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FORCED, IRREGULAR MIGRANTS AND THE EU PERFORMANCE IN TRANS BOUNDARY CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Migrantes forzosos e irregulares y la actuación de la UE en la gestión de la crisis transfronteriza

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The article presents the findings of a research on the EU response to the crisis caused by the growth of the inflow of irregular migrants in Europe in 2011 and the following years. The first section examines the causes of the current migration flows in general terms and explains why many European citizens and political leaders are hostile to the arrival of migrants most of whom are forced to leave their home. In the second section, the management of the migration crisis by the EU leaders is analysed with the concepts and tools of the TransCrises project, an H2020 research about managing trans-boundary risks and crises. In particular, this section reviews how the EU leaders have operated the seven management tasks that experts deem as important to bring a crisis to not harmful consequences. In the concluding section, the EU management of the migration crisis is assessed and advices are given for upgrading the management.

Abstract

Migration; irregular migrant; forced migration; European Union; crisis management.
Inmigración; inmigrante irregular; inmigración forzosa; Unión Europea; gestión de crisis.

Key words

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Fechas

El artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación sobre la respuesta de la UE a la crisis provocada por el crecimiento de la afluencia de inmigrantes irregulares llegados a Europa en 2011 y en los años posteriores. La primera sección examina las causas de los flujos migratorios actuales en términos generales y explica por qué muchos ciudadanos europeos y líderes políticos se muestran hostiles a la llegada de los inmigrantes, cuando la mayoría de ellos se han visto obligados a abandonar sus hogares. En la segunda sección, se analiza la gestión de la crisis migratoria por parte de los líderes de la UE a través de los conceptos y herramientas del proyecto TransCrises, una investigación Horizonte2020 sobre la gestión de riesgos y crisis transfronterizos. En concreto, esta sección analiza cómo los líderes de la UE han llevado a cabo las siete tareas de gestión que los expertos consideran importantes para que una crisis no produzca consecuencias dañinas. En la sección final, se evalúa la gestión de la crisis migratoria en la UE y se brindan consejos para mejorar su gestión.

Resumen

The arrival of unwanted migrants to Europe, North America and Australia has triggered political and social crises in the countries of entry. The governments face hard problems in responding to the phenomenon and developing efficient and legitimate management actions. The flows of irregular migrants are the effect of human behaviours like war, violent repression, maladministration and corruption that causes suffering and distress. These problems affect countries in areas of the world that are already in difficult conditions because of the structural trends of the global system. The local causes of migration outflows are amplified by worldwide conditions that push people to migrate like the widening gap of the population growth and employment opportunities that divides the developed and developing countries, the programs of human rights institutions, and the technology of fast transportation and communication (Attinà, 2016).

The people who are forced to leave cannot provide for their own basic needs and are perceived by the population of the destination countries as dangerous persons that threaten endurance of security, wealth and culture. In Europe, the massive inflow of migrants that claim to be the victims of disaster conditions and have no permit of entry in a European country has caused the negative reaction of the citizens. The member state (MS) governments went to the European Union (EU) and asked to develop the common management of the crisis. Especially the countries of the Schengen system were unanimous in considering irregular immigration as a transboundary issue and asked for the joint management and coordination of the national responses to the problem. Since immigration by third country nationals is not in the powers of the EU but the MS institutions, the common management of the crisis has been difficult to achieve. The actions that have been decided by the European Council and the Commission have been poorly put in place. The efficiency and legitimacy of the EU's management of the crisis have been frustrated by the customization of the EU co-decisions by the *customized* implementation of the management operated by all the MS governments. Also, today, this *customization* ranges from the covert downsizing of the common actions to the overt refusal of implementing altogether the common programmes and actions.

This article presents in a condensed manner the findings of a study on the management of the migration crisis by the EU leaders[1]. The article is organised as follows. The first section deals with the reasons of the crisis in general terms and explains why the European citizens and political leaders have been hostile to the massive arrival of migrants most of which are forced to leave their home and have no permit of entry in a European country. The second section assesses the European management of the migration crisis in light of the conceptual framework of the analysis of trans-boundary crises that has been created by a group of researchers of the TransCrisis project. The concluding section highlights the main results of, and the lessons learned from, the analysis of the EU migration crisis management.

