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Spillover of public opinion into the EU harmonization on asylum policy:

Evidence from Belgium, France and Germany

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Abstract

This thesis discusses how public opinion has an influence on the administrative decision-making procedures in Belgium, France and Germany in terms of recognition rates regarding applications for asylum, relocation rate and migrant integration rate and how varied public opinion in the Member States influences EU harmonisation in asylum policy. Utilising Most Similar System Design (MSSD) the research conducts an analysis to examine public opinion on asylum seekers and refugee policy in three different EU Member States (Belgium, France, Germany) and to identify how individual differences existing within each of these countries challenges implementation of Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The study found that although the European Union grows around normative values, the still strong nation-state reflexes cause difficulties in establishing common transnational migration policies.

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List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
MSSD	Most Similar System Design
MIPEX	Migrant Integration Policy Index
ESS	European Social Survey
EB	Eurobarometer
EC	European Commission
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IOM	The International Organization for Refugees
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
FRONTEX	The European Border and Coast Guard Agency
Eurostat	The Statistical Office of the European Union

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

After the so called “refugee crises” during 2014-2016, asylum file drives a wedge among the European Union Member States and divides public opinion. The chaos in European asylum and immigration policy maintains a paradox: while there is a large shortage of labour, the same labour is being excluded from outside the EU. Member States of the EU have been trying for years to control migration flows, to make them manageable and, above all, to shape them to their own interests. However, national states have different limitations in policy making. There are economic restrictions, restrictions on human rights treaties and political restrictions. The political limitations are that national political parties have to deal with control dilemmas, in which cabinets want to put public opinion behind them and safeguard private interests. Guiraudon and Joppke (2001) call this self-limited sovereignty.

As a result of “stress” created by the asylum oriented migratory flows into European region, the EU asylum and migration frameworks, especially efficiency and relevance of Common European Asylum System (CEAS), were tested. The CEAS, in theory, provides a harmonized policy towards asylum seeker across the EU by each Member States. These challenges emphasized the question again whether there is fair and effective burden sharing among the Member States, whether harmonization in asylum procedure is really applicable and suitable in practice.

The arrival of asylum seekers to the EU is not only an administrative challenge; it is politically charged and keeps people divided. In European countries, there was a high influx of asylum seekers at the end of 2015 and early 2016. This led to all kinds of logistical problems concerning the reception of asylum seekers and the flow of status holders to the municipalities - problems that were regularly reported to the press.

The influx of asylum seekers was accompanied by unrest among the population and downright negative reactions about the reception of asylum seekers. For example, in a few

places there was a grim atmosphere, disturbance of public order, intimidation, use of verbal or physical violence. The comprehensible media coverage of these kinds of events made it easy to create the impression that there was great social unrest and that public support for asylum seekers' reception was low or at least decreased sharply. In other words, the support for the reception of asylum seekers is variable: it differs from person to person and perhaps from moment to moment.

Different Member States acted in various manners during the so-called refugee crises. Moreover, the public attitude varies towards “newcomers” from one Member State to another. This differentiated opinion might be one of the reasons why common asylum policy within EU could not be achieved, so far. The failure in harmonized policy can be observed through varied recognition rates of application made by the asylum seekers from a definite origin country. The aim of this research is to carry out an evaluation of public opinion towards refugees within its role in shaping public policy on asylum. The project seeks to investigate the following questions:

The relatively small increase inflow of asylum seekers to the EU within 2014-2016 changed public opinion towards refugees and migrants differently in each Member State. How does varied public opinion influence public policy on asylum? And why does it hinder the EU policy harmonization in asylum issues in terms of recognition rates regarding applications for asylum, relocation rate and migrant integration rate?

The contribution of this work in this context and in terms of understanding the role of public opinion on variation in the implementation of CEAS by Member States begins with the fact that existing body of literature has not yet to investigate the public opinion phenomenon in the light of EU harmonization. By relying on the data and empirical evidence this work intends to contribute to filling this gap.

Following the operational definitions of important concepts, next chapter explains methodology and research design. Chapter 3 then introduces the existing literature and chapter 4 presents the main developments, discussions and decisions of the years 2015 to 2018. In the chapter 5 data on the public opinion on migrants and refugees is discussed regarding its effect on asylum policies of the observed countries in terms of recognition, relocation and migrant integration rates. The last chapter concludes the main finding and recommendations.

Operational definitions

In this thesis different concept are used. To avoid any misinterpretation the main terminology is briefly defined below.

Modern migration flows are multidirectional and reasons behind trans-border movements vary. Contradictions among the terms “migrant”, “refugee” and “asylum seeker” in different literatures resulted in different approaches towards human movements. Although one of the key reasons of migration is economic opportunities and better life conditions promising by the destination countries, the concepts of “economic” migrants and refugee or asylum seekers should be differentiated. Therefore, irregular migration flows including both the persons in search of better life and the persons fleeing from persecutions are called “mixed migration”.

The asylum-seeker is one who has applied for asylum and the reasons for being a refugee by the courts of the country in which he applied, and during this period protection, housing and humanitarian needs are met.

The refugee is a person who has been prosecuted for reasons such as political thought, religious, ethnic and ethnic conflicts, and therefore has to leave his country and the refugee

status is accepted by law. Refugees have the right to enjoy all the rights recognized by the Geneva Convention in their country of destination.

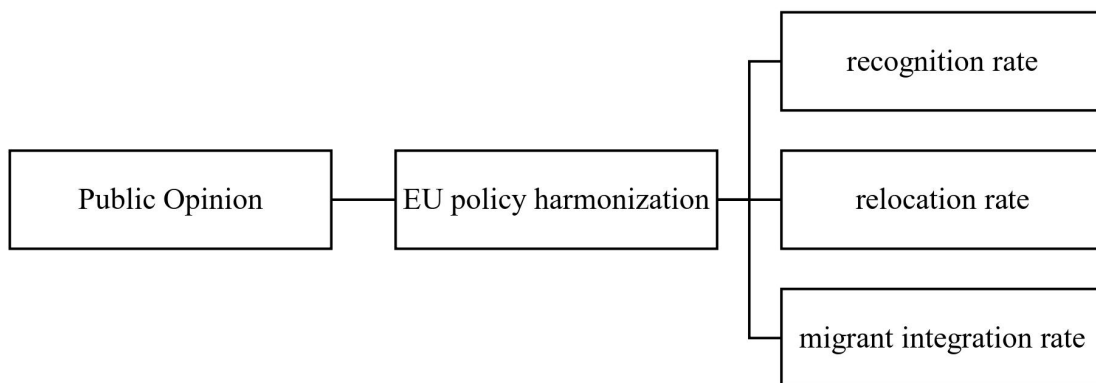
Enacted in 2005, the EU Common European Asylum System (CEAS) serves to provide the foundational migration policy for granting international protection in the European Union (European Commission, 2019).

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

The objective of this research is to investigate how public opinion in Member States (Germany, Belgium and France) influences EU policy harmonization in asylum issues. The research questions are:

- How does varied public opinion influence public policy on asylum?
- Why does it hinder the EU policy harmonization in asylum issues in terms of recognition rates regarding applications for asylum, relocation rate and migrant integration rate?

The interaction of variable can be described as follows:



Research design

The research design chosen for this study is a qualitative method of a comparative analysis. Qualitative comparative analysis advocates a comparison of cases, whereby the detailed complexity of individual cases and the diversity of the relevant phenomenon are largely preserved (Ragin, 1987). This analysis can be used for several purposes, including systematically summarizing and organizing large amounts of qualitative data, discovering patterns and differences between cases and developing and articulating new theoretical propositions (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Qualitative comparative analysis makes it possible to

show the underlying complex causality of processes in multiple cases without compromising the recognizability of each individual case. The richness of the case is the starting point and the results must be based on knowledge about the cases. This method provides researchers with tools for organizing and analysing qualitative data, offering substantiated and formalized principles for comparative case interpretation.

Complimentary to the qualitative comparative analysis Most Similar System Design (MSSD) is utilized to compare distinctive feature of countries with relatively similar characteristics. MSSD compares cases that share many common functions to identify important functions that make them different. According to John Stuart Mill (1843) “if an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance save one in common, that one occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or cause, or a necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon”. Selecting ‘few countries’ in a comparative analysis is usually more thorough and profound (Landman, 2003). Therefore, this research refers to evaluation of public opinion on asylum in Germany, Belgium and France. Being members of the EU, all three countries have relatively similar GDP per capita, employment rate and welfare development.

Data

Public opinion

Measuring public opinion through surveys are common in many countries including EU countries. Although public opinion on asylum seekers and refugees is not included in the most surveys, general question on migration can be utilized as an indicator of population’s attitude towards “new comers”. Normally, these polls, including Gallup Worlds Poll and

Eurobarometer, in general pose inquiries about the people's general perspectives on migration and migrants. Public opinion on migration can shape and impact migration policy of the governments, despite the fact that the public might not have an exact comprehension of the number and kind of migrants living in their country ("Public opinion on migration", 2019). Public opinion on migration may likewise impact integration of migrants in their destination countries. Information on public opinion on migration can be a helpful indicator of how open the receiving communities are towards migrants.

As the aim of this research is directly connected with public opinion on asylum, in order to define Europeans attitude towards the emerged "refuge" crises three survey results - Eurobarometer 2015 surveys, the European Social Survey wave 7 (ESS7), and the Pew Research Center 2016 survey is utilized.

For the purpose of analysing changing patterns in attitudes towards migration and refugee in Belgium, France and Germany Standard Eurobarometer survey reports is used. Established in 1974 the Standard Eurobarometer covers question related security, EU values, citizenship, economic situation, employment, EU affairs, Role of the EU, trust in institutions, etc. this research focuses on the Standard Eurobarometer questions related to immigration covering 2014-2018.

The responses to the following question are analysed using the data from Standard Eurobarometer 82 (November 2014), 84 (November 2015), 86 (November 2016), 88 (November 2017) and 90 (November 2018):

- Attitude towards immigration of people from other EU Member States;
- Attitude towards immigration of people from outside of the EU;
- Attitude towards common European policy on migration;
- Immigration as the most important issue facing the country at the moment;
- "Our country should help refugees";

- “Immigrants contribute a lot to our country”.

The last two questions were added to the EB questionnaire since 2015.

EU policy harmonization in asylum

As there is no concrete data on how harmonized policy EU Member States have in asylum procedures, for the purposes of this research three different categories of data is selected in order to complement key requirements of the CEAS:

- Recognition rates – Recognition rate for international protection is “the number of positive decisions on applications for international protection as a proportion of the total number of decisions issued for each stage of the procedure (i.e. first instance and final on appeal) in the reference period under review” (European Commission, 2019). Positive decisions include international protection status controlled by EU regulations, namely refugee status and subsidiary protection status. Referring to harmonization at the EU level, permits to stay for humanitarian reasons under national laws of the Member States is not taken into consideration when calculating the recognition rates. The total number of decisions comprises of the total of positive and negative decisions. The data is collected from Eurostat database.
- Relocation rates – In 2015 there was a relatively strong increase in the number of asylum seekers who came to Europe. They mainly came via the Balkans and the Mediterranean. As Greece and Italy had a relatively high number of asylum seekers compared to other EU countries, with the Council Decision dated 22 September 2015 it has been agreed that around 120,000 refugees who reside in Greece and Italy will be accommodated in the other Member States until 26 September 2017. In April 2017, the

European Commission lowered the number of refugees that Member States must take over from Italy and Greece. In total, only 33,000 refugees were eligible for a relocation.

The data for relocation is retrieved from European Commission Migration and Home Affairs Factsheet on “Relocation EU solidarity between Member States” (2017) covering the last full summaries of the Temporary Emergency Relocation Scheme.

- Migrant integration rates – Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) measures integration policy in 38 countries including, EU member states and three non-EU countries. It uses more than 167 policy indicators to provide a multidimensional picture of the opportunities for migrants to participate in European societies. MIPEX focuses on six policy areas that represent a migrant's journey to full citizenship: access to the labour market, family reunification, long-term residence, political participation, access to nationality and anti-discrimination. For each indicator, the level of 'best practice' is set at the highest European standard, based on charters from the Council of Europe or Directives from the European Union. As policies are assessed based on the same standards in all Member States, MIPEX can be used as a tool to compare integration policies in the countries surveyed.

CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section presents a comprehensive review of existing work on public opinion and its impact on EU asylum policy. It begins with theoretical approaches to public opinion and its role in public policy. Then it introduces academic review of Member States' interest in EU policy harmonization. Moreover, this chapter includes existing researched done regarding the public opinion on asylum policy.

Public opinion in theory

Publicly, a matter is not mentioned simply because it is not secret and generally accessible. Public is something especially when it comes to the "*res publica*" has to do when it comes to the cause of all. There is a political public sphere when the public creates transparency, allows discourse on topics, opinions and beliefs, and provides guidance in diversity of opinion. Public opinion as a political term does not automatically result from the addition of individual opinions. It is neither a quasi-statistical aggregate of democratically raised population attitudes, nor is it synonymous with the published opinion. Public opinion rather, it has to be understood as "a collective product of communications that presents itself as 'ruling' opinion among speakers (Neidhardt 1994). For the legitimacy of democratic rule public opinion is a central category. Nevertheless, a commonly accepted definition of public opinion does not exist (Davidson 1968).

For the understanding of public opinion there are a number of explanatory approaches that accentuate the problem area of politics and the public in general and of rule and public opinion, in general.

1. The social-psychological approach: public opinion as a "social skin" - In the context of her internationally acclaimed and politically influential theory of the "spiral of

silence" E. Noelle-Neumann tries to explain the process and function of public opinion to be re-described and made accessible to the empirical examination: According to this, public opinion "based on the unconscious desire of people living in a union to arrive at a common judgment, to a consensus as required to act and if necessary decide" (Noelle-Neumann 2002). A key driver of people's attitudes and social behaviour is the desire not to isolate themselves in the social environment. Through a "quasi-statistical" organ of perception man has the ability to register in its environment the increase and decrease of opinion distribution on certain topics. Due to a "fear of isolation" assumed as a socio-psychological constant, one's own opinions are concealed if they do not correspond to the perceived "climate of opinion" and the danger threatens to be isolated. Conversely, when people see the current or future majority opinion on their side, people tend to publicly profess their beliefs. This creates a dynamic development over time. The actual or seemingly decreasing group of opinion always appears weaker than it really is, the actual or supposedly increasing as stronger. This process develops in the manner of a spiralling process of increasing speech or silence (hence "silent spiral").

2. The system-theoretical approach: public opinion as a construct on the basis of "attention rule" - N. Luhmann (1970) sees public opinion. nothing more than a result that follows from politically relevant events. His concept renounces all normative claims and "liberates" public opinion from the remnants of all enlightenment pathos. Instead, from a systems theory perspective, he wants the functional mechanisms of public opinion as a subsystem of discovering society. The high functional differentiation with almost arbitrary possibilities of action required in modern societies compels selection. The public opinion designated as the "thematic structure of public communication", is therefore essentially the result of selection on

the basis of "attention rules". These rules are formed due to the scarcity of attention as rules of attention. While "decision rules" control the formation of opinions in the decision-making instances of the system, the public interest-oriented "attention rules" (e.g. novelty value, status of the sender, crises or crisis symptoms, etc.) influence the construction of political reality in the media. What matters here is not so much the transformation of individual opinions into general, for all as reasonably acceptable formulas, but the adaptation of the thematic structure of the political communication process to the respective decision-making needs of society and its political system. Topics serve the "structural coupling" of mass media with other areas of society. Luhmann (1990) understands public opinion, therefore, as a "communication network without connection obligation".

The performance of public opinion meets for the system theoretician Luhmann once in the "thematization", so that "a subject on the negotiating table" is brought; on the other hand, by the reduction of problem complexity. As a result, the political issues which cannot be surveyed are made comprehensible by simplification and are even able to make decisions. It is not the inaccessible public sphere of all political communication that matters, but the structuring of all, including non-public, political communication through institutionalized themes. Luhmann renounces all "rationality expectations and hopes for a revitalization of civil-republican 'life'". In the process of forming political opinion he assigns the mass media the role of rather passive disseminating organs (mirror model). Their position remains vague to other subsystems of society (economy, politics, culture, etc.). The mirror of the public opinion enables the "observation of observers" and enable the political system with the help of public opinion on "self-observation and the formation of appropriate expectation structures".

Further development of the system-theoretical approach is shown by F. Neidhardt and J. Gerhards. Neidhardt (1994) and Gerhards (1998) gave the public three functional meanings. On the one hand, it has an observational function, insofar as it allows for self-observation and foreign observation in the increasing complexity of modernity. It opens up access to the public for political actors and at the same time provides a sounding board for civil society actors. On the other hand, the public has a validation function in that the media should provide standards for factual accuracy and quality. Finally, the public will gain a sense of orientation by contributing to the selection services required in the framework of the "Economics of Attention" by Georg Franck.

3. The radical-democratic-communication-theoretical approach: public opinion as a critical authority over political power - J. Habermas, on the other hand, represents a critical view of public opinion and public life. According to him, the liberal model of publicity as an audience of discriminating private individuals, who meet automatically in the interest of educating the common good, no longer applies to the social state mass democracy. Historically speaking, he diagnoses the "structural change of the public" (1962) as a phenomenon of political decay. The public today arises in the field of competition of organized interests through the "unfolding of demonstrative publicity", above all through planned, primarily addressed to the mass media and public relations. Habermas sees this as a disintegration and a re-politicalization of the political public. Meanwhile, Habermas conceded that he had been "arrested for a questionable totality concept of society and social self-organization" and had been too much oriented towards the further development of the democratic and social state of law into a socialist democracy. While Habermas (1992) continues to focus on the emancipatory potential of a critical public in the context of a deliberative model of democracy, he now increasingly emphasizes the interplay between the institutions of

the rule of law on the one hand and the public and counter-public actors of civil society on the other.

Variants of a rather normative-critical understanding of public opinion are still prominent, not least in connection with the ongoing critical debate on political staging (Meyer 1992), symbolic politics or more generally on "politics as a ritual" (Edelman 1976). At the same time, a countermovement fed by cultural influences is forming, understanding the public as an area of experience in which entertaining politics and political entertainment merge (Dörner 2000).

4. The liberal-democratic approach: the interplay between "active" and "passive" public - Liberal conceptions of society stand in direct opposition to the radical-democratic postulate of a generally active public. Thus, R. Dahrendorf (1986) fundamentally doubts the constitutional meaning of an active public sphere involving all citizens. In principle, he questions that in modern democracy a structural change of the public took place. Even today, public participation in the political process is sporadic and selective. It was also through mediating, heavily weighted instances such as parties and associations in a way that is not always compatible with the idea of a free citizen. Nevertheless, the fundamental democratic understanding of public opinion past the reality of modern society. The liberal view is that the public is not made up of many equally motivated and participation-oriented individuals. Rather, a distinction should be made between a "latent", a "passive" and an "active" public. Only the latter regularly participates in the political process with their own ideas, recruits from political organizations and takes over offices. By contrast, the democratic utopia resulting from a totally activated public is as totalitarian as all utopias. Non-participation in politics is even acceptable and desirable within certain limits. From a liberal point of view, therefore, the interrelation between an "active"

public capable of representing diversity and capable of generating political initiative on the one hand and the "passive" public intervening in case of need or conflict, on the other hand, is decisive for the maintenance of market rationality in a democratic community.

In conclusion, in any political system that depends on consent, politics without the continuous observation of self and others comes in the medium of the public opinion, not from it. This includes the targeted use of demographic instruments. Democratic action requires constant feedback from citizens' opinions. However, politics can not only observe and, if necessary, execute opinions. Because political leadership competence is not exhausted in communication and certainly is not in the mere execution of fluctuating opinions.

The impact of public opinion on public policy

A great number of scientific researches have been done about whether public opinion influences government policy in general. However, a clear answer to this question has not yet been found. Scientists Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro investigate in their study "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy" (1983) 357 cases in which public opinion undergoes a significant change over a period from 1935 to 1979. They then compare changes in public opinion with the policy that was made in the two-year period before the change in public opinion took place and four years thereafter. They come to the conclusion that in 66 percent of the cases policy change is congruent to opinion change and that this congruence occurs more frequently when public opinion is undergoing a major change and when it covers an important issue. Moreover, the change in public opinion occurs more often before the policy changes than afterwards, which implies that public opinion does in fact influence government policy (Page, Shapiro, 1983).

In “Public Opinion and parliamentary action: Responsiveness of the German Bundestag in comparative perspective” (1996), Frank Brettschneider examines the same question with the German federal government as the case. For this he compares 94 public opinion polls with more than 3000 parliamentary documents over a period from 1949 to 1990. Brettschneider also finds congruence between public opinion and government policy of 60 percent. He also concludes that the congruence is greatest when the public opinion changes in a conservative direction, the political status quo is supported and when there is a large consensus among the population about the solution for one particular problem. According to Brettschneider, parliamentary action is at least partly determined by changes in public opinion. He emphasizes, however, that his research has not yet proven a causal relationship between public opinion and government policy, and that further research is needed into what moves public opinion and what influence political systems have on the responsiveness of government (Brettschneider, 1996).

Paul Burstein argues in his research “Why estimates of the impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy are Too High: Empirical and Theoretical Implications” (2006) that, based on his comparison of 60 randomly selected policy proposals with the opinion formed or not formed, there is there is much less congruence between public opinion and government policy, when looking at government policy that receives little attention in society. According to him, it cannot therefore be said that public opinion always influences government policy. This strongly depends on the nature of the subject on which policy must be written (Burstein, 2006).

In “Invoking Public Opinion” (2002), Benjamin Page with Fay Cook and Jason Barabas investigates the extent to which policymakers and politicians are influenced by public opinion, this time by looking at how often politicians referred to public opinion polls during the debate on social security in the United States between 1993 and 1999. Page

concludes from this research that, although politicians often referred to public opinion, they usually did so in vague terms, without expressing specific views. Moreover, politicians only highlighted certain aspects of public opinion to support their own arguments, while this did not always represent general public opinion well (Page, Cook, Barabas, 2002). According to this research, government policy cannot therefore be considered one-on-one as an expression of public opinion or as determined by public opinion. The above-mentioned studies show that the relationship between public opinion and public policy can be looked at in different ways. Although congruence between public opinion and government policy is observed in several studies, a direct causal relationship between the two variables is difficult to establish. The degree of influence of public opinion on government policy appears to be highly dependent on the circumstances in which government policy is formed and on the type of issue on which policy is made.

The EU policy harmonization in asylum

The tension between the economy and politics on the one hand, and the law and politics on the other, scrapes migration and asylum policies in every member state. At the institutional level, we see states turning to other actors in order to achieve their interests, and migration and asylum policies are becoming increasingly denationalized. In addition to private and local actors, supranational actors are also becoming increasingly important as partners in forming migration and asylum policies. Guiraudon and Joppke (2001) distinguish four motives that have led national member states to denationalize migration and asylum policy:

- "Cat and mouse dynamics" - Governments are increasingly paying attention to the reality "on the ground". Local actors appear to have a much better view of the number of

illegal immigrants in the country and know how to find them better. Local actors are therefore used for street checks, among other things.

- "Jumping on the bandwagon" - Guiraudon and Joppke use this term to indicate that European cooperation is already well developed in many related areas. In that regard, countries can join existing networks that, for example, have been bending over for cross-border crime and terrorism.
- "Norms borrowing" - This is in line with the previous motive. Developments such as privatization and harmonization of rules and standards are the order of the day in many policy areas. Here too, countries can align themselves with their migration and asylum policies.
- "Venue shopping" - A motive that stems from the limitations that national states experience in policy making with regard to migration and asylum. By moving decision-making powers to actors at local or supranational level, national barriers can be circumvented.

Despite the above motives for transferring powers to non-state actors, Member States remain very suspicious of more supranational decision-making. Although migration and asylum policy is now covered by Community decision-making, practice shows that Member States can exercise a lot of influence on decision-making if they so wish. According to Wallace (2005), this proves her claim that intensive transgovernmentalism remained the norm in Brussels after the Maastricht Treaty. Member States prefer the intensive transgovernmental method as a decision-making method to the Community method when it concerns Economic and Monetary Union, common foreign and security policy or certain themes within justice and home affairs. After all, these themes are sensitive nationally.

By keeping the intensive transgovernmentalism alive in the field of justice and home affairs, the Member States limit the development of the Common European Asylum System (Lavenex, 2001). This also has important consequences for the content of the policy; where

national policymakers play the leading role, national interests are central. However, Member States are concerned first and foremost about national security, economic growth, stability and identity, followed by human rights. While EU institutions should set the basic standards to safeguard human rights, also for people outside Europe, methods are being developed in which these institutions are bypassed.

