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The Far-Right Surge in Europe and Its Ripple Effects on Migration in the Mediterranean

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List of Abbreviations

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
EU	European Union
EUTF	Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
NDICI- Global Europe	Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Abstract

Several indicators point out to the rise of far-right wing within the European bloc including polls for the upcoming European elections and the migration deal which was passed by the French parliament last December. Far right sentiments are reflected on many issues especially Migration which holds second place in the list of most pressing issues for European voters. The New European Migration Pact, which exempts Ukrainians from the new measures, reflects European leanings towards the right adding more restrictions on Migrants, refugees and Asylum seekers especially those arriving from the Middle East and Africa. The far-right leanings do not only hold significance for the European Union (EU) but they will definitely impact neighboring countries especially countries of North Africa who act as a transit for refugees and asylum seekers aiming at reaching European shores. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers will face catastrophic humanitarian situation due the Pact's measures such as the screening procedure which will lead to diminished safeguards and a risk of mass detention at the borders, including for children, in countries of first arrival, the Crisis and Force Majeure Regulation which regulates what happens if there is a "crisis" at the EU's external border. European countries themselves will be put in an unenviable position due to transit countries' levering their geopolitical positions. Using a multi-faceted criterion, the paper argues that the new pact is just a "rebranding" of ongoing European migration policies which are found to be unsuccessful. The paper uses the EU-Turkey migration deal showcasing shortcomings of European migration policies. Findings suggest that, among other losses, far-right measures taken by EU states tend to embolden transit countries vis-a-vis European states who will lose on the political as well as the economic side. Politically, they will have to make concessions in face of transit states while economically they will have to pay huge amounts of aid for the sake of borders' externalization and keeping migrants away.

Introduction

In recent years, the European Union has witnessed a trend of increasing support for far-right parties, paving the way for migration to emerge as a pivotal issue in both public discourse and policy-making arenas. With the upcoming European elections on the corner, the specter of far-right rise underscores the significance of migration as a salient concern among voters and policymakers alike. Indeed, migration ranked among the top five issues motivating citizens to vote in the last European Parliament elections in 2019, reflecting its resonance within the European electorate (EP SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER, 2019). A survey conducted in autumn 2023 further underscored the prominence of migration, revealing that Europeans perceive it as the most pressing challenge facing the EU, alongside the conflict in Ukraine (EUBAROMETER, 2023).

Accordingly, the unveiling of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum has sparked intense debate. Positioned as a response to mounting migration pressures and characterized by its evidently severe measures, the pact has elicited polarized reactions from various analysts and commentators. Proponents defend it as a necessary step towards enhancing border security and restoring public confidence, while critics condemn it as regressive and detrimental to the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. Amidst this discourse, the pact has come to symbolize a broader shift towards conservative migration policies, reflecting a perceived "shift to the right" strategy among European policymakers (Barigazzi, 2024; European Movement Ireland, 2024).

This paper contends that the New Pact on Migration and Asylum represents a continuity rather than a revolutionary approach departing from existing migration policies in the EU. Rather than offering innovative solutions, the pact perpetuates entrenched challenges and fails to address underlying structural issues. To clarify this argument, the paper employs a multifaceted approach based on the utilization of a criterion designed to assess the efficacy, economic and political implications of migration policies in the EU. The designed Criterion aims at evaluating the followed policy on four layers; its adherence to the EU values and norms, its ability to achieve intended goals, whether implicitly or explicitly announces, economic costs and political costs. Each of the given criteria will then be defined and analyzed.

Drawing upon this criterion, the paper examines the new pact, evaluating its alignment with humanitarian principles, economic considerations, and geopolitical realities. Additionally, the paper adopts a case study approach, focusing on the EU-Turkey agreement as an example of migration cooperation. Despite being hailed as a success by EU officials, the agreement's effectiveness is evaluated, shedding light on its multifaceted impacts and unanticipated consequences. Finally, the paper will offer recommendations aimed at enhancing the approach towards migration issues, addressing the complex challenges faced by states and the EU as a bloc. However, the scope of this paper does not permit the development of an entirely new set of policies for European countries to adopt.

Policy Success Criterion

This paper aims at creating a criterion for measuring European Migration policy's success. To begin with, we define the terms on which the policy is going to be assessed. Firstly, the value-based criterion which evaluates whether the followed approach fulfills certain values and norms which the organization/state that follows them is claiming to adopt. Secondly, the economic cost criteria which analyses how much is the policy costly and whether it is as much costly to other parties in case of non-compliance. Thirdly, we refer to the objective criteria to see whether the policy was successful in attaining its intended goals. Lastly, we analyze the political cost associated with the followed policy. In another terms, how states' bargaining power and geopolitical situation is affected vis-à-vis other parties of the agreement.

Firstly, the value-based criterion, which in our case requires judging externalization policies based on their adherence to wider EU values and norms; with human rights and freedom as key pillars. International laws such as the 1951 Convention, on which EU countries are signatories, also known as the Geneva Convention with non-refoulment as one of its main pillars, is a main criterion. Common European Asylum System should also be taken into account.