1. Forced migration, labour market, culture, and populism. The management of the migration crisis by the EU leaders

The most used categories of migrant are the refugee and asylum seeker category, and the economic migrant category. The former is an international law category, which is accepted by the governments of many states. The definition of refugee was stated by the 1951 Refugee Convention[2] that functions as a yardstick to all the state policies dealing with this migrant category. The economic migrant category, instead, is the object of the agreements about migration matters that are negotiated and signed by states and international organisations. This category includes the persons that move from the home country to a country with a job contract[3].

Distinguishing different categories of migrants is important for knowledge and policy purposes

Distinguishing different categories of migrants is important for knowledge and policy purposes. It is correct also to group by the "forced migrant" category all the persons that migrate for escaping persecution, starvation, deprivation and the risk of death. It is hard to know how many persons who attempt to cross the borders of Europe lacking the visa of a European state are forced to migrate from their country for saving their lives and living in dignity and decency. However, it is not surprising that they cross international borders unlawfully and, consequently, are labelled as irregular. The person that is forced to migrate for escaping serious insecurity and extreme poverty is hardly in the condition of abiding by the laws of the regular crossing of international borders. Nonetheless, the distress of any forced and irregular migrant calls on the potential state of destination to abide by the legal and humanitarian principles of the rescue and protection of the persons in distress. Reception and status regularization should be given to such persons to end the human rights restrictions they are experiencing because they are the victims of unsustainable conditions.

François Crépeau, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the Human Rights of Migrants 2011-17, remarks that in 2012, the year that followed the big growth of the number of the

1 The study is part of the Horizon 2020 TransCrisis research project, funded by the European Union under grant number 649484. See http://www.transcrisis.eu

2 In the Convention, the term refugee applies to any person who "owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".

3 In the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1990, the term "migrant worker" rather than "economic migrant" refers to a person "who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national".

irregular migrants crossing the Mediterranean seawaters, the EU experienced a 12% decrease of regular migration of non-EU nationals. The decrease was the effect of the tightening of the number of immigration visas that was developed by the European MS border agencies (Crépeau & Purkey, 2016, p. 3). Unsurprisingly, in that year and the following ones, the number of irregular migrants in Europe grew enormously. The migrants pay a high sum of money to smugglers, navigate on unsafe vessels and risk their lives in the seawaters because the European governments refuse to give them the chance of entering in Europe to earn their life from the job opportunities that exist in Europe.

Research institutions and experts maintain that the European economies need foreign workers and that their inclusion in the labour market will bring beneficial effects to the economic growth (see, for example, Bertelesman Stiftung, 2016). The sectors that have low profit margins and cannot be delocalised to countries where cheap labour conditions exist and, therefore, are in need of foreign workers to survive in the world economy, are especially the agriculture and fishery sector, the constructions and extraction sector, and the care, cleaning, and catering sector. The companies of these sectors are disposed to employ foreign workers who are ready to do the low-paid jobs the European citizens disdain to do. Furthermore, these companies profit from the underground labour market that develops since the governments do not give migrants the necessary regularization permit for stay and work (Crépeau & Purkey, 2016; İçduygu, 2007).

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Populism and xenophobia are at the origin of the decision of the European governments to disguise the need for foreign labour and restrict the regular entry of migrants. Generally speaking, many citizens oppose immigration for two reasons: the economic and cultural one. The sudden inflow of a large number of immigrants is a big financial burden to the state. The costs of reception, which were not counted in the state budget, look unaffordable to the taxpayers and voters. The immigrants are perceived as a big overload to the national welfare and the education system, and as the cause of security problems like the growth of street crime and occasionally the infiltration of criminal networks and terrorist groups. Hosting a large number of immigrants requires the change of public expenditure programmes. However, since Europe has jobs for migrants, it is right arguing that approving appropriate laws and regularising the status of the immigrants in due time to give them the right to enter in the regular job market would contribute to the state budget and revenue, and offset the reception costs.