Guiraudon and Joppke (2001) distinguish two policy strategies for EU member states to control migration flows, namely border visibility and regulation and remote control. An example of the first strategy is the wall that Greece built on the border with Turkey, to ward off illegal migrants. Such visible proof of control usually works well in elections. Many Western European countries, however, do not venture into this; people still remember the Berlin wall too well. Visible control can also be done in other ways, for example by having police and customs carry out more checks. In addition, most countries have extensive laws and regulations in the field of migration and asylum. (ibid) There are plenty of examples of the second strategy: consular posts, visa regimes, sanctions for airline companies crossing the border, setting up buffer zones and cooperating with countries of origin and transit. The development of a common policy within Europe is also an example of the second strategy. These examples illustrate that there are various tools to delegate control over migration and asylum to actors who are less limited in their actions. (ibid)

Academic interest on public opinion on migration and asylum

The question of public opinion crosses the boundaries of several social science disciplines, including political science and sociology, and more indirectly, economics. Each of these disciplinary fields naturally favours the dimensions of the concept of public opinion that are closest to its issues, and there is no single definition of what public opinion

is. Political science focuses on the role of public opinion in the political system and in public policy making. It therefore generally associates public opinion with the aggregation of individual opinions on a given question of public interest, apprehended notably through surveys. In sociology, public opinion is more perceived as the product of a public discussion: The apprehension of public opinion as an aggregation of individual opinions lends itself to an interpretation of the formation of the latter as the result of rational choices made by individuals. On the other hand, the "sociological" approach emphasizes the role of public opinion as an instrument of social control, in the sense that its manifestation is perceived as the culmination of a process of seeking consensus.

The use of opinion polls to characterize and analyse public opinion on a wide range of societal topics is common practice. In general, a certain number of pre-established questions are asked of a representative sample of individuals, the definition *a priori* and the limited number of possible answers then makes it possible to obtain a representation of the distribution of opinions in the population. The majority terms are generally presented as the more or less precise expression of the majority opinion and more generally of the "popular will".

Many studies in economics and political science therefore analyse individual opinions on immigration and migration policies using survey data of this type. These analyses focus in particular on the role played by perceptions of the economic impact of immigration, and the impact of immigration on the lifestyles of local populations (Mayda, 2006, Sides and Citrin, 2007, Hainmueller Hiscox, 2007, Card *et al.*, 2012). Methodologically, these studies measure the correlation between the level of acceptance of immigration and certain individual characteristics (such as age, gender, level of education, etc.) in order to highlight the role of immigration.

The potential economic impact of immigration regarding the economic dimension of the impact of immigration, social science research has focused mainly on two major aspects. The first concerns the impact of immigration on the national labour market, while the second deals with the impact of newcomers on public finances and social protection systems. The arrival of immigrants on the national labour market may be perceived by local assets as competition for the allocation of available jobs. All tasks are not identical; they therefore demand workers with different levels of qualifications, who can only substitute imperfectly for each other. Therefore, the qualification structure of immigrants is decisive in order to understand the potential impact of immigration on the labour market. Local low-skilled workers compete with low-skilled migrant workers, as well as highly qualified local workers face the competition of highly skilled foreign workers. The residents' individual opinions on immigration will therefore depend on their level of qualification but also on the characteristics of the migration policy, depending on whether the latter favours a certain level of qualification. It should be noted, however, that empirical studies on the subject conclude that there is little or no impact of immigration on the wages of indigenous workers (Borjas, 2003, Manacorda *et al.*, 2012 or Ottaviano and Peri, 2012).

Turning now to the supposed impact on public finances, immigration is likely to have two contradictory effects. On the one hand, the influx of immigrants, preferably medium or highly skilled, may be an adequate response to the growing problems of financing “pay as you go” systems in developed countries. On the other hand, low-skilled immigrants accompanied by their families may become net beneficiaries of the social protection system, through sickness and unemployment insurance, or the family allowance system. In this perspective, immigration aggravates the problem of financing redistribution systems instead of responding to them. Again, there is no consensus for either of these two effects, and

studies generally conclude that immigration has a negligible or minimal impact on public finances (Rowthorn, 2008, Dustmann et al., 2012).

A study carried out by Coenders, Lubbers, and Scheepers (2013) on the public opinion with the EU with the results of the European Social Survey 2002/2003. They concluded that public opinion towards asylum seeker differs from immigrants. Thus, public tends to more open and resistant to immigrant rather than asylum seekers. They found wide attitudinal contrasts between countries, even with considering economic and demographic factors. An astounding finding from their examination was that retirees were progressively impervious to migrants and asylum seekers while self-employed people were more unfriendly to migrants. In accordance with contact hypothesis, the authors additionally discovered that resistance to migrants and refugees was more fragile in greater urban communities. Coenders, Lubbers, and Scheepers (2013) found that anti-migrant mentalities are most pervasive among the underprivileged - those with lower livelihoods, less instruction, and physical work occupations. Like Blinder (2013) and others, Coenders, Lubbers and Scheepers (2013) stress the significance of perceptions. While “economic conditions and net migration were not significant variables, resistance to immigrants was associated with perceptions of migration numbers, feelings of insecurity, perception of threats from migrants, and feelings of general social distrust” (Freeman, Hansen and Leal 2013, p.6).

Concentrating on asylum and refugees explicitly, Bansak et al (2017) directed a review asking 18,000 people from 15 European states – signatories to CEAS – about their preferences in regard to various components for designating asylum seekers within EU. In one study Bansak et al. requested that respondents pick between three allocation rules: Dublin Regulation (existing conditions), relative allocation that appropriates asylum seekers in extent to every nation's ability (characterized by population size, GDP and different variables), and an equal allocation rule in which every state gets an equivalent number of

asylum seekers. They found that a vast majority of respondents supported a distribution that is corresponding to every state's ability over existing conditions approach of portion dependent on the country of first entry. Interestingly, just 18 percent of voters favored the nation of first passage (Poland, UK, Czech Republic) in spite of this being status quo since the application of Dublin during the 1990s. They found "no systematic relationship between the changes in the number of asylum seekers a country would experience and the support for proportional allocation compared with country of first entry" (Bansak et al. 2017, p. 6). Bansak et al. recommend their discoveries feature a potential pathway towards change of the Common European Asylum System.

CHAPTER 4. BACKGROUND

Over the past two decades, the European Union has had extensive harmonization on asylum procedures, rules on the recognition of those in need of protection and, to a lesser extent, reception conditions. Despite these legal standardizations, however, there are still great differences in the practice of dealing with asylum seekers and refugees in European countries. In the previous two rounds of harmonization of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) of the 2000s and early 2010s, the EU states could not agree on adequate solutions on two key issues. These concerns, on the one hand, the division of responsibilities within the European Union and, on the other hand, the creation of sufficient legal and safe channels for those seeking protection in Europe. The historically high influxes of those seeking protection in 2015 and 2016 have left the EU and its Member States largely unprepared and have led to intense and persistent conflicts between and within EU states. At the same time, the struggle for further development of the CEAS has intensified (Bendel, 2017). This chapter presents the main developments, discussions and decisions of the years 2015 to 2018.

Trigger of the crisis in European refugee policy

In 2015 and 2016, as many asylum seekers came to Europe as never happened before. In 2015, according to the European statistics office Eurostat, together 1.32 million asylum applications (including 1.26 million initial applications) were registered in the 28 EU Member States compared to 1.26 million in 2016 (1.21 million initial applications) (Eurostat, 2019). The high number of asylum applications has several causes. This increase does not change the fact that the vast majority of those seeking protection worldwide continue to seek shelter in developing countries. According to UNHCR, in 2016 this was around 84 percent of

all refugees (UNHCR, 2017). An increase in refugee numbers has been observed worldwide, which has intensified since 2013 (UNHCR, 2018). Of particular importance for the European context here are asylum movements emanating from states in the European periphery (especially Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan) and based on existing migrant networks. In addition, there is inadequate humanitarian support and lack of long-term prospects in the receiving countries of the crisis region (Crawley, et al, 2016). In 2017, asylum application rates in the EU have fallen significantly. According to preliminary figures, around 700,000 asylum applications (approximately 650,000 initial applications) were registered. The decline is partly due to policies taken by the EU and the Member States such as the closure of the Balkan route and the EU-Turkey agreement.

The impact of refugee migration on the individual EU Member States was very different. Some states (e.g. Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary) acted mainly as transit states: they passed on the refugees or let them pass without registering for asylum, which led to conflicts between the EU states (Sabic, et al, 2015). The vast majority of asylum seekers sought refuge in only a few states, especially in Germany, Italy, Sweden, France and Austria. The distribution of asylum seekers among the Member States was therefore very uneven, both in absolute terms and in relation to the size of the population (EASO, 2017).

The high number of asylum applications initially led to a considerable backlog of asylum procedures (September 2016: 1.24 million pending cases) (ibid) and a longer duration of proceedings. At the same time, relatively high recognition rates were registered, even by historical comparison. In 2016, in the EU average, 61% of all asylum applications in the first instance were decided positively, with large differences between the EU states (2015: 53%, 2014: 47%, 2013: 35%) (EASO, 2016). The frequent granting of a protection status means that a significant number of refugees will stay in the EU longer term or permanently.

The EU member states have been struggling for many years for the "right" course in asylum policy. As a result of the rising number of applications and the high number of deaths on routes leading to Europe, the political debate in recent years has intensified once again, in advance of the 2015 refugee movements (Engler, 2015). During the negotiations on the second phase of the Common European Asylum System, which were concluded in 2013, agreed with the Member States and the European Parliament to further standardize rules on asylum decisions, the conduct of asylum procedures and reception conditions. On the central questions of creating legal and secure access routes and a fairer division of responsibility within the EU, however, there was no progress. The Member States decided to adhere to the Dublin system, which has been widely criticized by experts and NGOs, according to which, in most cases, EU external borders are formally responsible for asylum procedures (Fratzke, 2015).

Movement into European refugee policy came only after several major refugee tragedies in the Mediterranean (IOM, 2017). When more than 1,000 refugees died in two shipwrecks within a few days in April 2015, European politics came under pressure to act. In May 2015, the EU Commission presented a "European Agenda for Migration" (European Commission, 2015) containing the strategic guidelines of migration policy for the coming years. For the first time, it relied on Article 78 (3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union anchored emergency clause on the basis of which exemptive measures may be adopted where "one or more Member States are in dire straits as a result of a sudden influx of third-country nationals" (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). Specifically, the Commission proposed a relocation-based relocation scheme, whereby each Member State should take a share of all asylum seekers in the EU based on a distribution key (Sabic, 2017). This relocation program was initially conceived as a limited time and quantity model. In addition, the Commission called for the establishment of a permanent mandatory

redistribution system. They also recommended the resettlement of around 20,000 refugees from third countries by September 2017. Other objectives of the migration agenda include tackling smugglers, combating the causes of migration and developing legal migration channels for migrant workers.

The proposals of the EU Commission led to a heated dispute between the member states. In particular, the Eastern European countries, Spain and the United Kingdom made clear that they were not prepared to accept significantly more refugees than before. They referred among other things to their own socio-economic problems and the lack of receptiveness of their populations. On the other hand, countries such as Greece, Italy and Malta were in favour of intra-European redistribution on major migration routes. Also the governments of states with high asylum application figures like Germany, Austria, Belgium or Sweden pleaded for greater division of responsibility within the EU. Despite the dispute, the Heads of State and Government agreed at the EU summit on 25/26 In June 2015, 40,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy were relocated and another 20,000 refugees resettled from third countries. However, contrary to the Commission's proposal, this should be done voluntarily and not on the basis of a mandatory distribution key. As the number of newcomers seeking protection continued to increase in the summer months of 2015, the Commission proposed the relocation of another 120,000 asylum seekers from Italy, Greece and Hungary. On 22 September 2015, the Home Affairs Council approved this proposal (Sabic, 2017). The decision provided for compulsory reception of asylum seekers on the basis of a distribution key, taking into account population size, economic strength, the number of asylum seekers already admitted and the unemployment rate. However, it was not met unanimously, but by qualified majority, and thus prevailed against the opposition of Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania, who had voted against it.

As a result, relocation was extremely inactive and ultimately moderately successful. In total, only 33,178 of the planned 160,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy were relocated to other EU countries by 12 January 2018 (European Commission, 2018). Originally, the program should be completed by the end of September 2017. However, the EU Commission argues that asylum seekers registered in Italy and Greece until September 2017 can also be redistributed beyond that.

