2015 addresses the urgent need to fulfil the immediate needs of Syrian Refugees both in and out of camps, as well as vulnerable Jordanians affected by the crisis. It supports the Government budget to cope with the additional financial obligations and income losses resulting from the Syria crisis.

In contrast to Jordan, **Lebanon** implemented a stricter policy in regulating the entry to the country. Since January 2015 a new border policy was implemented by the Lebanese Government to deter massive flows from entering the country. This bars Syrians from entering Lebanon on a merely humanitarian basis. Instead, Syrians at the borders are asked to justify their presence whether for work, trade, transit, or tourism among other options. In addition to the closure of borders to Syrians displaced on a humanitarian basis, the Government has recently requested from the UNHCR to stop registering refugees. Although the UNHCR has a vast operational structure, there may still be (and there most likely are) thousands of Syrians in Lebanon, who could not register with UNHCR. Closing the registration process will render them 'invisible', highly vulnerable, and also less accountable to the Lebanese authorities, which can only benefit from clear and transparent records of Syrian presence in Lebanon. In parallel, a targeted financial plan was established for specific purposes. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan proposes US\$ 2.14 billion to respond to priority humanitarian and stabilization needs, of which US\$ 210 million has already been secured through multi-year donor commitments.

*Socio-economic impact:* The labour market situation for **Jordanians** prior to the Syrian crisis was characterized by a labour participation rate of 67% among men and about 18% among women. The total unemployment rate among Jordanians prior to the Syrian conflict was relatively high (just above 14%). Both female

unemployment as well as youth unemployment (15-25 years) was considerably higher than this average, standing at around 30% for both groups. At present the labour force participation rate for Jordanians is similar to the same estimation reported before the Syrian crisis, while the unemployment rate has increased from 14.5% to 22.1%. Currently the highest unemployment rates are registered among the youngest, the lowest educated and poorest segments of the population. It is noted that there is a substantial concentration of Syrian refugees' workers in specific sectors. An increasing share of Syrian workers in the construction industry is observed, while at the same time the number of Jordanian workers in the sector has decreased. The same accounts for whole sale and retail industry. These processes have occurred despite the legal restrictions on work permits of refugees. It is therefore expected that most Syrian refugees work in the informal sector too. In order to face these developments, the Jordanian Government has sought to increase the regulation of the labour market. The authorities have deported for instance 5.723 illegal Syrians workers in 2013.

Contrary to the stricter Jordan labour policies, **Lebanon** implemented a more flexible action by treating and conceiving Syrian refugees as non-nationals. They are entitled to work in Lebanon during the first six months following their arrival to Lebanon. However, they do not have access to full coverage under the National Social Security Fund. As non-nationals, Syrians require a work permit whose cost for foreign workers in Lebanon depends on the work category. The majority of Syrians workers are mainly concentrated in the informal economy. An averagely consistent number of Syrian refugees regularly participate in the labour market. 47% of the Syrian refugees are in fact actually active including 19% of female participation. Men are more broadly distributed in a more varied range of occupations than woman and they are present in construction, wholesale and retail trade sectors. According to UNHCR 2014 the active Syrian labour force in Lebanon was about 240.000 in mid-2014, 160.000 of which regularly employed. It is worthy to be mentioned that labour conditions in Lebanon were already dire as high unemployment rates coexisted with mismatches in the labour market. Moreover, unemployment rates are expected to double to above 20%, mostly among unskilled youths. Competition between labour forces, pressure on wages

and deteriorating working conditions and the increase of informal employment are common. This is because refugees seem to accept lower wages and worst conditions of employment in respect to the hosting citizens. It is estimated that only 5% of males and no females have a work contract. Children are employed in hazardous activities such as streets peddling or begging. An additional number of 170.000 people have been pushed into poverty over and above 1 million already living below the poverty line.