The cultural argument against immigration consists in considering the sharing of life with the "other" and the "diverse" as an intolerable condition. Such a belief is rooted in the social norms and the popular culture of a society. Generally, the perception of irreconcilable differences with respect to religion plays a fundamental role in this belief. Therefore, the characteristics of the "other" are stereotyped and sometimes demonized. In the 1960s and 1970s, the North European states were very much exposed to this problem. They were either former colonial powers like the United Kingdom, Belgium, France and the Netherlands that had to manage the large number of people coming from the former colonies or rising industrial powers like West Germany and Sweden that had to manage a large number of foreign workers. These countries responded with programs aimed at promoting multiculturalism and the respect of the "others". The ineffective results of those programs raised much confrontation about trusting multiculturalism as the solution to the problem of integrating foreign people in the national, monoculture society (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). However, some societies are less resistant to the penetration of external cultures and more inclined to cultural mixture, while others straight

oppose any cultural contact and contagion. It is also known that social norms and culture are in continuous change and adapt to the pressure of domestic and external trends.

Today, the mainstream political parties of the centre, left and right wing of the political spectrum of the European states repeat the economic and cultural arguments that the anti-immigration groups have diffused in Europe in the pas twenty years. All the political parties emphasize the security threat and fuel the anti-migration mobilization that was expressed by the extremist and protest parties. This phenomenon is part of the growth of populism in Europe. The right-wing populist parties diffuse xenophobia and anti-immigration messages in addition to the populist typical themes like anti-elitism and nationalism. For electoral reasons, the parties in power and all the mainstream parties do not hesitate to chase the rightist, populist parties on immigration issues. An expert study asserts that:

> Today, some mainstream parties –whether in an attempt to compete with the populists, to follow public opinion, or because of ideological shifts– have endorsed a populist rhetoric. These narratives, until recently taboo, have become part of everyday public debate in Europe, with potential consequences for civil liberties and domestic peace. (Balfour, 2016)

The mainstream political parties repeat the economic and cultural arguments that the anti-immigration groups have diffused in Europe in the pas twenty years

Members of the populist parties that are in charge in several EU states sit in the Council of the Union and the European Council. In the 2014 European elections, the number of seats of populist parties in the European Parliament grew to an average of 12.5% of the vote (Grabbe, 2015).

The 2008 economic and financial crisis gave a boost to populism in Europe. The populist messages of all the parties blamed the "others" and the wrong policy of the world financial institutions for the economic burden borne by the people. Free circulation was accused of weakening the protection of the national market against the damages of the financial crisis. These messages hit also the popular attitude towards Europe and the integration process.

While the Europeans have been complaining about the impact of "too many immigrants" on their welfare, and the xenophobic groups have been speaking out against the "invasion" that breaks down the European integrity and security, the mainstream governments and political leaders have restrained themselves from debating the nature of the current migration phenomenon and explaining the case of adopting measures to cope with forced migration. Furthermore, the governments and mainstream parties did not oppose the arguments of the anti-immigration groups even though, in the last twenty years, they approved amnesty laws to change the irregular status of immigrants since they knew that the cheap labour of the foreign workers was good to the national economy. Additionally, the leaders, the mainstream political parties and the EU institutions straight disregarded the opinions of the citizens favourable to receiving and integrating the migrants and give to them the chance of living safely in Europe.

In conclusion, while the political leaders neither tried to start a debate nor shared the demand of the Europeans asking for returning the third country nationals lacking the permit of entry, the argument of the unsustainable costs of immigration and of the defence of the European cultural integrity shaped the European perception of immigration and constructed the political demand of protection against the immigration threat. This demand was initially fed by, and brought advantage to, the populist movements and parties. As the populist messages were received by a growing number of citizens that were hit by the economic crisis, the mainstream

political parties of all the countries of the European Union shared the anti-immigration attitude. Last, the response strategy the political leaders have developed never took into consideration the reasons why so many persons left their home and accepted to risk life for the sake of reaching Europe (Vollmer, 2017).

2. The management of the migration crisis by the EU leaders

Managing a trans-boundary crisis is accomplishing a set of tasks to address the goal of reducing perceived threats and uncertainties and re-establish normal life conditions in the countries whose values and life-sustaining systems are affected by the crisis. The tasks to accomplish are in the power and responsibility of the political leaders of the affected countries. They have to coordinate the response to the crisis of the individual countries and decide common management actions. The right development of the management tasks by the policy-makers will minimize the effects of the perceived threat on the values and life of all the affected states.