The fact that the goals of the relocation program were not achieved was largely due to the unwillingness of many EU states to accept asylum seekers under this program and thus to fulfill their self-obligations. Hungary and the Slovak Republic even filed a lawsuit against the European Court of Justice against the obligation to accept asylum seekers under the resettlement program. However, in its judgment of 6 September 2017, the latter confirmed the compatibility of the relocation decision with EU law (European Court of Justice, 2017). The EU Commission then initiated another stage in the infringement proceedings against Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic and also referred these states to the European Court of Justice in early December 2017, as they continued to refuse to accept asylum seekers, despite the ruling (European Commission, 2017).

Policies in response to the “crises”

The high numbers of newcomers to the Greek coasts and routing to Western European states, accompanied by images of dead refugees, a loss of control of border patrols and fears of terrorist attacks by IS fighters disguised as refugees or radicalizing refugees in the host countries, put the political decision makers in the EU under pressure. Aftermath of the high influx from summer 2015, several states initially responded by introducing national border controls. In addition, many EU member states tightened their respective asylum regulations,

including countries with high influxes such as Germany, Sweden, Austria and Hungary (EASO, 2017). There was agreement among the EU Member States that the external borders of the EU should be more closely controlled and that the numbers of newcomers seeking protection should be significantly and permanently reduced.

Against this backdrop, representatives of some European governments, and Germany in particular, sought cooperation with Turkey, the main transit country for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. On 15 October 2015, Turkey and the EU agreed on a joint action plan, which was officially adopted on 29 November 2015 at an EU-Turkey Summit (European Commission (2015)). In it, Turkey ensured stricter controls of its sea and land borders with the EU and the implementation of previously agreed readmission agreements with Greece and Bulgaria. It also announced that it would tighten visa policy towards refugee and migrant countries of origin and step up the fight against human smugglers, including through increased cooperation with the EU border agency FRONTEX. The plan also included provisions to improve the coverage of vulnerable people and better access to medical care, school attendance and the labour market for refugees. In return, the EU promised that it would support Turkey in this project with up to three billion euros. The cooperation in the refugee policy was also with the resumption of accession negotiations and the prospect of lifting the visa requirement for Turkish citizens. However, the measures adopted seemed inadequate to European governments. The number of newcomers seeking protection in Greece declined at the end of 2015, partly due to seasonal factors, but initially remained at a high level. The governments of the EU Member States feared that as the weather improved, arrivals would rise significantly again in the spring. The political pressure continued to increase - also due to electoral successes of right-wing extremist parties in several countries. However, there was disagreement over the measures to be taken.

A group of states, led by Austria, advocated the closure of the so-called Balkan route. They blamed the Greek authorities for insufficient protection of the EU's external borders and wanted to isolate the country by closing its border with Macedonia. Refugees would be forced to stay in Greece, making their passage across the Aegean unattractive. The "closure" of the "Balkan route" took place over a period of several weeks: from mid-November 2015, Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia began to let only Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis pass their borders. Later, daily quotas were introduced to slow down migration and reduce the number of those seeking protection to Central Europe. The EU Commission, the Federal Government and other states, such as the Netherlands, were critical of this, as Greece would be left alone with Europe's "refugee crisis" and a difficult humanitarian situation would be created in the already severely depressed EU state. They pleaded for further negotiations with Turkey. These culminated in the Turkey-EU Declaration of 18 March 2016. According to the agreement, from March 20, 2016, Turkey was to withdraw all irregular migrants entering the EU from March 20, 2016 onwards. In return, the EU would receive a Syrian already recognized as a refugee in Turkey for every withdrawn Syrian. However, this regulation was limited to 72,000 seats. In addition, the EU ensured that its Member States would receive a larger number of vulnerable people from Turkey as irregular cross-border delays between Turkey and the EU fell significantly and sustainably. In addition, Turkey was promised an extra three billion euros to support the refugees living there. The refugee agreement with Turkey has been severely criticized by numerous refugee organizations, as it is the rights of refugees are violated (Amnesty International, 2017). The number of newcomers to protection in the Greek islands fell significantly after the agreement was concluded. Nevertheless, it is disputed what proportion the EU-Turkey Agreement has. Skeptics point out that the number of monthly arrivals, which peaked at 211,663 asylum seekers in October 2015, had already declined before the agreement with Turkey (Spijkerboer, 2016). Against this background, it

seems plausible that a combination of factors has led to a decline in the number of newcomers. On the one hand, it has been increasingly difficult to pass the Balkan route since autumn 2015. On the other hand, a depletion of the potential of refugees and those willing to migrate from Syria and other countries is conceivable. Most refugees who wanted to move from Turkey to the EU and had the necessary (financial) resources would have done so by early 2016. At the same time, the decline in the number of people seeking protection in the EU can also be attributed to the fact that Turkey has tightened its visa policy and erected a wall on the border with Syria, making it more difficult for those seeking protection to reach Turkey at all.

Reform at Common European Asylum System

At the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016, the EU Commission opened infringement proceedings against several EU states regarding non-compliance with existing EU law provisions on asylum law (European Commission, 2016). In April and May 2016, they then put plans for a new and far-reaching reform of the CEAS before (European Commission, 2016a). For example, the directives on common procedures for the recognition of asylum (Asylum Procedures Directive) and for determining criteria that asylum seekers must fulfil in order to obtain a protection status (Qualification Directive) should be transformed into regulations. Unlike directives, regulations apply directly in all EU Member States and do not need to be transposed into national law. They are binding and leave the states little legal scope for implementation. The EU Commission's plans include a reform of the controversial Dublin Regulation, according to which, as a rule, the EU country is responsible for the asylum procedure in which an asylum seeker first entered. The Commission proposed to introduce a mandatory distribution key instead of the previous

Dublin principle, it could not prevail and was withdrawn. Instead, the Commission proposed a model whereby a state would not be exempted until it exceeded 150 percent of a calculated asylum-seeker admission rate. Refugee organizations criticized this proposal and the European Parliament also called for substantive changes. In November 2017, most European MPs voted in favour of a fundamental reform of the Dublin system (European Parliament, 2017). Parliament advocated a permanent distribution system based on a distribution key, which should also take account of family connections and destination preferences of asylum seekers. However, by the middle of 2019, Member States could not agree on a model; their concepts of migration policy were too different.

The reorganization of the CEAS also resulted in the strengthening of two European institutions (Tsourdi, 2017). In October 2016, the border protection agency FRONTEX was upgraded to the "European Border and Coast Guard Agency". It received new responsibilities and powers. It has developed technical and operational strategy to introduce integrated border management, supervise external border controls and assist Member States in securing borders when an urgent need arises. A pool of 1,500 border guards and other rapid response personnel will also be set up. The EU Council should be able to decide on the deployment of FRONTEX teams in emergency situations - even without the agreement of the EU Member State on whose territory the operation will take place.

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) was also developed into an EU agency. A proposal for a regulation was presented by the Commission in May 2016. Among other things, this new European Asylum Agency will assess how the Member States are implementing the requirements of EU law on asylum law. In addition, it should provide operational and technical support to states that come under pressure as a result of high asylum migration. These include "asylum support teams", which may also act without request from the Member State concerned. The asylum agency is intended to help Member States to

identify and register asylum seekers, as well as to assist with the application process. It is also possible to help with the construction of reception facilities. Until now, EASO has been active in the field of further education and information provision.

External migration policy of the EU

In June 2016, the EU Commission also announced the extension of the scope of external migration policy. The central goal is to significantly reduce irregular migration movements and to persuade states to take back their citizens. To this end, tailor-made "migration pacts" (compacts) were concluded with individual states (Bendel, 2017). These are states such as Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia, which are either important countries of origin and/or transit of fleeing migrants. These "migration partnerships" link cooperation in migration policy with cooperation in other policy areas, in particular trade, development and economic policy. States that take back more of their own citizens should receive more support ("More for More" principle) (Collett, et al., 2017).

After the influx of passengers via the eastern Mediterranean route had declined significantly in the spring of 2016, migration via the central Mediterranean route (again) became more in the focus of attention. Following the example of the EU-Turkey Agreement, European officials sought similar agreements with North African countries, particularly Libya, currently the main transit country for migrants and refugees who want to reach Europe via the Mediterranean. Despite the continuing conflict in Libya, the EU and Italy (bilaterally) began cooperation with different actors in Libya. Early February 2017 Italy and then the EU took decisions that explicitly aim to significantly reduce immigration via Libya. Among other things, the other equipment and training of the Libyan Navy and Coast Guard were agreed. This is to pick up dropping boats still possible in national waters off the Libyan coast and

lead back to Libya. In addition, funding has been pledged to improve health care and reception conditions at the Libyan reception centres. Italy and the EU also want to help control and secure the Libyan borders in the south, i.e. Chad, Sudan, Egypt and Algeria. The number of Mediterranean crossings over the central route decreased significantly in summer 2017. This is among other things attributed to the relief often provided by aid organizations.

Human rights and refugee organizations regularly call for more legal entry into the EU for those seeking protection, so that refugees are not forced to travel to Europe in dangerous and illegal ways. While EU Member States have fulfilled their commitments to the resettlement program foreseen in the EU's Agenda for Migration, they recorded more persons in 2015-2017 than in the past. Nevertheless, the approximately 22,000 refugees admitted appear in the face of a worldwide resettlement needs of more than a million at best is a drop in the ocean. In September 2017, the EU Commission made proposals for further expansion of legal migration routes (European Commission (2017b)). It suggested, inter alia that the Member States should resettle by at least 50,000 refugees by October 2019, providing 500 million euro. At the same time, it called on Member States to set up the regular EU resettlement program proposed in July 2016. In addition, the Commission called for the testing of so-called private sponsorship programs whereby relatives or charitable organizations contribute to the costs of receiving refugees, thus allowing them legal entry into the host country (Kumin, 2015). In addition, the Commission encouraged the creation of pilot projects on legal labour migration, with the prospect of financial support.

Significantly declining numbers of new arrivals arriving in the EU make the crisis of migration and refugee policy in the public perception fade. However, there are still major challenges in refugee protection and asylum policies. For example, the number of people fleeing war and persecution worldwide has not fallen. Other migration motives - such as poverty, corruption, lack of prospects - persist. With a growing population, for example on

the African continent, a considerable migration potential remains in the medium and long term.

Whether and how the necessary and desired reform of European asylum policy will succeed remains uncertain in view of the very different migration policy positions of EU Member States. The EU and its Member States have so far failed to find adequate policy responses, particularly with regard to the development of legal migration routes and better sharing of responsibility. However, overcoming the EU's political divide would be more than desirable given the major global challenges to refugee protection.

CHAPTER 5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

Europeans attitude towards “refugee” crisis

The development of European attitudes towards refugees and immigrants is presented on the basis of three international surveys: the Eurobarometer 2015 surveys and the European Social Survey wave 7 (ESS7), and the Pew Research Center 2016 survey. The results are reviewed in chronological order, with particular emphasis on presenting the opinion of the German, Belgian and French population on the European “attitude map” when presenting the data.

As most surveys, including the survey question used for this research use the term “migrant” interchangeably with the term “refugee” or “asylum seeker”, during the possessing of data the context will be taken into consideration for interpretation. Moreover, although the international organization including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and human rights organizations consider the use of the term “irregular migration” to be appropriate, the questionnaires used the more common term “illegal migration”, instead.

First, the research presents the Spring 2015 snapshot, based on a Eurobarometer survey conducted in the same period in all EU countries. The survey was repeated in the autumn of 2015, allowing for a more accurate comparison over time. For the period between these two surveys, information is available from the European Social Survey (ESS7), which took place in 2015-2015. The third, and most recent, data source is the Pew Research Center study, conducted in spring 2016.