Secondly, incurred costs means that the costs associated with applying a certain policy should be minimal or acceptable when compared to costs in case of its non-adoption. In this case, we will measure expenses associated with this policy. In return, the cost of non-compliance would be measured as well. Would third states, countries of origin, and transit countries, suffer huge costs in case of their non-compliance with their agreements with the EU?

Thirdly, we asses policy success based on its ability to achieve its intended goals. While the objective criterion might face several criticisms; mainly due to the usual vagueness of defining goals and their variation, we will pick one of the declared goals found as of paramount importance (Reslow, 2017). In our case, while not explicitly said, the goal of keeping migrants and asylum seekers away from European shores would constitute the premium objective. Our analysis based on data shows that most EU money goes to that end which puts it at the forefront of our assessment. Doing so, it will be demonstrated whether European externalization policies have led to a decline in the number of asylum seekers arriving at European territories after applying such policies.

Finally, political success will be examined. In the case of EU countries, following policies of externalization embodied in old approaches and the new approaches to be followed after the new migration asylum pact, we will find out how third states are being emboldened and given extra political power in the face of the EU, which allows these third states to extract benefits from the EU and direct threats in case of European non-conformity with their demands.

The Value-Based Assessment

Criticism has been surrounding the recently introduced European migration pact, with accusations of pandering to the far-right. While mainly aimed at curbing the influx of asylum seekers to European territories, the pact appears to overlook the humanitarian aspect of the situation. Consequently, numerous loopholes have been identified, potentially constituting breaches of international and humanitarian laws.

The pact aims to restrict migrants' access to international protection in Europe, which contradicts the internationally recognized right to asylum enshrined in the 1951 Convention, to which European states are signatories. Moreover, the pact neglects the Common European Asylum System, which acknowledges asylum as both a human right and an obligation for countries. Notably, articles 18 and 19 of the European Charter of Human Rights affirm the right to asylum and prohibit expulsions and extraditions to places where individuals may face risks. Additionally, the pact undermines the principle of non-refoulement, which is regarded as one of the central principles of the International and European protection systems (Woolrych, 2024).

One of the main critiques of the new pact lies in its failure, whether intentional or not, to address the challenges facing asylum seekers and migrants in general. The basic premise of the new pact is to deter individuals seeking refuge in Europe. However, this premise is flawed because it assumes that arrivals exploit asylum laws in their intended destination continent (Woolrych, 2024). Yet, existing data and statistics challenge this assumption, revealing that the majority of asylum seekers are fleeing persecution and violence in their countries of origin. For instance, the year 2024 is witnessing the highest number of forcibly persecuted persons, out of 110.8 million people that UNHCR protects and/or assists, 110 million forcibly displaced people worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order. Additionally, a significant portion (52%) of those fleeing their countries of origin come from Syria, Ukraine, and Afghanistan, nations grappling with warfare, political instability, and violence (EU Commission, 2023; UNHCR, 2023). Consequently, those arriving at Europe's borders often have no alternative but to seek asylum, particularly given the limited pathways available.

The regulations outlined in the new laws require large scale "screening", these laws mandate extensive screening and processing of asylum seekers within facilities situated at borders. Subsequently, various categories of asylum seekers will undergo an extensive process of evaluation while being held in enclosed border facilities for a maximum of 12 weeks. Notably, during this period, asylum seekers are legally considered to be outside EU territory, despite their physical presence, which increases the risk of them being denied access to basic rights and services. Additionally, if their claims are rejected, individuals may face an additional period of detention up to 12 weeks. However, in practice, the duration of detention is likely to extend, as many countries of origin are reluctant or incapable of repatriating their nationals,

thereby delaying their deportation. Such prolonged detention, coupled with limited access to legal assistance, breaches both European and international laws (Amnesty International, 2024; Romani, 2024).

Under the new pact, asylum seekers' applications might be denied if they are found to come from a "safe country." Individuals who have travelled through these designated "safe countries" before arriving in Europe, such as Turkey, risk having their claims dismissed without any inspection of their cases specific of persecution or political violence. This policy overlooks the reality that people flee their countries for different and personal reasons, and while certain nations may be considered as "safe" based on factors like crime rates, they may not be safe for those who have fled them (Romani, 2024). Essentially, this rule exposes asylum seekers to the threat of being deported to countries where they could face persecution. What adds to the issue is the lack of consensus among European countries regarding what makes a "safe country." By failing to establish common EU criteria for determining 'safe third countries' and leaving this responsibility to individual member states, the agreement creates opportunities for exploitation and abuse (Civil Right Defenders, 2024).

One of the most controversial aspects of the new pact is the principle of "force majeure," which grants member states the authority to diverge from certain regulations during situations of crises and exceptional circumstances (European Commission, 2020). This provision creates fertile ground for European countries, particularly Southern European states serving as the initial destination for people crossing the Mediterranean, to potentially violate human rights. Consequently, this could lead to significant human casualties and the resurgence of severe situations. The shortage of safe and regulated pathways forces people seeking better livelihoods to embark on dangerous routes to Europe (Martini & Megerisi, 2024). In 2023, this resulted in the deadliest year since 2016, with at least 4,064 individuals losing their lives while attempting to cross European borders. Particularly in the Mediterranean, the primary route from North Africa to Southern Europe, over 2,500 people have been reported as either dead or missing, with belief that the actual numbers could be higher. This figure merely shows the surface of the issue, demonstrating a much larger underlying catastrophe (El Pais, 2024).