Managing a trans-boundary crisis is accomplishing a set of tasks to address the goal of reducing perceived threats and uncertainties and re-establish normal life conditions

This definition of trans-boundary crisis management has been proposed by the TransCrisis scientists who outlined also seven tasks the leaders are expected to do (see Boin, Ekengren, & Rhinard, 2013; Boin, Cadar, & Donnelley, 2016). The seven tasks are the following ones: detection, i.e.: recognizing the emerging threat in due time; sense-making, i.e.: collecting, analysing and sharing information to generate a shared picture of the situation; decision-making, i.e.: selecting strategic decisions in a joint decision-making process, and formulating an effective strategy to implement the key decisions; coordination, i.e.: identifying key partners and facilitating collaboration between these partners; meaning-making, i.e.: formulating a key message that offers an explanation of the threat and a sense that leaders are in control of the situation; communication, i.e.: delivering the core messages to selected audiences like the victims, citizens, stakeholders, voters, and media representatives; and accountability, i.e.: giving to the parliaments and public fora the explanation of the relevant decisions and strategies before, during and after the crisis.

This section of the article briefly recounts the analysis of the management of the crisis by the European Union leaders and how they fulfilled the management tasks in the four scenarios of the crisis that have been highlighted in another research work (Attinà, 2016). The four scenarios are shortly described as it follows.

2011 - 2013: Conventional response scenario. At the time the migration crisis came to light with the growth of the number of irregular migrants in association with the Arab Spring revolt, the EU leaders did not recognize the forced migration phenomenon and opted for responding by the existing border control means, i.e.: identification and return of the irregular migrants.

October 2013 - October 2014: Mare Nostrum scenario. The Italian government chose to prioritize the humanitarian dimension and respond to the tragedies of the migrant sinking boats with the SAR (Search and Rescue) operation *Mare Nostrum*. The EU governments and institutions disapproved the operation straight away and blamed the Italian government for missing to identify the rescued migrants and seriously endangering the Schengen system.

November 2014 - September 2015: EU-Turn scenario. A year after *Mare Nostrum* started to work, the European governments and the Commission chose to turn towards a comprehensive approach policy and respond to the humanitarian emergency by the SAR operation *Triton*, the

relocation to all the EU countries of the migrants hosted in Greece and Italy, and the EUNav-For-Med anti-smuggling operation. The British and Visegrad governments overtly contended the new approach while the other EU governments elusively accepted it.

October 2015 - on: Fencing-the-EU scenario. The relentless arrival of migrants through the Balkan route, pushed the EU governments towards a new management deal in order to get Europe rid of the irregular migrants. The EU called on the transit countries to keep migrants in their own territories, and the origin countries to block the exit of potential migrants. It promised to both of them financial and technical assistance. An accord was signed with the Turkish government consisting in returning to Turkey the migrants that were hosted in Greece in exchange of economic and political concessions. The Council President, Donald Tusk, repeatedly invited the migrants not to "dream" about Europe. Last, in October 2016, the EU institutions approved the regulation of the European Border and Coast Guard service as key tool for fencing the EU, and in November they signed the first migration compact with the Lebanon government, followed in two-month time by the compact with Jordan.

3. The late detection of the crisis

In the last decades, migration studies and the statistics of international organizations have documented the flows of regular and irregular migrants from Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia

In the last decades, migration studies and the statistics of international organizations have documented the flows of regular and irregular migrants from Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. Until the Seventies, the migrants were softly integrated in the European countries since these enjoyed high economic growth. In the 1990s, irregular immigration in an economic down-turning Europe became a political issue. The arrival of numbers of citizens of former-Communist countries that peaked with the multitude of Albanians landing in Italy, fed the protest of the political groups that exploited the rising anti-immigration sentiment of some social sectors. Also, the EU enlargement to the central and eastern European countries carried the fears of the citizens for the arrival of foreign workers and people of alien cultures and pushed up the anti-migration theme in the programmes of the extremist political parties. But the consequences on the labour market of the member countries were small, in some sectors non-existent at all. The accusation that migrants steal jobs from the Europeans was made again and again in connection with the 2008 economic-financial crisis. The media reported side by side the news about public spending cuts, welfare services reduction, and rising unemployment, and the news about the huge increase of the number of migrants from Africa that entered Italy, Spain and Greece unopposed by the border guards. The anti-migration parties faulted the state for cutting the welfare of the citizens and serving the irregular stay of the immigrants, and asked to deploy military means to stop the migrants out of the national borders and protect the life of the citizens, the cultural integrity of the local communities, and the way of living of all the Europeans.

