



# PERCEPTIONS

UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF NOVEL TECHNOLOGIES, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND PERCEPTIONS IN COUNTRIES ABROAD ON MIGRATION FLOWS AND THE SECURITY OF THE EU & PROVIDE VALIDATED COUNTER APPROACHES, TOOLS AND PRACTICES

## D2.6 Baseline report



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## Project

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## Executive Summary

This Baseline Report of the PERCEPTIONS project, based on the previous work developed throughout WP2, aims to provide a concise overview of (1) which types of stakeholders are relevant to consider for the project; (2) the existing academic literature on narratives, perceptions and discourses on Europe and how this impacts migration, (3) policies on migration and security issues, (4) threats perceived by security practitioners, policymakers and civil society organisations and (5) good practices. Furthermore, we aim to give a brief overview of migration context, including the institutional setting, migration history, and the key development since 2015 of the 13 countries where research is conducted. By doing so, we aim to define and conceptualise narratives, perceptions and discourses on Europe and how this is perceived to impact perceptions on migration to Europe. This deliverable is intended as a starting point for the empirical research and other work that will be developed in the PERCEPTIONS project - and therefore is referred to as a Baseline report – a helps to analyse existing biases, views and trends in discourses on migration to Europe, perceived threats related to migration, and securitization issues. Furthermore, it allows us to contextualize and interpret findings by taking into account the different local contexts and broader debates on migration.

In summary, we can state that in mainstream discourses, when focusing on migrants' perceptions to Europe, policymakers, academics and civil society organisations are mainly concerned with 'unrealistic' or 'false' expectations of migration trajectories and life in Europe. Hence, they often start from the idea that these expectations, inherent in these discourses, should be re-shaped to avoid deception and a massive inflow of migrants coming to Europe, especially when they migrate based on illusions or 'false perspectives'. One should be very critical when using terms like misperceptions or false perceptions, and keep an eye on the equal and balanced representation of all stakeholders' perceptions – certainly including migrants' perceptions – on migration to Europe, when discussion perceptions to Europe. The systematic analysis also shows how host societies or their representatives seem to give much attention to perceived threats, and particularly to the threat of radicalisation and violent extremism. This can be understood from a security perspective in which all risks (to migration) need to be considered and decreased. However, it is not necessarily in balance with the actual threats posed by migration, nor does it consider the multiple perspectives of all actors involved in migration to Europe. Taking this into account, the PERCEPTIONS project and the multi-perspective approach it embraces provides a good opportunity to look beyond these dominant discourses: it includes the voices and perspectives of vulnerable groups or those who are not yet fully represented in these discourses and narratives, and tries to understand how these different actors consider particular perceptions, narratives, and discourses as either 'accurate' or 'inaccurate', or 'true' or 'false'.

The Baseline Report is structured around two parts. Part I brings together insights from previous WP2 deliverables, and mainly focuses on the data triangulation and theoretical reflections regarding perceptions, narratives and discourses related to migration, 'threats' and security. Part II has a more descriptive purpose and provides a brief overview of the migration context in the 13 countries where research is conducted in the context of the PERCEPTIONS project. The Baseline Report ends with some general concluding remarks and recommendations for the next phases of the project, most notably the empirical research of WP3.

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## General introduction

The main aims of the Baseline report are twofold. Firstly, we aim to combine and cross-pollinate insights from all of the previous deliverables of Work Package 2 into one deliverable. Secondly, we aim to provide relevant country-specific information for the research sites that are involved in the PERCEPTIONS project as either country of origin, transit or destination. More specifically, in Part I of the Baseline Report, we aim to list all stakeholder groups that could be involved in the PERCEPTIONS project (D2.1. Ilcheva, M. & Bertel, D. (2019). *Stakeholder overview, involvement roadmap & engagement strategy*) and give an overview of the challenges and findings concerning the study of perceptions of Europe and their impact on migration to Europe across distinct European countries and outside Europe as well, by including a structured overview of all gathered knowledge and materials (D2.2. Bayerl, P.S., Pannocchia, D. & Hough, K. (2020). *Secondary analysis of studies, projects, and narratives*). In doing so, we start by summarizing the various conceptualisations of ‘perceptions’, ‘narratives’ and ‘discourses’ on Europe and how it is found to affect migration to Europe. Subsequently, we give an overview of migration and security-related policies as well as policies related to technology, social media and information, that are based on perceptions on migration to Europe (D2.3. Ben Brahim, N. & Rogoz, M. (2020) *Analysis of policies and policy recommendations*). Furthermore, we provide an overview of the threats and security issues that have been identified in the countries where empirical fieldwork will be conducted in the PERCEPTIONS project (D2.4. Bermejo, R., Bazaga, I., Tamayo, M. Sinoga, M.A. & Romero, I. (2020). *Collection of threats and security issues*). Finally, a summary of the good practices in all partner countries will be provided (D2.5. Kampas G., Papadaki, D. & Spathi, T. (2020). *Good practices collection*). This baseline report is part of the preparatory work to answer the following research questions in Work Package 3:

- “How do other migrants, first-line practitioners, and policymakers assess migrants’ perceptions and why?”
- “Are certain perceptions likely to be assessed as “accurate” from some perspectives and “inaccurate” from others?”
- “How do 1) non-factual perceptions and 2) perceptions assessed as “inaccurate” by practitioners and policymakers emerge and spread, particularly on social media?”
- “What structural and subjective variables mediate their distribution?”
- “What roles do 1) non-factual perceptions and 2) perceptions assessed as “inaccurate” by practitioners and policymakers play in migration?”
- “Can certain perceptions be reasonably correlated with mobility behaviour that may cause harm to people or institutions?”