Again, while the term force majeure is not clearly defined, countries can exploit such term to deport asylum seekers and deny their requests especially during times migration influxes. This situation presents a double-edged problem because crises in countries often coincide with increases in asylum seeker numbers, seen in events like during the Syrian civil war or the current situation in Sudan. In that case, European countries will possess the right to deport people fleeing crises at their countries of origin, despite the lack of safe routes (Martini & Megerisi, 2024).

One of the new pillars introduced in the pact is the "solidarity mechanism," under which affluent European countries are expected to assist other EU countries facing migratory pressures. Other member states can contribute by relocating asylum applicants or beneficiaries of international protection to their territory, providing financial support, or offering technical support. Essentially, member states can effectively buy their way out of the responsibility to accept their proportional share of asylum seekers. Initially, Sweden

objected to this mechanism, arguing that putting a price on people was unethical. However, later, the Swedish Minister of Migration announced that Sweden is open to paying to avoid receiving asylum seekers (European Movement Ireland, 2024). While the "solidarity funds" introduced by the new pact can be used to improve living conditions, there is also concern that they could be used to construct prison-like detention centres at borders or to finance migration control beyond the EU, the UK-Rwanda scheme is an example that could be replicated here.

Another critical point to highlight is the perpetuation of double standards by European countries in their dealings with migration issues. This new pact contrasts with the response from EU member states to the displacement of Ukrainian refugees, which demonstrated solidarity with people fleeing war and persecution. The rapid activation of the Temporary Protection Directive showcased the benefits of rapid access to protection status, streamlined procedures, redistribution of refugees across Europe, family reunification, freedom of movement, and easy integration into the job market. It was a response that underscored the possibility of welcoming and treating asylum seekers and migrants in a humane manner (ENAR, 2024; Woolrych, 2024).

Europe's open-door policy toward Ukrainian refugees stands in stark contrast to this new pact, which essentially aims to lower protection standards in Europe for racialized individuals seeking asylum. According to the European Commission's data, in 2022, first-time asylum applicants mostly come from Asia (30%), Africa (21%), and the Middle East (20%). Consequently, the majority of those affected by this new migration pact are individuals from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In contrast to the favorable response towards displacement from Ukraine, the inherent double standard in this new agreement becomes apparent and perpetuates the discriminatory approach to granting protection (Woolrych, 2024).

Economic Cost and Objective's Attainment

When evaluating this new pact, a critical question arises: does it truly revolutionize Europe's current approach to migration? Examination of the pact reveals that it only mirrors many pillars of the European already adopted policies. Therefore, it appears more as a "rebranding" of the existing approach rather than a new policy. The new pact essentially revolves around the policy of externalizing borders, an already existing European policy. Externalization policies encompass a range of legal, procedural, and even physical measures intended at restricting migrant arrivals at European borders and either keeping them within their countries of origin or neighbouring transit countries facing European states (Crisp, 2021).

The policy of externalization is far from novel; it dates back even before the 2015 surge and can be found in European Commission policy documents of 2001 which argue that for the EU to achieve its migration policy objectives, cooperation with non-EU governments is crucial (Tsourapas, 2021). The new pact continues this approach of externalizing migration to other states, aiming to prevent refugees and migrants from reaching European shores. This persists despite reports of human rights violations and the disproportionate impact on peoples from racialized communities. Within a month of the pact's approval, the European bloc had already taken action, with the European Commission announcing a €1 billion aid package for Lebanon amidst a surge of Syrian refugees arriving in Cyprus from the country (Politico, 2024).

Despite being represented as a new migration policy for the EU, the new pact essentially perpetuates old practices, particularly those that encourage "rentier behaviour" by third states. Externalization policy imposes significant financial burdens on the EU. For example, in addition to the €6 billion allocated to Turkey from 2016 to 2023, substantial amounts of money have been allocated to other countries and regions as well. This includes €60 million for a new Western Balkans migration package, €120 million to Egypt, and €152 million to Morocco (euronews, 2023). These states can leverage their geostrategic positions to extract financial gains from European nations in exchange for the reception of migrants and asylum seekers. These agreements further aggravate the EU's reliance on states beyond its borders to manage migration influxes, building upon recent agreements with Albania, Libya, Tunisia, and Turkey. Instead of directing funds towards building dignified reception within the EU and expanding safe and regular pathways, the pact represents a further step towards externalizing border control and the avoidance of Europe's responsibilities in refugee protection (Woolrych, 2024).

Africa and the North Africa region in specific serve as significant regions through which the EU receives migrants and asylum seekers, either directly from their countries of origin or as transit points on their way to Europe. In recent years, these regions have been going through a multitude of complex challenges that have redesigned migration patterns and driven forced displacement. These challenges include growing inequalities, political instability, poor governance, conflicts, poverty, urbanization, demographic growth, climate change, and environmental degradation. Consequently, forced displacement and irregular migration across Africa and towards Europe persist, particularly through the Mediterranean and Atlantic

coast regions. Countries in North Africa serve as points of origin, transit, and destination simultaneously in this migration dynamic while the mediterranean serves as the main route to the EU (European Commission, 2021).