The EU institutions and the governments preferred to respond to the preoccupation of the people by a low-profile approach towards irregular migration. The Commission, in agreement with the national diplomacies, worked at the external migration policy, namely at reducing irregular migration in collaboration with the countries of origin and transit of the migrants.

Irregular migration went on top the agenda of the European Union on Autumn 2013, the time the Italian government decided to launch SAR actions to respond to the humanitarian emergency of the migrants in distress in the Mediterranean waters aboard the unsafe vessels provided by the smugglers. The rescue of people in distress in navigation is an obligation of the coastal states in

respect of the international law of the sea. The Italian government chose to abide by the international law but the European political leaders' perception of irregular migrants as threatening European values remained unaffected by the Italian decision. The leaders joined the anti-migration protest of the populist parties and repeated that only the migrants coming from countries at war like Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Syria and Afghanistan, could ask for the asylum seeker status while the coastal state had the obligation to stop all the migrants at the border, identify each one of them, and check their qualification to asylum. Should the governments of the countries on the border of the Union fail to do it, the suspension of the free circulation of the persons would be the legitimate measure of any government of the Schengen system.

A year after the start of the Italian operation, in November 2014, the pressure of the Italian government and of the humanitarian international organisations and NGOs convinced the Commission and the European Council to recognize migration as a humanitarian emergency but did not change the EU position about the irregular migrants as a threat to the wealth and security of the European countries and a menace to the free circulation of the persons in the Schengen area. Only the migrants in Greece and Italy who qualify for international protection were admitted to the two relocation plans the Commission, in agreement with the European Council, approved in May and September 2015. The plans were for 160,000 migrants but only few of them have been relocated from the two frontline states to another EU state[4].

Only in Autumn 2014, the European leaders recognized that the flows through the Mediterranean Sea was a humanitarian emergency

In conclusion, up to the last quarter of 2014, the EU governments and institutions did not detect irregular migration as a forced phenomenon and continued to perceive it as a voluntary violation of immigration laws by persons to block at the frontiers by using the existing means of border control. Only in Autumn 2014, the European leaders recognized that the flows through the Mediterranean Sea was a humanitarian emergency, and that the conventional response to irregular migration was to be replaced by a proper management response that they agreed to name as a comprehensive approach. But this recognition of the nature of the phenomenon was far from a true turning point of the management of the crisis.

4. The inappropriate sense-making of the phenomenon

The delayed detection of the crisis is explained by the conception of irregular migration the EU leaders agreed on in the past and have kept as good since the time of the growth of the migrant inflow against the informed opinion of the experts about unemployment, overpopulation, and violence as the conditions that push a large number of people to overlook the rules of regular border crossing. To the EU leaders, the migrants cross the seawaters in unsafe vessels for the sake of improving their economic conditions and do not care about complying with the law of border crossing, in particular with the rule of the entry permit that is awarded to those who have a job contract. Accordingly, no EU country should let them cross the border without prior identification, visa check, and consequent expulsion in case they are unable to demonstrate they are qualified to international protection.

In the EU law, border control and immigration rules are in the power of the state but the European Council, the Commission and the Parliament produce important documents and rules on

4 The EU official data are as follows: as of 13 March 2017, of the 160,000, only 4,174 have been relocated from Italy, and 9,953 from Greece (https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/press-material/docs/state_of_play_-_relocation_en.pdf).

this object. The aim is to push the MSs towards harmonizing the main aspects of the relevant legislation and policies because the immigration policy of a member state has important consequences on the affairs and policies of the other states, especially since the free circulation of the persons has been agreed by the Schengen convention signatory states.