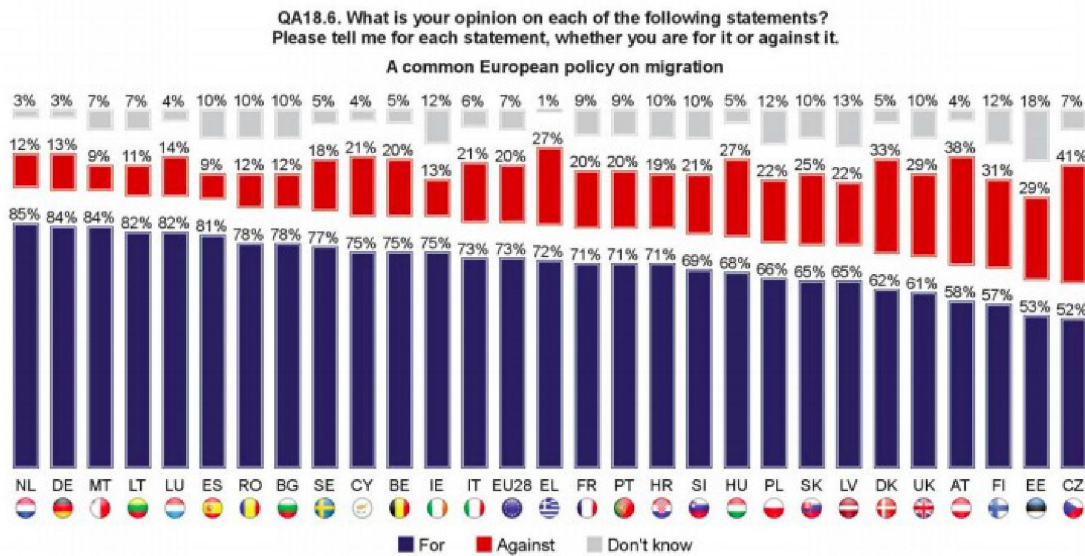
In the context of the analysis, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the countries surveyed experienced the effects of the European migration wave with varying degrees of intensity at the time of each survey and were subject to varying degrees of pressure at national and European level.

While in June 2013 barely 14% of the EU28 population (Eurobarometer 79.5, 2013) and in September 2014 a quarter (24%) (Eurobarometer 82, 2014), by May 2015, one in three (38%) (Eurobarometer 83, 2015) respondents considered migration as one of the most serious challenges for the EU and its Member States. At that time, Italy was the first country where migration was classified as one of the most serious challenges facing the Union (65%). Alongside the Italians, migration was the highest concern for Germans (55%), Estonians (54%), Danes (50%), Dutch (49%), Swedes (48%) and Hungarians (43%), which were above the EU average.

Against irregular migrants from outside the EU, the European public was very negative in May 2015, with the vast majority (85%) saying that further efforts should be made to limit irregular migration. There was no significant difference in rejection rates between the twenty-eight Member States. The highest values were measured in the southern EU Member States (Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Italy), which have long been affected by irregular migration, as well as in Estonia, Portugal and Hungary. The lowest values were typical of the traditional host and destination countries (France and Sweden) and the Balkan countries (Croatia, Romania, Slovenia), but at least two thirds of the respondents in these countries preferred to further tighten their migration policy.

The population of the countries wishing to restrict illegal migration more strongly (73%) agreed that a common migration policy was needed. The Netherlands' population is above average, while the population of Czech Republic, Austria and Denmark have less acceptance of the need for a common migration policy (Graph 1).

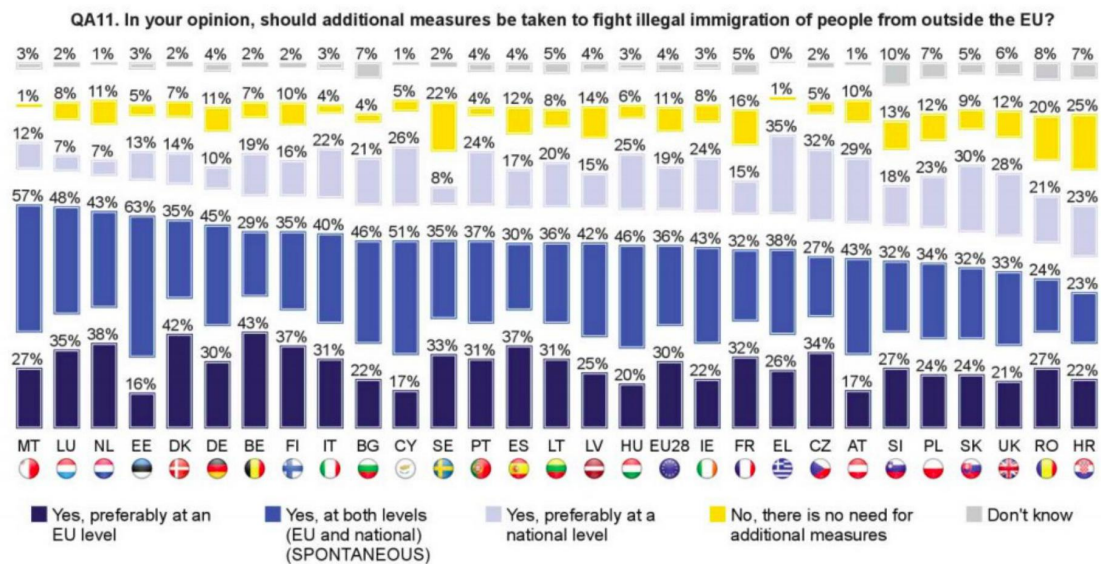
Graph 1.



Source: Eurobarometer 83, 2015

However, in countries where there was an overwhelming majority in favour of tightening up the regulation of migration policy, there were differences of opinion as to whether this should be done at EU or nation state level.

Graph 2.



Source: Eurobarometer 83, 2015

The most commonly chosen alternative was a combination of EU and national regulation (36%). This was followed by an alternative that relied primarily on EU-level regulation (30%), while less than one-fifth (19%) opted for essentially national-level regulation. In contrast, in Greece, Czech Republic and Slovakia respondents voted for centralizing migration regulation focusing national sovereignty while Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands prefer EU level regulation of migration processes (Graph 2).

When examining the admission of migrants, it is found that more than half of Europeans (51 %) are open to migration from other EU Member States, while immigration from outside of the Union is acceptable by only 34% of the population.

In terms of the social basis of xenophobia (with particular regard to the rejection of the admission of immigrants and refugees), it is generally seen that low status, poverty and right-wing radical political thinking create the environment within which the proportion of xenophobes higher than average (Simonovits and Bernát 2016)., i.e. this negative attitude is most characteristic of socially “losing” groups.

In the European Social Survey's 7th Wave Database, Messing and Ságvári examined the impact of social status measured by dividing household income into quantities. During their analysis, a new aspect, although partly related to the previous ones, was introduced to detect differences. According to their studies, the subjective psychological factor associated with income status also shows the effect of fear of slipping in the growth of hostility. In their analysis, low social status in every country surveyed increased the level of “alienation”. Compared to the lowest and highest fifths (in terms of household income), in all countries surveyed, not surprisingly, those in a better position are more receptive. However, it can also be seen that there are significant differences between countries. In countries where the overwhelming majority of the population does not reject, there is less difference between the “rich” and “poor” groups defined by income quintiles (e.g. Sweden, Norway, Germany).

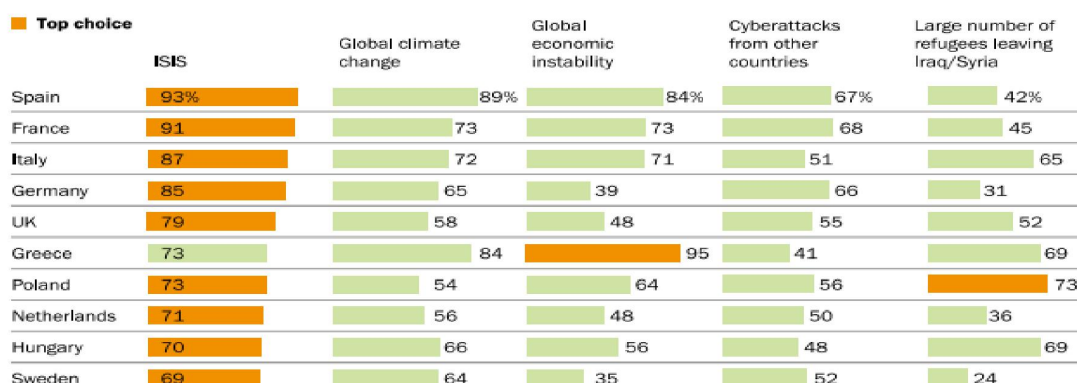
However, in less accepting countries these differences are much greater (e.g. Slovenia, Ireland, France, Belgium) (Messing and Ságvári 2016).

According to the latest spring 2016 survey by the US Pew Research Center, almost half (49%) of the population of the 10 European countries surveyed believed that refugee cases (specifically those from Syria and Iraq) one of the biggest problems for their country. It is important to note, however, that in 2016, when measured by the average of the countries in question; this problem is considered to be only the fifth most frequently mentioned fear among the eight listed. In all countries examined, the threat of the Islamic State (ISIS) was considered the biggest problem, with Greece (where the economic situation is fragile) and Poland (where the refugee problem is at the same level as the threat of ISIS) (Graph 3).

According to the research Poland, Hungary, Greece and Italy are the most widely believed to be a serious problem for refugees from Syria and Iraq. It is noteworthy that Poland (73%) and Hungary (69%) stand out despite of the fact that in both countries, the ruling right-wing parties have slowed down in many ways and have largely prevented migrants from crossing their country. However, in a few countries, relatively few people find refugee issues the biggest problem for their country: this is specifically the case in the Netherlands (36%), Germany (31%) and Sweden (24%), with the highest reception rates. war refugees (Graph 4).

Graph 3

% saying each is a major threat to their country



Source: Pew Research Center, 2016.

The gap seen regarding the asylum issue does not seem to depend solely on the geographical location of the countries. According to Pew Research Center (2016), political orientation also plays an important role, with eight out of ten European countries surveyed showing a relationship between political party preference and fear of the refugee crisis. In France, 61% of those who consider themselves to be right-wing think that migrants from the Middle East are a serious problem for their country, compared with 29% of those on the left. In addition, there is an equally significant (almost double) difference for England, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Greece, Spain and Sweden. Hungarian and Polish data showed no significant difference between left-wing or right-wing self-classification and fear of refugees. In addition to political orientation, there are also significant differences in educational attainment across six of the ten European countries studied. In the case of England, the Netherlands, Sweden, France, Germany and Spain, the share of those with lower education is higher, with refugees posing a serious problem for their country. The impact of educational attainment is most pronounced in England, where 30% of the high-educated and 62% of the low-skilled find the refugee crisis one of the biggest problems in the country (Pew Research Center 2016).

For all the countries surveyed, all but one of the populations are dissatisfied with the European Union's asylum policy. Overall, less than a third of respondents in less than ten countries expressed support. The highest rates of dissatisfaction with current asylum policies were found in Greece (94%) and Sweden (88%), but also above 70% in France, Italy, Spain, Poland, England and Hungary. Support is the highest level in Germany (26%) and the Netherlands (31%) but is also below one third in these countries.

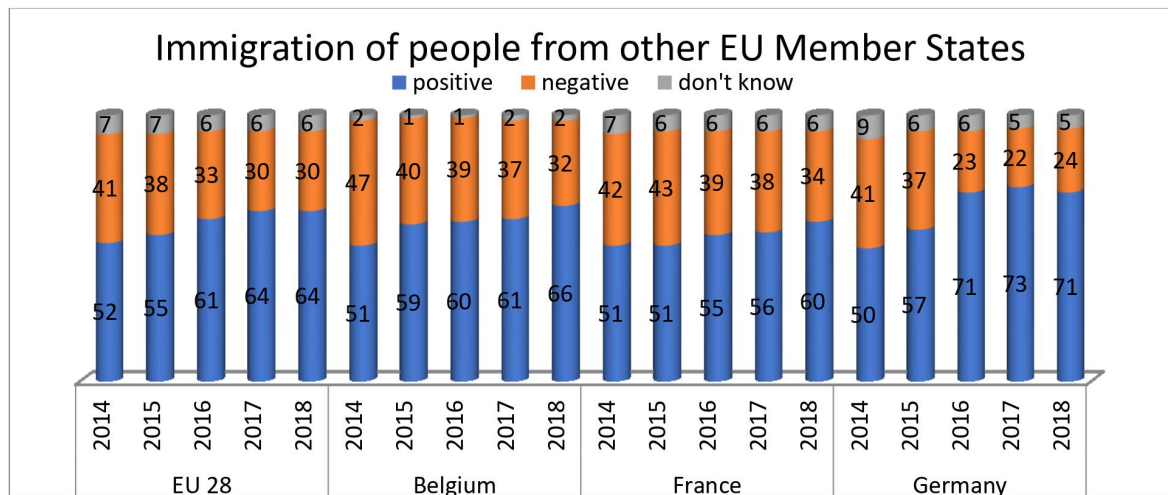
Evidence from Germany, Belgium and France

The arrival of relatively high numbers of asylum seekers to Europe after 2014 raised the question how Europeans think of this challenge. As the significance of immigration increased among political and social segments in Europe, the public opinion shows changing patterns over time and the difference is also observable among Member States within the same region. This section provides the findings on how public attitude towards migration and refugees varies in Belgium, France and Germany using the Eurobarometer data from 2014 to 2018. As a methodological challenge it is difficult to determine how respondent perceive “migration” term in the survey. The attitude can depend on personal experiences that might influence response behaviour; that is migration can be understood as economic, religious, cultural or political challenge. Despite of this shortcoming the survey is helpful to identify general trends in public opinion.