Data shows that a significant portion of the expenses allocated for migration, as part of externalization policies, actually go towards policies aimed at restricting migrants' entrance, as illustrated in the chart below. For instance, based on 2017 data from the European Union Trust Fund (EUTF), the main channel for Funds for Africa, the majority of projects are aimed at curtailing irregular migration through measures of containment and control. Out of the €400 million allocated for the EUTF, roughly 55% of the budget allocated to migration management is dedicated to policies aimed at preventing irregular migration, such as providing support to local migration institutions, enhancing capacities to prevent irregular migration, and combating human trafficking. Basically, the strategy aims to deter migration towards Europe by creating more opportunities while simultaneously bolstering border control. Other areas include raising awareness about the risks of irregular migration (4% of funds), implementing policy reforms for returns (25%), and enhancing the identification of countries' nationals (13%). However, only 3% of the budget is allocated to developing safe and regular migration route (Oxfam, 2017). These findings indicate that the approach of the EU to migration management is predominantly targeted at containment and control. Instead of leading to a reduction in migration, restricting irregular migration may compel migrants to undertake even riskier routes which adds to the problem rather than solving it.
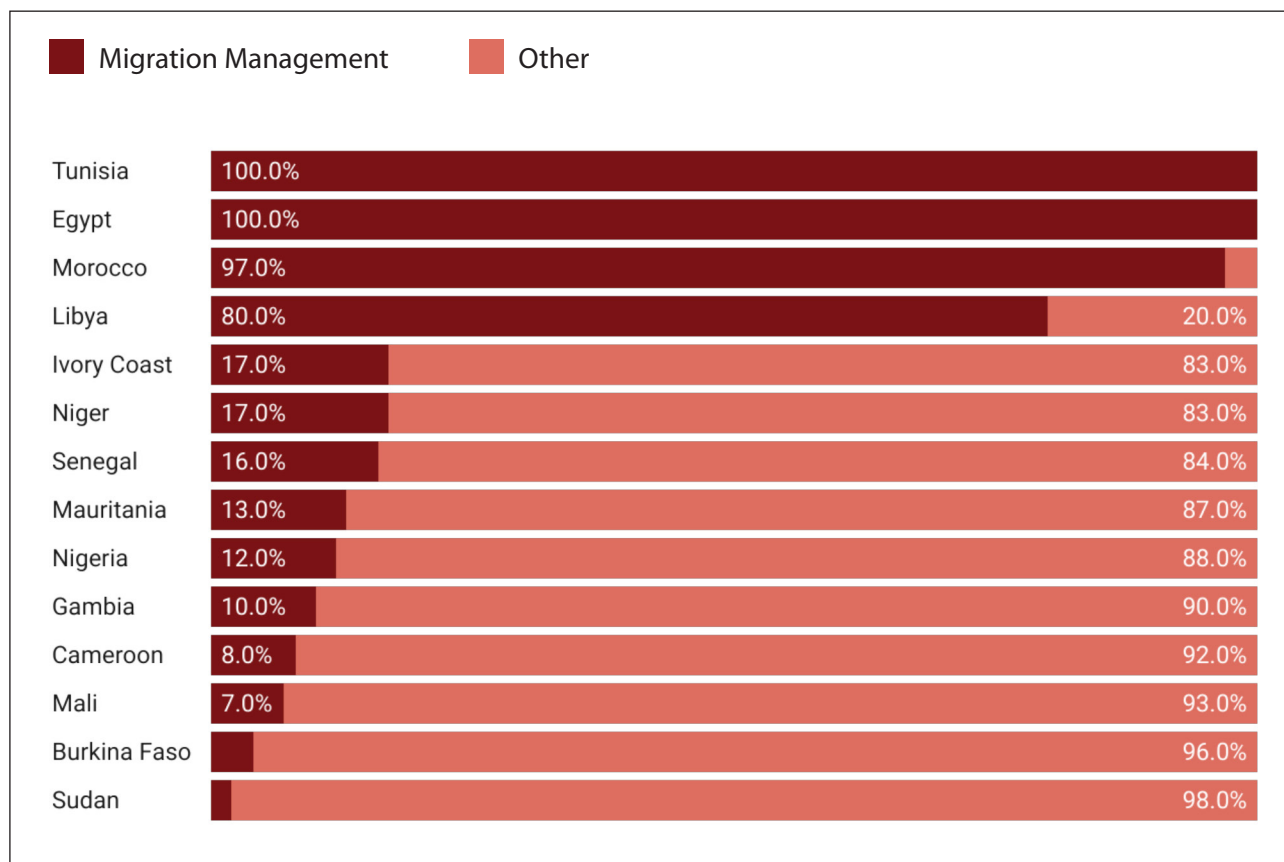
EUTF Funds' Allocation
In Percentages
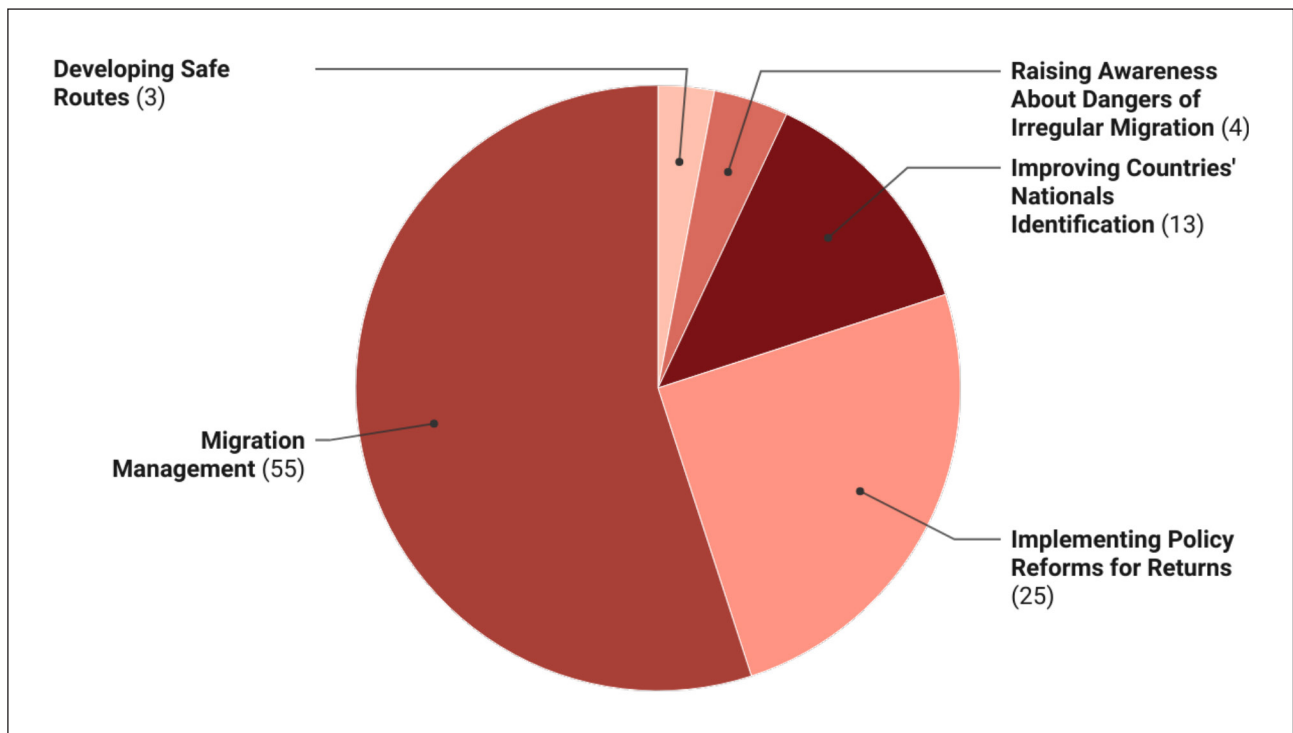
Source: Oxfam