To understand why the leaders made sense of the Mediterranean migration flows as unauthorised movement of economic migrants, the most significant EU document is the Communication of the Commission to the other EU institutions titled *Global Approach to Migration and Mobility,* also known as GAMM. It was delivered to the Council and the Parliament in November 2011 and approved by the Council six months later, i.e. at the time the Mediterranean migration movement was skyrocketing. This Communication updated the 2005 Communication named *Global Approach to Migration*. As it is explained later in this article, the extension to mobility is a meaningful speech-act made by the EU institutions. Another important document, the *European Agenda for Migration*, was released by the Commission and approved by the Council in 2015, the time the European Council and the Commission recognized the humanitarian emergency and obligation of the EU to respond to it with a comprehensive approach. Accordingly, the *Agenda* outlined the actions the EU institutions and the member governments have to adopt for managing the crisis. But the *Agenda* restated the *Global Approach* interpretation of migration and reaffirmed that, in addition to the border control measures the member governments should strictly apply, the EU's external migration policy is the primary response tool for managing the Mediterranean migration crisis.

The Global Approach states that ruling migration in the current chaotic growth of the migratory movement means developing worldwide actions

The *Global Approach* states that ruling migration in the current chaotic growth of the migratory movement means developing worldwide actions and mechanisms for letting workers go into the countries that have a flourishing economy and dynamic labour market. In such case, migration is advantageous to both the destination countries that solve labour shortage problems, and the departure countries that receive capitals through remittances and the know-how the migrants bring back to the home country when the work period in the receiving country expires. On such premise, the *Global Approach* defines mobility as the condition of the migrant that, at the time employment term expires, goes back to the country of origin or moves to another country that offers him a new employment.

Such EU-shared sense of migration as a way to provide a commodity to the European economies is the ground for entrusting the Commission to coordinate the actions of the member governments towards regular economic immigration and against irregular migration. In particular, by approving the *Global Approach,* the Council assigned to the Commission the task of driving the external migration policy. In the EU terminology, this is the set of negotiations, actions and programs for building regional and bilateral cooperation deals with the governments of the origin and transit countries. Thanks to such cooperation deals, only the migrants who have job contracts in a European country will travel to Europe and as well the home country will reclaim them as the job term in Europe expires.

In agreement with the *Global Approach*, the EU leaders did not claim any change in dealing with irregular migration in spite of the remarkable growth of the number of forced migrants. In October 2013, the Italian government refused to submit to the GAMM-driven response to the Mediterranean migration and started the Operation *Mare Nostrum*, and in November 2014 the European leaders changed their mind and claimed to respond to the humanitarian emergency of the migrant movement. But this short-lived change caused many controversies. In September 2015, the governments reversed the management approach and put it again in line with the usual sense of the

Mediterranean migration as irregular economic migration. They definitely opted for keeping out of Europe all migrants to prevent the risk of breaking normalcy and order. They agreed also on the following common positions that further enlighten their sense-making of the crisis.

» The strict compliance with the international and EU laws about the control of the persons that have no permit of entry in the territory of a member state is essential for keeping intact the Schengen system of the free circulation of the persons. This position implies the conservation of the Dublin Convention on the concession of asylum to the third state citizens who claim international protection, even though some government repeatedly requested to change the Convention.

» The fight against the smugglers must be increased to reinforce the external migration policy. The leaders maintain that smuggling incites persons to migrate –a controversial argument since the forced migrant first escapes and later trusts any person who can take him/her to a safe place– and frustrates the agreements of the Union with the governments of the countries of transit and origin of the migrants.

» The official documents of the EU institutions mention the existence of the root causes of migration in the contemporary world, i.e. civil and international wars, structural unemployment, bad governance, corruption, and climate change. But they refrain from offering other solutions than the awarding of financial and technical aid to groups of countries, especially in Africa, even though the aid development that has been given in the last sixty years has produced very scarce results and has not reduced the gap between rich and poor countries.