### *Conclusions*

Both countries adopted resilience-based plans to meet refugees' needs as well as local communities' requests. However, the amount of the interventions covers only part of the cost needed for hosting the refugees. The economic impact of Syrian refugees' settlement mostly affects labour market. In both cases, it should be remarked that the impact should be calculated on a long term too since a massive number Syrian refugees currently settled in both countries with no sign of going back to Syria anytime soon.

### **Feedback and discussion**

- The feedbacks focused on the need to assess not only the negative impact of the Syrian refugees flows on the general economy of the countries, but also the positive effects. The refugees had contributed to revitalize the agricultural sector for instance.
- A participant stressed that many Syrian refugees were exploited (with salaries of 1\$ or 2\$ per day); 86% were under the absolute poverty line.
- A participant insisted that another dimension should be integrated in the study: the massive support Jordanian population had spontaneously given to Syrians refugees.
- There is a need to put on the agenda the issue of socio-economic integration by providing same opportunities and relax the tension that could arise if the labour market continues to be so competitive and unbalanced in terms of equality and same opportunities for the hosting country and the hosted communities. In this sense Lebanese and Jordan Governments should positively see any potential agreement with European countries as seriously

beneficent. It could be recommended to the EU to promote local business in Jordan and Lebanon in order to increase the possibilities of employment for all people settled in both countries. Alongside, it was valuably highlighted how Jordan could conveniently entangle opportunities by attracting foreign and further investments and creating new employment opportunities. A participant noted that only 25% of the estimated costs generated by the presence of Syrian refugees were covered by international donors.

- The Government representative stressed the difficulties to deal with the illegal labour market.
- A participant noted that Jordan opening up its labour market would be a game-changer.
- Further comments related to the need to particularly look at education policies needed to homogenize the system and avoid unbalanced socio-economic discrepancies and potentially grave consequences on the integration of the affected countries in terms of education, training and consequent job opportunities. The risk of creating social segregation due to such heterogeneity in education equivalences might lead to an increase in social conflict and tension.
- Another participant asked why the number of refugees coming in was decreasing and reflected about possible long term geopolitical changes of the refugee situation.
- Responding to a question, the presenter shared interesting findings from a survey conducted among Syrian refugees on the conditions under which Syrian refugees would return to Syria.

### **2.3 Economic and Social Integration of Migrants and Refugees (with a focus on Turkey)**

Ahmet Bayaner and Gulden Boluk from CERMC - Centre for Economic Research on Mediterranean Countries focused on socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees in Turkey. Turkey was said to be mainly interested in transit flows than long term settlement since it is mostly considered as a temporary bridge to European countries for Syrian refugees. Being mostly

conceived as a temporary place to stay for refugees, Turkey never adopted a holistic integration policies. The presenter explained the various legislative, policy and capacity building efforts Turkey had made over the last years. The Migration Integration Policy Index MIPEX 2014 report ranked Turkey at the bottom positions when it comes to integration policies due to weaknesses reported in the education, political participation and labour market mobility area. There has been an explosion in the number of asylum seekers coming from not only Syria, but also from countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. The number of Syrian refugees in Turkey reached around 2.2-2.5 million in 2015. Consequently, the Turkish Government agenda mainly rests on three issues. First, the need to manage the massive flows of refugees and migrants and their integration. Second, as a mainly transit country, it needs to act as safe gate-keeper for those flows transiting to Europe. Turkey decided to adopt an open-door policy by allowing Syrian refugees to enter the country and by providing them temporary protection status. They are eligible for receiving assistance in Turkey, which includes unlimited stay, protection against forcible returns and access to reception arrangements where immediate needs are addressed.