The new pact is poised to perpetuate the EU reliance on funds to North African governments, overlooking the Mediterranean, which will continue to play a central role in managing migration. These payments already constitute a significant economic burden on Europe, a continent already facing economic struggles as the European Commission proposes economic rules allowing the return of austerity measures (ETUC, 2024). The EU has allocated substantial resources to North African countries in recent years. For example, between 2014 and 2020, the EU devoted around €1.4 billion to migration cooperation with Tunisia through various funding instruments, including the EUTF and the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe). Additionally, Tunisia receives EU funding for migration through instruments like the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) (European Commission,2023).

In the same vein, Libya has been a major recipient of European financial support in the area of migration, with approximately €465 million committed between 2015 and 2021 through the EUTF (European Commission, 2021). Morocco has also received considerable funding, with around €1.5 billion allocated between 2014 and 2020, including contributions from the EUTF and NDICI – Global Europe. Likewise, Morocco also benefits from EU funding for migration through instruments such as the AMIF (European Commission, 2023). Egypt, due to its geostrategic position, is a recipient of European funds, particularly for migration management. The latest deal with Egypt involves a €1.8 billion investment plan and €600 million in loans, with a considerable portion designated for migration management (Africa News, 2023).

A closer look at these funds reveals that the majority of it is directed towards "migration management". As already mentioned before, this is a general trend in EUTF allocation of funds. However, when compared with other African countries, the trend appears to be more acute in North African countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Libya and Tunisa; the key transit points for migrants wishing to travel to Europe (EDJNET, 2022).

Share of Funds Allocated to Migration Management in EUTF Beneficiary Countries

■ Migration Management   ■ Other

Country	Migration Management	Other
Tunisia	100.0%	
Egypt	100.0%	
Morocco	97.0%	
Libya	80.0%	20.0%
Ivory Coast	17.0%	83.0%
Niger	17.0%	83.0%
Senegal	16.0%	84.0%
Mauritania	13.0%	87.0%
Nigeria	12.0%	88.0%
Gambia	10.0%	90.0%
Cameroon	8.0%	92.0%
Mali	7.0%	93.0%
Burkina Faso		96.0%
Sudan		98.0%

Source: European Data Journalism Network

The pressing question here remains is; whether those European costly politics of externalization, expected to continue under the new pact, are actually effective?