In order to estimate the development of Europeans attitude towards immigration to their countries, the EB regularly includes the question about immigration of different categories of migrants. The respondents are asked how they think of migration from other EU countries, i.e. sharing relatively common social and economic values, versus immigration from third countries, which is usually associated with forced migration and movement of unskilled labor force. Graph 4 shows how respondents from Belgium, France and Germany

feel about immigration from other EU Member States which can be an indicator of free movement principle, by comparing overall rate of the EU. According to the data most people are for immigration within the Union. During the course of 2014-2018 support rate for migration within the Union is increased steadily. Although the most noticeable increase is observed in Germany, being 50% in 2014 to 73% in 2017, Belgium (66%) is slightly above the EU average (64) and France experienced few changes in public opinion during this period (9% increase).

Graph 4

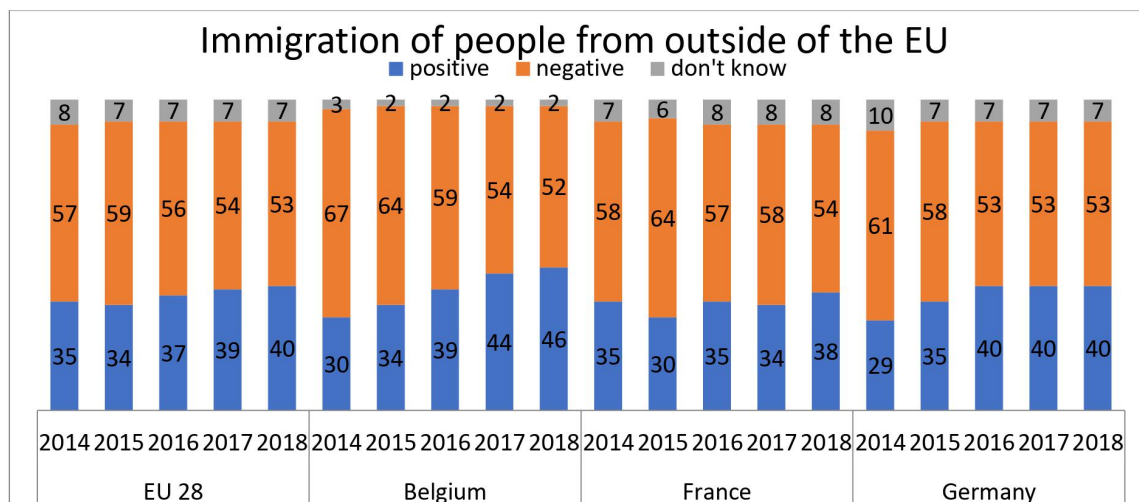


Source: EB 82, 84, 86, 88, 90.

While the EU countries are more positive towards immigration within the Union, the rate is far more below related to immigration from outside of the Union (Graph 5). According to the data, EU average rate for welcoming the newcomer from third countries is 40%, while being 64% from EU Member States. Germany and France have similar results during 2014-2018, starting 35% in 2014 and ended 40% and 38% respectively in 2018. Belgium has an unexpected result for this category. 46% of Belgians think positive about immigration from other countries, which can be explained how people understand immigration, which can be interpreted immigration of economic migrants who can fill the labour shortage in the local

labour market and immigration of people from conflict zones who depend on social benefits from the government. Moroccans and Turkish people are the top foreign population in Belgium, it is related the historic immigration patterns and their role in performing the low skilled labour in demand.

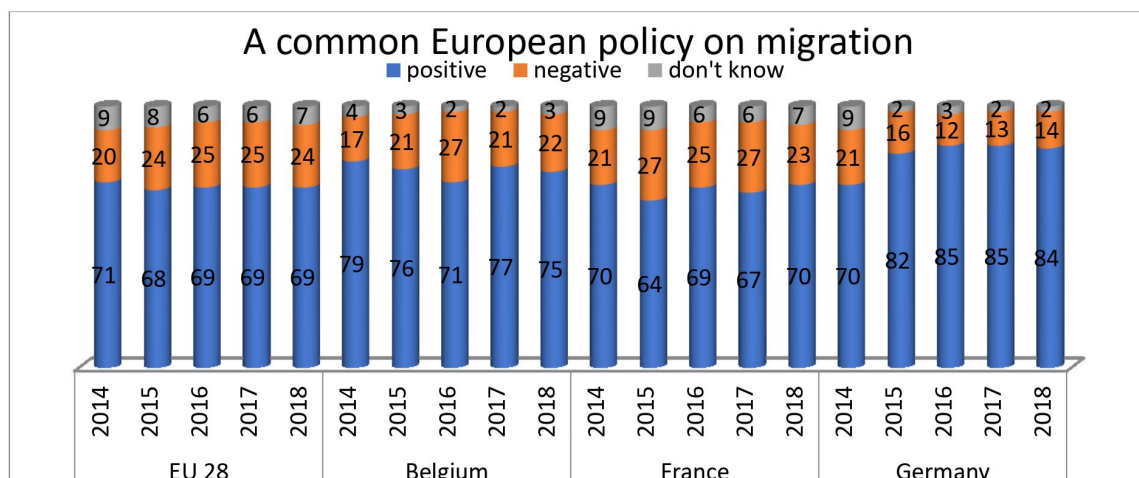
Graph 5



Source: EB 82, 84, 86, 88, 90.

When it comes to common migration policy at the EU level, a higher variation is observed, with a slight decrease for the supporters of Common policy at the EU average (from 71% to 69%). The positive public opinion on common European policy on migration in Belgium tends to be lower, while France has a steady attitude with slight fluctuation over the course. As a supporter of the Union-level policy making, Germany has the highest share of the positive responses (85% in 2016 and 2017), with the only example of increasing trend among all countries under observation. Although this question is open end for interpretation, i.e. it does not fully explain in which area of migration the common policy is intended, the responses can be an indicator of how respondent trust EU institutions and support supranational governance on migration related issues.

Graph 6

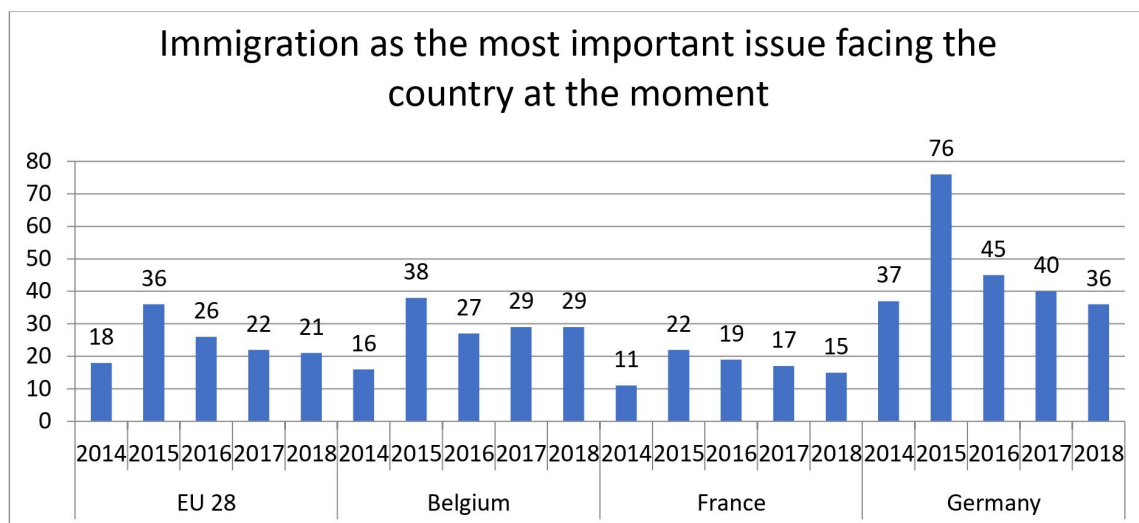


Source: EB 82, 84, 86, 88, 90.

Public perception on importance of immigration doubled in 2015 in all observed countries, as well as on the EU28 level, particularly in Germany where 76% of respondent selected immigration the most important issue that Germany faced that time. Comparing the arrival of refugees from southern Europe, this increase in attention to migration issued is not extraordinary. The respondents from France and Belgium considered significant for the national level, this rate is higher in these countries when they asked about the most important issue that EU facing. Therefore, migration is perceived as an issue of supranational governance.

In 2016, public opinion about the migration challenge dropped in all three countries again, and returned 2014 rates only in 2018, after the “refugee” crises. It can be summarized that migration is perceived as important at the national level when the country itself experience flows of migrants, not when the other EU Member States face the problem.

Graph 7

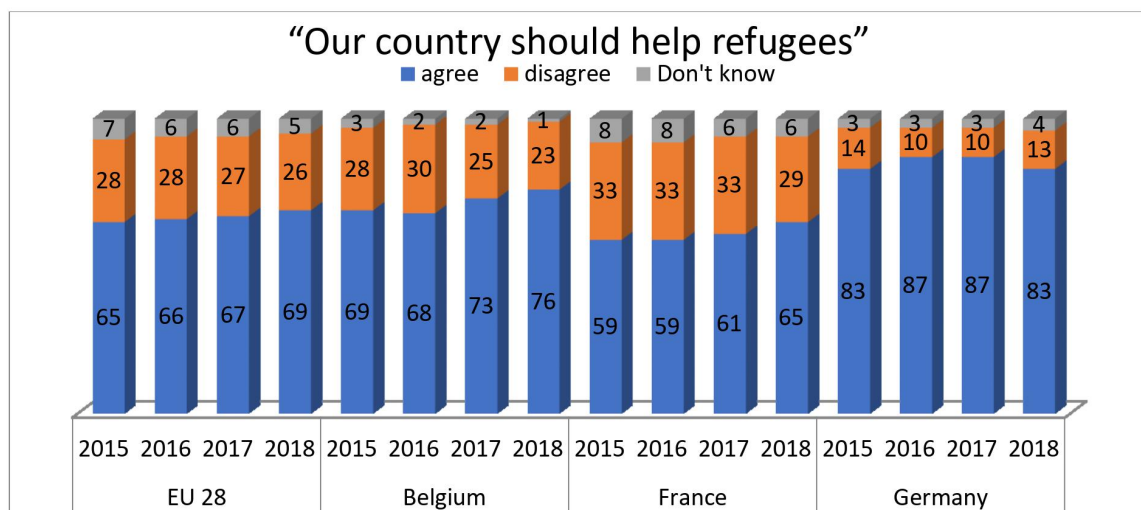


Source: EB 82, 84, 86, 88, 90.

Following the increase in public salience towards migration, two new survey questions were added to Standard Eurobarometer in 2015 in respect to measure perception on national policy making process related to refugees and migrant's contribution to the destination countries. The responses to question "Our country should help refugee" shows that on the EU28 level majority accepts states' responsibility to assist refugees. However, this question does not explicitly indicate whether states help refugees by accepting them in their territories or assisting financially while keeping them in third countries, like Turkey and Libya.

The countries observed show high variance towards public perception on assistance to refugee. While all three countries observed increasing tendency in public opinion on this item, France (59-65%) is below EU average (65-69%) and Belgium is just above the average. The results suggest that the majority (83-87%) of Germans have a one-dimensional opinion regarding arriving refugees and agree with assistance to refugees by their government and believe in principle that people fleeing war and persecution should find protection in Germany.