Among the 2.5 million Syrian citizens in Turkey, 300 000 live in 25 shelter centers which Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate (AFAD) established and managed in 10 provinces. The presenter elaborated about the features of these camps. For instance, registration facilities are located within each camp. Upon registration, camp residents receive registration cards from the camp authorities which can be used as identification documents, and which secure access to a number of services, including medical care. Considering that 53% of Syrian refugees are children the protection of them is one of the most important issues faced in the crisis. According to the figures, the majority of children living in camps (80%) are receiving regular education. A Ministry of National Education (MONE)'s circular was issued in September 2014 in order to include the Syrian conditional refugees and all other foreigners in schooling free of charge. According to the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), the non registered Syrians can access health care only in emergency situations. Despite the management inside the camps is rather successful, the non-camp refugee population continues to

experience significant problems that need to be further and deeply addressed. Employment is a critical issue among others. Actually, the number of Syrian refugees employed informally is estimated around 400 000.

Following the Syrian crisis, Turkey's migration policy has changed considerably. The presenter explained how EU standards serve as a reference for this reform, both in legislative and institutional terms. The Turkish Parliament approved the Law on Foreigners and International Protection in April 2013. Over the last years, Europe and Turkey strongly cooperated in assuring the best management of migration flows transit to European countries. A solid cooperation was rooted in June 2012 when Turkey and the EU finalized the Readmission Agreement. However, it still remains to be implemented. More recently in October 2015 the establishment of a unique EU-Turkey joint action plan in Brussels affirmed a new step up on support of Syrian refugees under temporary protection and migration management in a coordinated effort. The Action Plan pursues to address the current crisis situation in three ways: by addressing the root causes leading to the massive influx of Syrians, by supporting Syrians under temporary protection and their host communities in Turkey (Part I) and by strengthening cooperation to prevent irregular migration flows to the EU (Part II). The implementation of the Action Plan will be jointly steered and overseen by the European Commission and the High Representative/Vice President and the Turkish Government through the establishment of the EU -Turkey high-level working group on migration.

The presenter hinted at a number of recommendations, including the need to deploy a more comprehensive framework in Turkey to shed light not only on the official integration policies, but also on the absorption capacity of the societies, acknowledging that a great majority of refugees were outside of the camps. In this context, it would be important to put forward successful stories of integration.

#### **Feedback and discussion**

- It was suggested that the structure of the chapter dedicated to Turkey should be the same as the structure of the chapter on Lebanon and Jordan in order to ease comparisons and cross-analysis.

- One stakeholder invited the presenter to present in details how migrants and refugees in Turkey were geographically distributed and what the main routes were.
- A participant noted the presence of highly skilled migrants in Turkey that can have boosting effects for growth.
- A participant noted that the issue of social integration was possibly more an issue for European countries than for southern Mediterranean countries.

#### **2.4 European Migration and Asylum Policies (with focus on Greece)**

Eda Gemi from ELIAMEP- Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy analysed European migration and asylum policies, with Greece as a case study. The Greek-Turkish land border became one of the key-bridge point and gateway for the routes to European countries between 2010 and 2012. Such a transit hub was slightly substituted in its role by the Aegean islands between 2013 and 2015. The increase of arrivals in 2015 was massive. By December 2015, 792.112 new persons had been registered entering the country. Over the last two months of 2015, the average daily arrivals ranged from 5.040 persons in November to 3.800 persons in December. Most of the new entered individuals came from Syria (43%) - showing how much it impacts the Greece demography - followed by Afghanistan (29%), Iraq (12%) and finally Iran (5%). Lesbos Island received the highest number of arrivals with 447.958 new regularly registered individuals reported between January and December 2015. Despite the huge number of new arrivals the amount of asylum applications remained very low. 10.718 total asylum applications were registered in 2015. A conspicuous part consists of Syrian refugees (2.965).