Experts argue that the elegant amounts of funds and resources allocated by Europeans to securitization and externalization projects could be utilized more effectively in other ways. Data demonstrated in the table below suggests that despite the continuation of similar policies since the 2015 migration "crisis," there has been no stark decline in numbers, indicating that the strategy has not been successful (IOM, 2023). A comparison between 2016 and 2023 reveals only minimal differences in migration numbers. It is true that numbers have decreased over years but the proportion of declining reveals that externalization policies are not enough and that migrants and smugglers are still targeting the EU while taking perilous routes. It is also important to highlight that declining numbers in some years could be attributed to other factors such as in 2020 following Covid-19. Furthermore, not only have the numbers of arrivals remained high, but the figures for deaths and missing persons also suggest a failure of the strategy. Consequently, the emergence of new crises, such as the crisis in Sudan, has led to an increase in numbers in 2023, and this trend is expected to continue in 2024 despite the implementation of costly externalization policies.

Arrivals, Death and Missing Migrants to Europe

Year	Arrivals	Dead and Missing
2024	52,053	916
2023	292,985	4,064
2022	189,620	2,970
2021	151,417	3,188
2020	99,907	2,325
2019	128,663	2,087
2018	146,949	2,380
2017	187,499	3,140
2016	389,976	5,305

Source: IOM

Regarding the Mediterranean route in specific, Despite the significant sums of funds allocated towards deterring migrants, recent Frontex statistics reveal a concerning trend: the number of irregular border crossings to the EU has actually increased in 2022. As of September 2022, a total of 221,456 irregular migrants have been documented as reaching Europe, a 74% increase compared to the same period in 2021. The central Mediterranean route, in particular, has become significantly more dangerous, with some 1,049 dead or missing migrants as of September 2022. In the Western Mediterranean, 126 migrants have been registered as dead or missing in 2022, representing a 124% increase compared to 58 in the same period of 2020. Given the mounting trend in the number of migrants, especially along the Libyan corridor, it is reasonable to anticipate a further increase in the number of fatalities in the near future (Frontex, 2023).

The Political Cost

Previous sections highlight how the EU's policy of externalization is fraught with numerous pitfalls inherent in the policy itself. For example, assessment of the new migration pact reveals how human rights violations are likely to take place and perpetuate a pattern that has already begun with the adoption of externalization policies. Additionally, it was established how this policy incurs significant costs embodied in sums of fundings and the erosion of values and reputation for the EU. In addition to this, the policy's effectiveness in achieving its intended goals remains modest at best.

While all the previously mentioned is important, it is also crucial to highlight how third states, in some instances, exploit EU policies for their own gain, ultimately harming the EU as a political institution. One prominent phenomenon in the MENA region has been the post-2011 instrumentalization of migrants and refugees in processes of interstate bargaining (Tsourapas, 2021). Countries in North Africa, Turkey, Jordan, and others across the Mediterranean have leveraged their geopolitical position—either as states of origin or transit states for migrants—to extract material and non-material concessions from European nations willing to pay.

Indeed, such tactics are not completely new, with leaders like Libya's Muammar Al-Gaddafi employing threats to "turn Europe into black" in case of noncompliance with his country's demands. Following the events of 2011, and particularly during the so-called "migration crisis" of 2015, more leaders began to adopt similar ways. This gave rise to the concept of "refugee rentier states," which refers to states that seek to extract external economic and political concessions in exchange for hosting forcibly displaced communities on their territories (Tsourapas, 2019; Freier et al., 2021).

Refugee rentier states' behavior which is being fed by EU states' willingness to pay huge amounts of money and expenses to avoid hosting migrants, has negative effects on European countries themselves; In their efforts to navigate asymmetry of power, refugee rentier states of the global south tend to use the existence of migrants on their lands as a bargaining tool against EU states. In the following section, the Turkish case will be analyzed showing how policies of externalization employed while dealing with the issue of migration in the post-2015 crisis led to unpleasant results on many layers. The EU-Turkey agreement shows how European policies are costly in terms of reputation, economic costs, and political power.

The EU-Turkey Agreement (Case Study) ———————————

In 2015, around 900,000 asylum seekers arrived in Greece, with the majority landing on small islands after making the journey by boat from Turkey. Approximately 50% of them were from Syria. The numbers of asylum seekers arriving in Europe through this route had been gradually increasing in the three years prior, fueled by the escalating civil war in Syria and the belief that Greece provided a safe path to Western and Northern Europe. However, the period from 2014 to 2015 witnessed a twenty-fold increase in the number of asylum seekers, presenting new challenges for the EU (Kleist, 2022).

To address these challenges, the EU and Turkey announced a Joint Agreement on March 18, 2016, usually referred to as the EU-Turkey Agreement or Deal. The deal included various provisions, with the main focus being on the introduction of a novel policy instrument known as the 1-to-1 mechanism. Under this mechanism, each irregular migrant arriving in Greece without the right to protection was to be returned to Turkey. In exchange, for every Syrian individual deported back to Turkey, another Syrian would be resettled from Turkey to the EU. The process was limited to 72,000 resettlement spots. If the number of migrants requiring return to Turkey exceeded expectations, the mechanism would be suspended—this clause was considered as a safety measure. In return for its cooperation, Turkey received €6 billion for enhancing the humanitarian situation for refugees within its borders, and Turkish nationals were to be granted visa-free travel to Europe (Kleist, 2022; Medicines Sans Frontiers, 2017).