The leaders of all the states affected by a trans-boundary crisis have to participate in the decision process of the management strategy to make it effective and legitimate

5. The shared decision-making

The leaders of all the states affected by a trans-boundary crisis have to participate in the decision process of the management strategy to make it effective and legitimate. This has been the case with the decision-making process of the Union for responding to the migration crisis. The EU top decision and policy-making institution, the European Council, has addressed to the Council and the Commission the guidelines for the management while the Commission and the national administrations prepared and supervised the management actions. However, before the European Council meetings, the heads of government of the states less inclined to the common management of the crisis used to tell the media that they wanted the EU to respond to the crisis by a different approach than that on the table of the meeting. Following important decisions like those on the relocation plans, the governments overlooked totally or partially the Conclusions of the European Council even though during the meeting they did not oppose to the measures on agenda. In short, the same leaders who decide the crisis management frustrate its very objectives by tailoring the implementation of the decisions to the interests and preferences of their citizens.

6. The ambitious coordination plan

Collaboration with partners is the very much-sought objective of the EU management. The MS governments look for collaboration with the local authorities of the regions that are affected by the inflows and also with the civil society organizations for working out the problems of the reception of the migrants. The Council and the Commission work mainly to build a wide

network of non-EU partners for the sake of sharing with them the management burden. In particular, the EU institutions want the governments of the third countries on the Southern border of the Union to bear the task of blocking the migrants before these enter in the EU.

The network of partners comprises (a) the governments of the Non-EU Balkan countries, who are requested not to drop the migrants on the neighbours and the EU countries, and to seal the border to the migrants in order to complement the deal with the Turkey government; (b) the governments of Africa, the area of origin and transit of the largest number of irregular migrants, who are requested to build up the capabilities of curbing irregular migration; (c) the Turkish government to keep the Syrian refugees in Turkey and accept the readmission in Turkey, as the last transit country, of all the migrants currently in Greece; and (d) the governments of Lebanon and Jordan to support their capacity to manage the refugee camps, which are populated mainly by Syrian refugees.

Coordination with the external partners, a long-time effort of the Commission that has been improved since the European External Action Service has been created, is claimed by many leaders as key to achieve the effective management of the crisis. Generally speaking, it is not the only key instrument for blocking migrants, but it is important to cast to the European citizens the message that the leaders are acting to send irregular, forced migrants to the country of origin. But the effectiveness of the coordination strategy depends on the true sharing of the goals by the third country governments, and their capability of accomplishing the coordination agreement. These conditions are difficult to achieve because of the low efficiency of the public administration of the origin and transit countries.

Collaboration with partners is the very much-sought objective of the EU management

The Commission and the Council consider also regional partnerships very useful to build coordination. Since the conditions that drive migration are common to the countries of a geographic area, multilateral collaboration schemes that engage all the governments of a geographic area have the advantage of creating synergies and reducing costs. But the existing multilateral schemes the EU has put in action like the Rabat Process, which is now 10 years old, and the two-year old Karthoum Process have not yet produced notable results.

Last, the network of the partners covers also international organizations like the UNHCR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), the IOM (International Organization for Migration), and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (see Irrera, 2016).

7. The confusing messages of meaning-making

The effectiveness of the management decisions of the leaders depends on the favourable response of the citizens. Generally, the citizens will support the trans-boundary crisis management if the messages of the leaders convince them about the leaders' abilities to bring the crisis to an end. The number of the EU institutions that participate in the management has a weakening effect on the efficacy of the messages that explain to the citizens how the European leaders expect to deal with the crisis. This occurs because the member governments and the European Council as well as the Commission are responsible of the management decisions but each one of them releases its own messages to make sense of what the threat is and what the common management aims to achieve.

Normally, the messages of the individual government to the national audience have been different from those of the Commission and the European Council. On occasions, the Commission has reproached the member governments for not complying with the common management

decisions but the Commission's powers and means to change the governments' preferences in the area of migration are small. In conclusion, the contrasting messages of the leaders have made the citizens aware of the lack of a common vision about the migratory phenomenon and the nature of the threat. This has frustrated the citizens' trust on the leaders' ability to control the threat and manage the crisis.

8. The multiple and contrasting communication

The effectiveness of the management decisions of the leaders depends on the favourable response of the citizens

The national leaders have made use of all the mass media and social networks to inform the citizens about their concern and the actions for managing the crisis at the European and national level. The media have informed the citizens about the different views of the governments and the problems of coordinating the priorities of the member states in making out the management of the crisis.