Large capacities centers are situated in Lesbos where Kara Tepe and Moria centers counts a total capacity of 2.800 persons. Athens has three reception centers: Elaionas has a capacity of 700 people, Galatsi (Olympic facilities) capacity is 1.000, and Elliniko (Hockey) can contain 600 persons. Those asylum seekers and migrants who do not intend to settle in Greece used to continue their journey via other south-eastern European countries to central Europe through the so-called Balkan route. The presenter gave some details regarding

the asylum legislative framework in Greece. In 2013, the Greek Government established that the asylum policies should be autonomously treated through decentralized agencies. In October 2015, Greece and Turkey signed a joint action plan to manage the refugee flows. A 17-points plan established how to effectively manage the flows. The plan emphasizes the need to increase the capacity to provide shelter to refugees along the Balkan route. According to the co-joint action plan Greece will create 30.000 reception places by the end of the year and 20.000 further more with the support of the UNHCR. The Greek Government established further cooperative partnerships with African countries in occasion of the Valletta Summit (11st – 12nd November 2015). At the beginning of November 2015, the Greek executive bodies proceeded with the relocation of 30 refugees to Luxembourg.

Particular attention should be paid to the implementation of the hot-spot relocation system conceived to balance flows where preliminary asylum applications are made and asylum seekers are then transferred to reception centres. Nevertheless, such a system cannot be a sustainable solution since it cannot stem the flow of refugees, nor provide long-term solutions. The hotspot-relocation system could run the risk of turning frontline states into waiting zones for thousands of people. In addition, the Balkan route has the potential to be transformed into a new 'binding space' for refugees. The potential consequence could be that refugees will look for alternative ways to reach other European countries, via the Bulgarian border, the Evros River and through Croatia and even Albania or the Greek-Italian maritime route. The future scenario could appear risky even because the absence of legal routes will continue to put pressure on the external borders of Europe and further increase profits of smugglers. A more probably efficient solution could be setting up well-functioning hotspots, increasing reception capacity and creating a longer-term reception scheme that need to be developed in full synergy. The co-joint action could foresee the need to create hotspots on Turkish soil with the deployment of Frontex and EASO officers in line with the improving of the management of Greek-Turkish sea and land borders. In addition, the need for a revision of Greece's asylum policy approach and introduction of integration schemes results particularly urgent.

### Feedback and discussion

- As Greece is the only EU country looked at in the framework of the study and in order to ensure an overall coherent study, it is important to work on solid links with other chapters.
- A participant suggested that the case of Greece had illustrated the wider EU weaknesses:
  - The EU migrations system had been built on the premises that the asylum requests had to be formulated in the first country of arrival. This assumption had collapsed as about 800 000 refugees had not done so.
  - In the absence of asylum requests, the registration process had to ensure the protection of refugees. This participant also criticized the fact that the EU had not activated a temporary protection system for the refugees coming to Europe that could have applied to those not asking for asylum.
  - It was officially foreseen that the refugees that arrived in Greece were given work permits but the conditions to get in were so impossible to gather, that de facto the situation in Greece was not so different as Jordan or Lebanon.
  - Border management challenge: the EU was counting on countries such as Greece to fight unauthorized crossings but more support had to be given by the EU in order to do this.
  - Similarly, the situation whereby it was asked to Turkey to open its southern border to Syrian refugees and close its border with the EU to avoid the refugees to continue their journey to Europe was absurd.
  - Last, the idea of hot-spots was to combine registration, asylum, return and relocation procedures in a unique location. However, relocation (the possibility to grant refugees with legal ways to move within the EU) had not been implemented yet and the resettlement project hadn't started yet.
- The urgency of serious and long-term integration and socio-economic policies was raised by some participants. It was remarked that relocation was not a really and perfectly defined integration policy.
- A participant stressed the importance of not only registering but also monitoring flows.

### 3. LIST OF REFERENCES TO THE MEETING IN THE PRESS AND THE MEDIA

- [http://www.petra.gov.jo/public\\_news/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?Menu\\_ID=&Site\\_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=228683&CatID=14](http://www.petra.gov.jo/public_news/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?Menu_ID=&Site_Id=2&lang=1&NewsID=228683&CatID=14)
- <http://www.alghad.com/articles/909690-%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%B4%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A2%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%A1>
- <http://www.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleno=252587>
- <http://jcss.org/new/ShowNews.aspx?NewsId=470>



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