Did It Work? "The Objective Criterion"

The EU Commission views the humanitarian assistance provided to Syrian refugees in Turkey as largely successful (European Commission, 2019). Importantly, the number of arrivals in Greece decreased significantly from 2015 (861,630) to 2016 (177,234), and again from 2016 to 2017 (36,310), although they experienced an increase in the following years. Overall, smuggling and irregular migration were effectively reduced, but this made migration and interactions with smugglers much more perilous for refugees (UNHCR, 2024).

However, it remains uncertain whether the initial decrease in asylum seekers numbers reaching Greece was directly connected to the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement, particularly the 1-to-1 mechanism. Analyzing available data, it shows that the number of arrivals had begun to decline even before the agreement was in place (43,318 in 2014). Moreover, arrivals continued to decrease on a monthly basis after October 2015, before the EU-Turkey Statement was even announced. While the reasons for this decline before the agreement is not yet known, it reveals an existing trend prior to the agreement's implementation. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the fact that the agreement between the EU and Turkey achieved its intended objective of reducing the number of asylum seekers arriving in Greece (UNHCR, 2024; Kleist, 2022)

What About Human Beings?

The status of refugees in Turkey could be argued to have improved, with documented support contributing to their immediate and long-term well-being. This improvement can be linked to a period when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan endorsed an open-door policy and a broader foreign policy emphasizing affinity with Arab "brothers." For instance, in 2016, the Turkish government amended its citizenship laws, offering refugees permanent integration. The EU-Turkey Agreement facilitated refugees' participation and integration across various sectors, albeit to a mostly basic level. However, Syrians continue to face widespread and escalating racism and discrimination within Turkish society. Since 2019, the government had begun cracking down on refugees in urban centers, and incidents of xenophobia and racism against Syrian refugees in Turkey have been increasing recently (Osten, 2024; Terry, 2021).

In Greece, the EU implemented 'Hotspots' to redistribute asylum seekers across the EU, but this plan largely failed as most member states refused to accept receiving asylum seekers from Greece. Following the closure of the Balkan corridor, asylum seekers became stranded on the islands, where the Greek government established refugee camps. These camps quickly became overcrowded, leading to a deterioration of humanitarian conditions. The Greek asylum system has long struggled to adhere to EU law, with severe human rights violations against asylum seekers, particularly regarding reception conditions. These violations were deemed so serious by the European Court of Human Rights that returns under the Dublin Regulation were suspended from 2011 to 2017 (Kleist, 2022; Farhat, 2018).

Despite extensive reform efforts, reasonable asylum and reception policies and practices in accordance with EU law have not been attained. The imposition of movement boundaries on Greek islands and the intolerable conditions in refugee camps violate EU laws. Moreover, designating Turkey as a safe third country under the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement has raised concerns about illegal refoulements. Indeed, documented cases of push-backs of asylum seekers by Greek coast guards at both land and sea borders have exacerbated an already flawed asylum system in Greece and worsened conditions for asylum seekers (Farhat, 2018).

Money and Political Power

Apart from the €6 billion incurred by the EU as payments for Turkey under the agreement, the EU experienced significant political ramifications as a result of its refugee deal with Turkey. By externalizing border control and relying on Turkey to prevent irregular arrivals of asylum seekers in Europe, the EU unintentionally gave diplomatic leverage to the Turkish government, thereby severely constraining the EU in other areas. Criticism from Europe was notably absent when the Turkish government cracked down on the opposition following a coup attempt in 2016. Similarly, European objection was largely muted when Turkish troops invaded Kurdish areas in northern Syria. Additionally, The Turkish government repeatedly issued threats to terminate the agreement and grant migrants' access to the EU border. In 2019, Turkish President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan repeated his threat to "open the gates" to Europe for Syrian refugees unless the EU provided them with additional support (Kleist, 2022).

In his actions, Erdogan utilized a strategy of "blackmailing" against the EU. Blackmailing, which involves making a threat one does not which to carry out (Keohene & Nye, 2012), was employed by Turkey against the EU. Given the EU's reliance on Turkey in its migration management policies, Ankara found itself in a position of strength vis-a-vis the EU. In February 2020, Turkey sent thousands of asylum seekers to the Greek land border, leading to swift reactions from Greece and the EU, and demands to adhere to the terms of the agreement. The EU's fear of irregular migrants left it incapable of adequately representing its foreign policy interest vis-a-vis Turkey. Furthermore, other countries took note and followed the same approach, with Belarus also moving asylum seekers to the external EU border in 2021. The followed Turkish approach and the inability of the EU to respond adequately proved the leverage given to Turkey and any third state on which the EU relies for its migration management (Tsourapas & Zarataloudis, 2021).

Policy Recommendations

While the EU's strategy of providing aid to third countries, particularly states of origin and transit countries bordering Europe, to manage its borders has been in place, it has proven to be troublesome and has not yielded satisfactory results. Therefore, this paper aims to propose solutions to address these issues. However, it is important to note that the scope of this paper does not permit the development of an entirely new set of policies for European countries to adopt. Instead, it focuses on addressing key issues through research and analysis.