The President of the Commission and the President of the European Council acted as the main EU sources of the communication about the migration crisis. They send the same messages to the mass media. The President of the European Council, more than the President of the Commission, has sent messages also to the migrants inviting them not to travel to Europe because Europe has not the opportunities they are looking for and the European countries do not accept the violation of the norms about border crossing. On occasion, the President of the Commission has addressed the MS governments to express disappointment for the missing compliance with many decisions of the Council by the states that frustrate the objectives of the EU crisis management.

9. The soft accountability

Irregular migration has been far from turning on conflict in the parliamentary arena of the European Union and the member countries. In general, the members of the European Parliament trust the approach of the governments. In the migration crisis, they have been lenient to the management decisions of the European Council and the Commission. The deputies have approved at large majority the projects and programmes on the migration issue. Also, in the national parliaments, the debates ever caused problems to the government and, as well, no government chose to challenge the parliament on the migration issue.

Outside the parliament, the mainstream political parties do not exhibit any view of the migration phenomenon different from that of the anti-immigration movements, do not back the views of the groups that are favourable to humanitarian aid and to the integration of the migrants in the country, and do not show concern with the issue of the forced migration. Despite the messages against policies for migrant reception, however, the political parties in power have been punished by the voters at the elections that have been run during the crisis because they have been accused of not blocking the entry of irregular migrants.

10. Conclusions

Since the causes of the current migration flows are both the processes of the global system and the local conditions of areas outside Europe, and since these flows are perceived by the European citizens as a threat to their normal life conditions, the European leaders should strike a composite management strategy to achieve the goal of reducing the impact of irregular, forced

migration on the European states and societies. The options of such a composite strategy are summarized as it follows:

1. Launch long-term action plans in partnership with international actors to contain the impact of the global and local causes of the current migration flows, and work for drying up these causes.
2. Tighten border control and develop cooperation with the countries of transit and origin to reduce the magnitude of the inflows of migrants in Europe.
3. Increase domestic capabilities to receive and integrate migrants in order to facilitate the citizen resilience to the crisis and restore normal life conditions.
4. Adjust the approach of the citizens towards the migrant threats by communicating clear messages about the importance of developing open, inclusive societies to meet the challenges of the contemporary world, especially the challenge of increased people movement and soft borders.

The present analysis demonstrates that the EU leaders' choice is mostly the second one. Three remarks stand in opposition to such choice and the elusion of the remaining options.

First, the choice of quasi-zero immigration will not achieve the expected results because the global and local causes of the migration flows are not going to weaken in the short-medium term. Additionally, cooperation with the governments of the origin and transit countries faces hard conditions like the inefficiency and corruption of the administration of those countries and the gain the governments have from letting the unemployed persons and political opponents leave the country.

Second, restricting immigration is inconsistent with the long-time invoked principle of well-managed immigration as it is at odds with the labour market of the European economies. Important industrial and economic sectors like agriculture, constructions, and the cleaning and catering sector are in need of the labour intensive and low paid jobs that the Europeans disdain to do.

Third, this migration management is in conflict with the open society principles of the European states and the political culture of the inclusive democracy that should stand firm in Europe. This may have a negative effect on the civic values of the European societies and certainly puts these societies off the trends of the global society. Additionally, this strategy damages the reputation of the EU and the MSs as advocates and defenders of humanitarian values, human rights, and international law.

There are no simple choices to make and easy steps to go to take Europe out of the crisis it has fallen in since the EU leaders developed such a management of the inflow of forced, irregular migrants. Opting for the simple solution of blocking the access to EU to people bearing on themselves the hard conditions that force them to move has not yet solved the problem and will not do it in the time ahead. EU and the European leaders have to turn towards a composite strategy made of the four above-mentioned options. They have to develop also domestic actions and policies to respond to the migration flows. The composite strategy comes with gaining the adhesion of the citizens to meet the current global change and, accordingly, with improving the social resilience of the domestic society to the effects and costs of migrant reception. After all, increased human mobility and migration create a 'new normal' since they are not the outcome

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of natural disasters, infrastructure breakdowns, and collective wrongdoing nor, of course, the mistaken choice of people that criminal groups exploit and amplify. They are the outcome of a social process that impacts on the state and put on the leaders the responsibility of responding by producing policies up to the process.

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