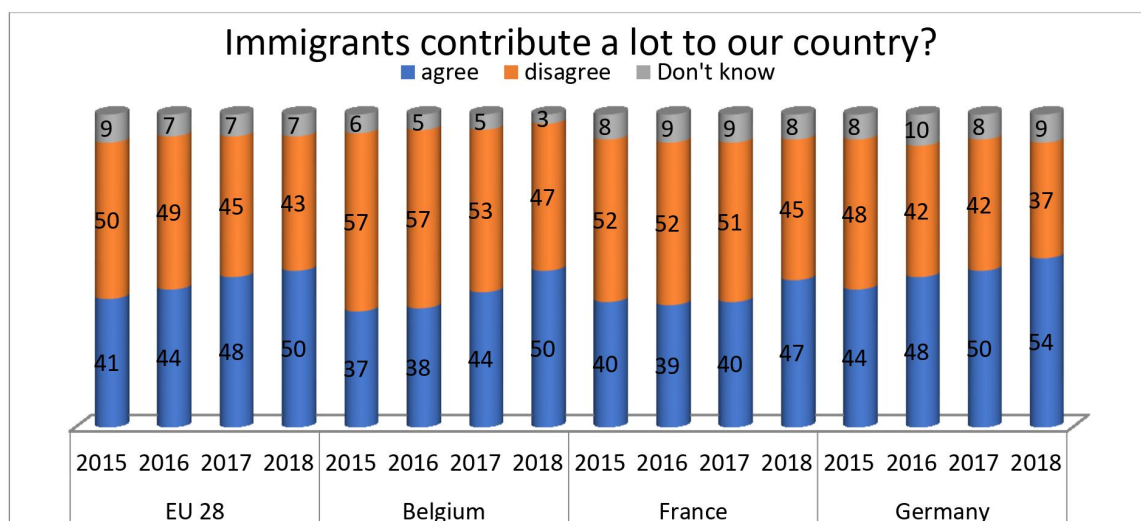
Graph 8



Source: EB 84, 86, 88, 90.

The survey results on evaluation of contribution made by immigrant to the destination countries shows corresponding result with public perception on immigration from third countries. This can be paraphrased that respondents do not include migration within the Union when they interpret the term “migration”. Respondents from all three countries observed and on the EU28 level have similar opinion about positive impact of immigrant to their countries.

Graph 9



Source: EB 84, 86, 88, 90.

Changing patterns in the policy: Recognition rate

The current asylum system in the EU do not ensure Member States to process asylum application uniformly, therefore the rate of positive decisions on asylum application in different Member states vary. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the European Union has been trying to create a more interdependent asylum system, but European countries retain control over their national system and therefore the treatment of refugees varies enormously across Europe. Financial aid, housing assistance, the right to family reunification, ease of access to refugee status: all these parameters are very different from one Member State to another, despite the common obligation to protect asylum seekers. The rate of recognition of refugee status is very low in some European countries, while being very high in others. For instance, in 2014, the recognition rate for Eritreans was 26% in France and 100% in Sweden. For the Iraqis, it was 14% in Greece, and 94% in France, according to the annual report of the European Council on refugees and asylum seekers (EASO, 2015).

Although the EU also prescribes basic rules for dealing with asylum seekers, the procedures in the individual member states are very different. In addition to the conditions of admission, the procedure for legal claims of asylum seekers differs, as well. In countries like Germany, appeals to a refusal letter are heard before a regular court and, under certain conditions, can go as far as the third instance before the Federal Administrative Court. Other states, such as France or Belgium, have established their own asylum courts for asylum applications.

In order to identify the variation in terms of recognition rates, data on asylum seekers is obtained from Eurostat for the specific countries (Belgium, France and Germany) being explored within the context of this research. According to Eurostat, during 2010-2017 Europe received around 5 million (4,918,240) asylum applications, of which more than 55 percent (2725690) was made in Belgium, France and Germany. To explore the changes in data, it is

first necessary to identify and record the baseline data for each of the different countries. Table 1 provides the data for the number of first-time asylum seekers requesting asylum within each of the aforementioned countries. During the ten-year period the main asylum destination country has shifted from France with 32% of total applications made in these countries in 2008, to Germany with steady increase in the number of applications during a few years. Although all region countries observe increase in the number of asylum seekers during 2015, the highest rise occurred in Germany (135%), following by Belgium (96%). In France asylum applications increased only 18%, which can be explained by the characteristics of each country to be destination for asylum seekers from specific regions. The characteristics of the asylum seekers differ in each country. While Belgium and Germany had experience asylum application from mostly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, the main origin countries of asylum seekers in France were Albania, Congo and Serbia and Kosovo region. Indirectly this can be interpreted that France is not affected by the Syrian conflict regarding asylum applications, as Germany and Belgium.

In Germany asylum applications peaked in 2016 with almost 80% of overall application made in the region as a result of refugee flows to the Europe. Although there also observed increase in the number of asylum seekers in the other countries, that increase is comparatively low. Thus, Belgium had returned the rates before 2010, while there was a rise within the “crises” period in 2014-2015 when the flows of asylum seekers reached to Northern European countries from the external border of the Union. In 2016, asylum applications only increased in Germany (56%) and France (10%), while Belgium had halved its asylum applications.

It can be seen that the increase in the number of asylum applications made in the relevant countries resulted in changes in public opinion (Graph 7 and Table 1). Salience of immigration began increasing when the countries observed inflow of asylum seekers.

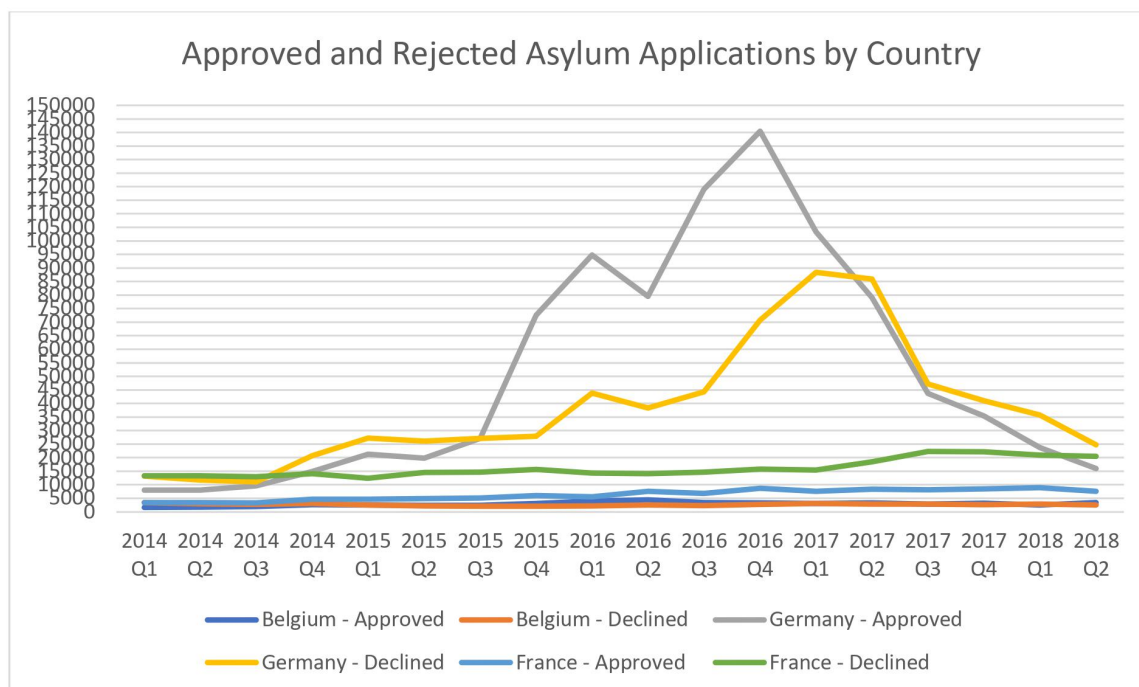
Table 1. Asylum applications received

GEO/Time	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Belgium	26080	31910	28075	21030	22710	44660	18280	18340
Germany	48475	53235	77485	126705	202645	476510	745155	222560
France	52725	57330	61440	66265	64310	76165	84270	99330

Source: Eurostat

The total number of applicants, versus the total number of accepted applicants, versus the number of applicants denied their first-time asylum requests allows for the identification of changes over time. In order to determine trends in declined applications versus trends in submitted applications in other countries, it becomes necessary to graph out the trend data. Graph 10 provides this trend data over time, allowing for the identification of potential trends in declines versus applications across countries.

Graph 10.



Source: Eurostat

While comparing the refugee recognition rate (the ratio of positive decisions to all requests) of each country throughout the eight-year period, it is observable that the Germany has the highest overall recognition rates by positively responding more than one fifth of overall applications (20%). Belgium has the lowest rates (4.6%). The increase in the asylum applications does not mean that more people acquired refugee status. As the dramatic shift occurred in asylum applications in 2015 the recognition rate stayed stable in France and slightly decreased in Belgium. However, in Germany this rate halved during 2015 and 2016 and reached 40% in 2017. This fluctuation can be explained due to the fact that the country received large scale asylum applications that the existing resources were not capable to process. Although having great number of asylum seekers within its territory, German public supported government policy on welcoming asylum (Graph 8). The attitude of the public ensured the government to take further assistance steps in leading refugee protection process in the EU.

Table 2. Refugee recognition rate (%)

GEO/Time	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total rate
Belgium	3.51	4.49	2.60	3.74	5.91	5.53	6.51	6.12	4.62
Germany	31.70	13.72	17.07	16.24	15.78	7.78	9.14	40.33	20.75
France	22.88	17.73	15.67	14.51	15.71	15.57	15.54	16.77	17.81

Source: Eurostat

Changing patterns in the policy: Relocation rate

Following the 2015 "refugee crisis", European states adopted decisions aiming at helping front-line Member States. These decisions established a so-called relocation system. Based on the principle of solidarity, the purpose of the relocation was to allow the transfer of asylum seekers arriving in Greece and Italy to other European states. Relocation is the transfer of asylum seekers from a Member State of the European Union, which is responsible for their reception, to another Member State of the European Union. For the purpose of this research the term "relocation rate" is used as an indicator of how EU Member States is committed to common European values in terms of burden sharing.

The transfer i.e. relocation is organized when one or more states face a large influx of migrants that prevents them from receiving them properly. In these circumstances, in accordance with the principle of solidarity, the other European states agree to relocate asylum seekers to their territory.

The new burden sharing procedure – Emergency Relocation Scheme was proposed and applied within the EU considering the large-scale number of asylum seekers entering Italy and Greece through Mediterranean and Turkey. In September 2015, two decisions were approved by the European Council in order to fairly relocate the asylum seekers within the

borders of the Union. The first decision which was adopted in 14 September 2015 included relocation of only 40000 asylum seekers but did not obliged Member States with any rate of acceptance. The Council updated the condition with the second decision of the 22 September 2015 with additional 120 000 relocation and mandatory commitments for each country. The Relocation Decisions, in total, were supposed to redistribute 16000 refugees within 24 months. However, by 2019 this number has not reached, so far.

According to the second Relocation Decision the Member States were allocated a commitment number which was based on four criteria; 40% for size of population, 40% for GDP of the Member States, 10% for existing refugee population per nationals, and 10% for unemployment rate in order to measure if the country is capable to absorb and integrate more refugees. Thus, France had undertaken to admit 19714 asylum seekers, while Luxembourg 557. This commitment was mandatory, with the exemption of refusals based on national security issues.

It was also decided which asylum seekers would be affected by the relocation. Only asylum seekers from those origin countries the average rate of recognition of international protection in the EU was above 75% could claim, i.e. Syrians, Eritreans, and Iraqis. To achieve their objectives, the European states developed "hotspots", that is to say, places that would allow the registration and identification of new arrivals and their orientation in the process of relocation. Mainly settled on the Greek and Italian islands, these hotspots have often been transformed into camps or closed centres.

A portion of the hesitant governments have obviously protested the idea and practice with regards to Relocation Decisions. The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia were against the application of the Relocation Decisions in the Council, and Hungary and Slovakia have even challenged the mandatory responsibility before the Court of Justice of the European Union. Besides, the council also adopted decision of simplification of relocation

commitment for some Member State, such as Austria and Sweden. Arrivals in Greece have dropped drastically as a result of the containment of departures caused by the 2016 EU-Turkey declaration. Libya's departure to Italy has also decreased since the implementation in July 2017 of repressive measures stemming from the Italian-Libyan agreement supported by the EU.