To begin with, policy makers tend to base their decisions on intuitive assumptions including assuming that people tend to migrate due to a myriad of causes including poverty and socioeconomic conditions. While this is not entirely false, it leads to inadequate decision making (Hagen-Zanker, 2024). Research has indicated that reducing poverty and increasing educational levels may paradoxically heighten desires to migrate, as it provides individuals with the means and opportunities to do so. For instance, individuals with higher levels of education, such as those holding a PhD, exhibit a 22% increase in migration aspirations compared to those with no formal education. (Carling et.al, 2023). Instead, it was found is that addressing corruption is key to reducing people's aspirations to migrate. People living in communities where paying bribes for services is commonplace are 36% more inclined to develop strong desires to migrate. Corruption is not solely a problem in itself; but it serves as a symptom of other underlying and less apparent societal issues. For instance, corruption within institutions such as hospitals, schools, and police forces may signal low wages, insufficient management, and a deficit of accountability. (Carling et.al, 2023). Accordingly, European policy makers need to redesign their migration aid policies in order to target real and more salient "root causes" of migration, corruption to be considered of a paramount importance in this case.

Additionally, we suggest channelling aid through international organizations such as UNHCR, the International Organization of Migration and others rather giving them directly to third countries governments' pockets. While it is argued that the origins of refugee renteirsim are believed to come from the establishment of the global refugee regime, particularly the establishment of the UNHCR as an institution responsible for managing forced displacement without political or economic obligations for United Nations member states (Loescher, 2001), still, we argue that reliance on these organizations would be better for some reasons. Firstly, it would enable the establishment of a monitoring system to track the allocation of aid funds. Implementing specific targets and ensuring transparency in the allocation of financial resources becomes more feasible when managed through international organizations. This approach also aids in addressing the root causes of migration to some extent, i.e. corruption. Additionally, it's essential to consider sovereignty concerns; countries providing aid may face limitations in overseeing financial processes, making international organizations a preferable option for financial oversight.

Secondly, the EU is accused of bailing out some of the third states in order to manage migratory flows; Harming both the reputation of the EU as well as perpetuating one of the main causes of migration. A considerable portion of refugees and asylum seekers flee their countries for reasons such as political opinion, religion and political persecution. When the process of providing aid becomes in the hand of governments who are asked to manage shutting borders, it gives third states a leverage and bargaining power leading to undermining European power and the emergence of the previously discussed migration renteirsim and blackmailing behaviour.

Current European policy based on externalization and migration aid raises questions around sustainability. Which solution seems to be more sustainable; to create a fortress around Europe so that no one can enter or to create better livelihood conditions so that people would not want to leave their countries? Current practices have already shown the unsustainability of policies of externalization. For instance, after years of accommodating Syrian refugees in turkey, refugees are starting to face racism fuelled by Turkish economic crisis in which Syrians are referred as responsible. Providing turkey with billions of euros nearly a decade ago did not seem enough as problems started to appear on the surface again. Thus, the EU needs to redesign its whole policy so that it is not targeting shutting off borders, but to help in addressing the root causes and main reasons which pushes people to leave their home countries.

Finally, it is suggested not to perceive migration as a threat or "crisis" perse as it is usually portrayed in prominent European narrative. Further research on migration and development is suggested, policy makers need to take this as a premise for their policies. Doing so, policies would empower migrants to fulfil their own development potential and thereby contribute to the development of the communities in which they live and from which they originate (IOM, 2016). To ensure that the potential benefits of migration are maximized and widely shared, governments need to tailor appropriate regulations. Numbers already show that migration could be a useful tool for development and economic prosperity and not the opposite; The global welfare gains resulting from increased cross-border labour mobility could surpass those from full trade liberalization by several times. Estimates suggest that eliminating restrictions on South-North migration alone could yield gains of $706 billion by 2030. Such elimination of restrictions is projected to lead to a rise in world GDP ranging between 11.5 and 12.5 %, along with an increase in GDP per worker of 11.3 % in the medium-term (World Bank, 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the new European migration pact serves as a representation of the rise of the far-right within Europe. Despite claims of reform, the pact perpetuates the externalization policies long pursued by the EU, maintaining a status quo that prioritizes border security over humanitarian concerns. Our evaluation, conducted through a policy success criterion including; value-based, objective, economic, and political assessments, reveals concerning implications. Notably, the pact is poised to yield disastrous humanitarian consequences, as evidenced by its provisions reveals a loss on the side of value-based assessments. Regarding the economic cost assessment, mounting economic costs incurred by the EU, particularly in its dealings with North African countries tasked with controlling migration flows through the mediterranean. Moreover, the erosion of EU bargaining power and the emergence of migration rentier states wielding newfound leverage underscore the EU's political loss. Despite all that, doubt on the pact's efficacy in deterring migration remains which means that high costs do not necessarily mean objectives' attainment.

Drawing upon the EU-Turkey Agreement as a case study, our analysis underscores the inherent flaws in current migration policies and the urgent need for reform. Our recommendations advocate for a shift towards addressing the root causes of migration, rather than focusing only on border security measures. Emphasizing the importance of international cooperation and aid distribution through international organizations while not funding third states' governments directly, we also propose the adoption of sustainable solutions that prioritize human rights. Furthermore, combatting negative narratives surrounding migration is essential emphasizing on the fact that migration can be utilized as a tool for development and not the opposite.

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