The table below indicates the results of Emergency Relocation Scheme, and how Belgium, France and Germany are committed to the burden-sharing within the Union. Within the two-year period of implementation of Relocation Programme, the commitments of Member States reach 60% of the 160 000 people proposed in 2015 (98 255) but it fails to highlight that only 31 503 people were actually relocated to the Member States, only 20% 160 000 originally planned. The reasons why significantly fewer people were distributed within Europe than theoretically possible are manifold. Firstly, the places planned for Hungary (40,000) were not needed because Hungary did not participate in the program. In any case, the framework was very narrow, with only those with an EU-wide average protection rate above 75%. In addition, there were some problems with program implementation in the Italian and Greek administrations.

Distribution took place across the majority of EU Member States. As in the case of the Dublin procedure, relocation also revealed the (as yet unquantifiable) problem of uneven reception conditions within the EU. Thus, cases of asylum seekers in Lower Saxony are known who have travelled to Germany after relocation to the Baltic States. The EU Commission has already announced its intention to continue the program, but the Member States must agree here.

Table 3.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Legal commitment</i>	<i>Formally pledged</i>	<i>Relocated from Italy</i>	<i>Relocated from Greece</i>	<i>Total relocated refugees</i>	<i>Percentage of relocated vs. legally foreseen</i>
Belgium	3812	1530	361	698	1059	28%
France	19714	6940	377	4322	4699	24%
Germany	27536	13250	3972	5197	9169	33%
Total EU	98255	47905	10265	21238	31503	32%

When comparing the legal commitments imposed by the European Commission calculated based on the aforementioned four criteria with the formal pledges proposed by each country, it can be seen that Belgium and Germany were volunteered to relocate only half of the number set by the Commission. France had the lowest rate in this item, pledging to admit only one third of the allocated quota. This step by the government is supported with the public opinion data of French society, thus the public perception in France related to immigration from outside of the EU diminished during “refugee” crises period (Graph 5). As well as, positive feelings on a common migration policy in Europe followed a decreasing trend. None of the observed countries fulfilled the commitments. Germany was slightly above (33%) the EU average. France and Belgium did not reach the average at the EU level.

Changing patterns in the policy: Migrant integration rate

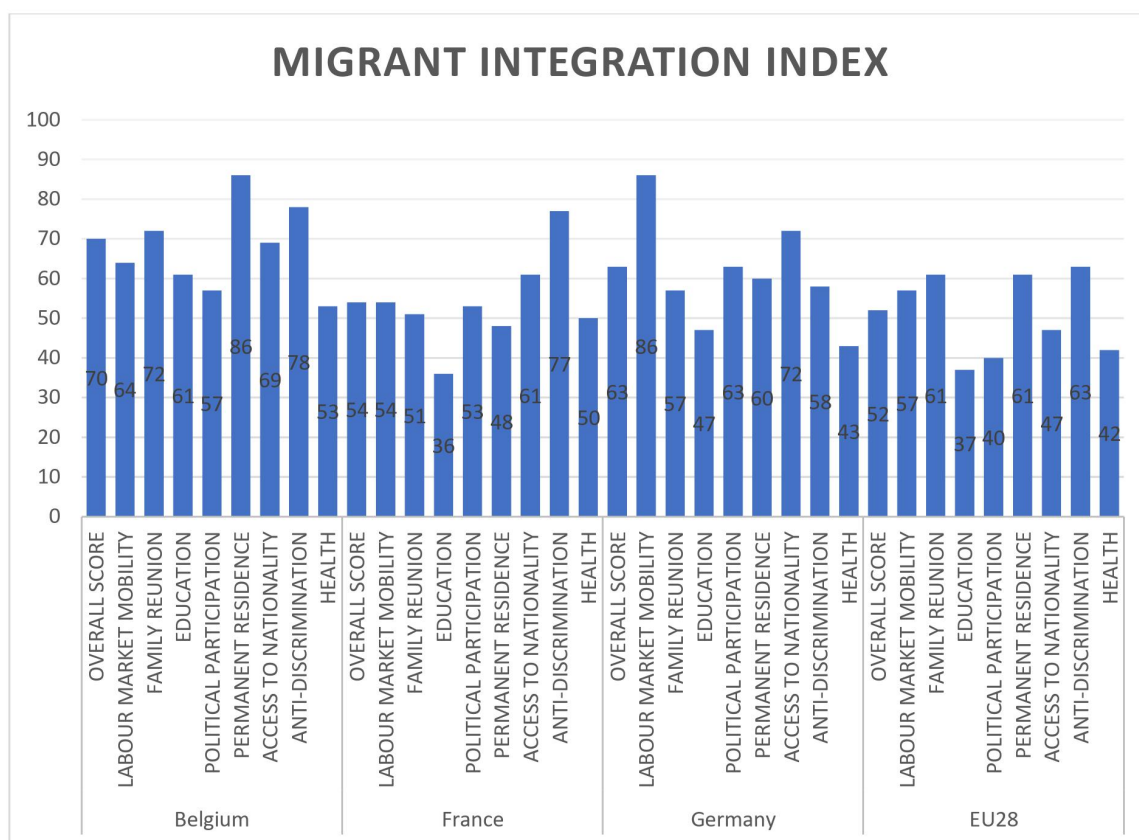
There are important differences from one European country to another in terms of integration policy for migrants. The MIPEX (Migrant Integration Policy Index) is a tool that measures the integration policies of migrants from different countries of the world to establish a ranking every 5 years in different areas (education, citizenship, access to the

labour market, etc.). Regarding the latter area, the European countries are very unequal, with Sweden dominating the 2015 ranking in terms of access to work (98 points out of 100), Belgium ranking in 13th place (64 points) in the same ranking of 38 countries, while France barely reaches the average with 54 points.

It is therefore interesting to observe the policies of these countries to see what initiatives have been developed and for which results, in order to draw up an inventory of practices (good or bad) in Europe.

For Sweden, for example, who presents itself as the best student in terms of reception of migrants, the massive national reception policy from 2015 seems to have borne fruit. While access to the labour market presents the same issues and difficulties as in all European countries, the success of the general reception and integration policy has created a much more favourable social context for integration for migrants. In addition, Sweden has adopted a virtually unique approach in Europe by making work a priority for newcomers: refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Sweden are not left behind in camps or entrusted to social support systems. On the contrary, they are enrolled in a professional integration program. Once their residency status has been settled, it is the national public employment service, not the migration office or city council that helps refugees adapt to their new environment. And finding a job is the central element of this adaptation.

Graph 11.



Source: MIPEX, 2015

Another good European example is Germany, which ranks fourth in the MIPEX ranking, but is the country with the most national integration initiatives. A notable fact, since the German labour market is based on two imperatives hard to reach for migrants: knowledge of the language and the possession of recognized diplomas and/or qualifications. A policy in line with the economic and demographic realities of the country that we have described previously, and which has seen the emergence of numerous and varied initiatives from all categories of actors: associations, citizens, universities, companies. For example, many companies offer internships and integration workshops to refugees to gradually accompany them to the labour market.

Coordinated actions from Germany were followed by the policy of Chancellor Merkel, who in March 2016 launched its integration program for refugees: 60 hours of

citizenship courses and a focus on language learning, with 600 hours scheduled courses. To go further, another official initiative is trying to put some order in the outpouring of projects addressed to refugees: integration points.

Other initiatives of this kind are emerging in European countries. In parallel with policies that are increasingly repressive and unfriendly to migrants, attempts are being made to better integrate those already present on the territory and enjoying refugee status. This is the case for example in France, where the government report emphasizes in particular the importance of learning French and France, that is to say a civil and civic integration, and an improvement of professional integration (NIEM project, 2018). In this regard, the elected official wishes to offer newcomers "comprehensive support, including access to housing and employment, with an average duration of one year". This would involve contracts with professional branches, "partnerships with large companies", but also partial recognition of qualifications and easier access to certain professions. A political ambition that joins different points already established in other countries, and which could then allow France to undertake a more appropriate policy.

MIPEX ranks Belgium 7th out of 38 countries in terms of integration of foreign nationals. The country takes 1st place regarding the right of permanent residence. Behind the good score of Belgium, migrants' access to the labour market and healthcare remains a major problem. Belgium still needs to review its copy with regard to access to the labour market. In 2014, Belgium had the lowest rate in Europe with almost 1 in 2 immigrants remaining unemployed.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this thesis is to show how public opinion has an influence on the administrative decision-making procedures on asylum policy. The results show that the European public does not have a uniform perception on migration, including arrival of refugees and asylum seekers. The possibility of lack of public awareness on migration issues and migration terminology, especially the difference between economic migrants and refugees in respect to which the governments are committed to provide protection under the international conventions, should be taken into consideration.

Following the sharp increase in the number of people who came to Europe to apply for asylum in 2015, EU Member States have had very controversial discussions about the reform of EU asylum and refugee policy. A number of new and diverse policy models have been proposed which give different ideas on the meaning and scope of asylum law in Europe, the relocation of refugees from conflict regions, minimum standards for protection, assistance and cooperation with countries of origin and transit, and the distribution of responsibilities between EU Member States. In order to discuss and decide on competing visions for policy reform, it is necessary to better understand public attitudes for the various dimensions of asylum and refugee policy. To this end, this research conducts an analysis to examine people's opinion on asylum seekers and refugee policy in three different EU Member States (Belgium, France, Germany) and to identify how individual differences existing within each of these countries challenges harmonization in asylum policy at the EU level.

The study found that although the European Union grows around normative values, the still strong nation-state reflexes cause difficulties in establishing common transnational migration policies. In the post-World War II period, the issue of immigration is one of the subjects for which European states could make independent decisions. Within the European Union, a common transnational policy of immigration still has not been fully implemented.

Although there are efforts and regulations in this field, the member states have the right not to accept some decisions taken by the union. Public opinion in each country can be shaped by the special peculiarities of the country such as political debate on migration, social and cultural inclusion of existing migrant population and the preparedness of the government to accept refugees (accommodation facilities, labour market access) For this reason, there are differences between the EU member states in terms of restrictive and flexible immigration policies.

Subsequently, there is a correlation between public perceptions and refugee policy, in which the acceptance of the refugee is based on the economic contribution to society. Furthermore, the media and political discourse have an influence on public perceptions and therefore also on political policy, because they are involved in the selection of events, facts and problems that may be placed on the public and political agenda, to which politics must apply policy. In addition, public perception can influence refugee policy and the acceptance of refugees through voting behaviour, protests and demonstrations. Perceptions about refugees can change, however, since media coverage is not always consistent, and the brain has the function of adapting reflexes to changes in the environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings show that greater responsibility sharing and approximation of decision-making are key elements of the functioning of the CEAS, not least because they are closely interlinked: on the one hand, the approximation of recognition rates in the Member States is a precondition for burden-sharing, as it would be highly unfair to assign asylum seekers to a Member State in which they would have little chance of protection, while elsewhere in the EU the likelihood of recognition would be significantly higher. On the other hand, a binding and equitable distribution of asylum seekers within the EU could encourage Member State governments to adhere to the common standards of the CEAS - rather than trying to make them attractive as host countries by restrictive housing practices and asylum procedures to reduce flight migration. In addition to burden-sharing and harmonization of decision-making, a genuinely common asylum system also requires uniform reception conditions and procedural standards for asylum seekers. In addition, the EU must also address the basic dilemma of territorial asylum: that asylum applications can be made practically only within the territory of a Member State (or at its external borders), while at the same time it is illegal for most seekers to get there. Consequently, it is also important to extend resettlement and other humanitarian admission programs and to open up more legal access to protection in Europe.

LIMITATIONS

One of the main limitations of the research is that the study relies on the public opinion surveys already conducted. The surveys analysed does not information whether the respondents are aware of the terms used. A survey among Hungarians posed a question about distribution of arriving migrants on mandatory based quota shows discrepancy with the European Parliament survey on the same topic, with almost 20% difference in the responses (Juhasz, et al, 2017).

As well as, the data on recognition rate from Eurostat does not include information on decision made on asylum applications submitted previous years, which in fact influenced Germany's recognition rates in 2015 and 2016. Moreover, limited number of the countries observed challenges the results of analysis.

Besides, lack of data on complete results of EU Relocation Program does not allow analysing the situation in proper way; it is difficult to define overall success of the program.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Public opinion surveys need to include interpretation of the terms used in their questionnaires and include detailed explanation of the topic in order to eliminate misunderstanding and biased ideas. Furthermore, more scientific research should be done into the positive contribution of refugees in a society, which could allow negative public perception to become more positive. Each Member State should investigate to what extent their asylum policies and preparedness affect public attitude on migrants and refugees.

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