Apart from triangulating data and bringing together insights from all deliverables of WP2, as a starting point for the empirical work, in Part II we also aim to give an overview of the institutional structures, migration history, and the recent migration trends and policies. This structured but brief overview of all countries where fieldwork will be conducted in the PERCEPTIONS project will help to guide the empirical fieldwork in Work Package 3 and to interpret the data, and can also be used as a reference work for future deliverables. In this overview, per country, first, we summarize the institutional structure of the participating country, including relevant policy-level(s) for immigration, international protection and migrant integration as well as relevant policy-level(s) for border control. Second, information is given on the recent immigration and/or emigration history of the country, and if relevant the ethnic diversity and migrant networks. Third, a brief overview of the key developments in the

country since 2015 is given on the discussed topics, including the new arrival of migrants and frequent migrant trajectories/countries of origin, which also reflects upon the impact of migration on society and politics. Finally, some key statistics on the migrant groups in each country are given. The Baseline Report will be one of the core outcomes of the scientific work within the project, together with the Multi-perspective Research Report and the Social Media Insights Report. All three reports together create the basis for the elaborated PERCEPTIONS solutions.



## PART I – Data triangulation and theoretical reflections

A red thread throughout the entire PERCEPTIONS project is how to define, conceptualise and empirically study narratives, perceptions and discourses of (potential) migrants on Europe and how this is perceived to impact migrants' perceptions on migration to Europe. As previously indicated (Deliverable 2.2), this conceptualisation is very complex and should be considered within its proper situation, and in relation to other perceptions. It is important to remark here is that perceptions only make sense with regards to a clearly defined topic, in this case, Europe and its impact on migration to Europe, and when compared with other perceptions on this topic. Hence, for this project, we depart from 'Europe' as unit of analyses, examining 'geographical imaginations' and define these imaginaries as "the subjectivity of the human conception of locations, spaces, countries and the people inhabiting these physical spaces" (Coppola, 2018). The difficulties related to the conceptualisation of narratives, perceptions, and discourses on Europe and their impact on migration are partly due to the complexity of the migratory process as well as the high degree of politicisation of these terms. Hence, this multi-layered nature and embeddedness demands to include the local and global context when discussing prevailing narratives (at collective, personal and institutional level), people's perceptions when talking about Europe, prevailing and/or dominant discourses on Europe and how this impacts migration to Europe, and to unmask the underlying assumptions and rationales of migration policies in- and outside Europe. To clarify these concepts, it is important to notify that there are no 'wrong' or 'right' perceptions or narratives. As such, the main objective is, following the Thomas theorem (Thomas & Thomas, 1928), to gain insight on the development of these perceptions, narratives and discourses, regardless whether they have some truth in it or not, as they may be *real in their consequences*. Hence, we just focus on the study of how migration to Europe is perceived, discussed in narratives (Boswell et al., 2011; Portelli, 2011), gives rise or is impacted by dominant discourses and has led to the creation of shared stories or myths, that may have lost track with reality and started a life on their own (cf. Baudrillard, 1983). The sharing of individual's perceptions of Europe, the creation of 'cultures of migration' (cf. Timmerman, Heyse & Van Mol, 2010), dominant discourses on Europe and migration to Europe (e.g., *crimmigration* approach, in which irregular migrants, including asylum seekers, are criminalized), both in- and outside Europe, are crucial to consider since they may impact migration to Europe and/or the development of migration/securitisation policies in Europe. The focus on narratives, perceptions and discourses on Europe as such is already a crucial and interesting topic of study, especially since 'Europe' itself as well as the European identity, is partly an imaginary and partly an actor in policy making (Ponzanesi & Blaagaard, 2010). Narratives and perceptions of Europe are crucial for its survival, success and decisive power. Apart from seeing Europe as both a construct and an important power, Europe-wide policies concerning migration have also been developed, which makes it an important unit of analysis with regards to the study of migration.

The systematic literature review on studies, projects, and narratives (D2.2.) had already indicated the difficulties on how to define all these terms, how to distinguish them from one another. This is even more complicated due to the vagueness of terms, the interchangeable use of terms, with different meanings, and the interdisciplinary nature of this topic of study. Without concluding research and discussions on this topic, we aim to make a distinction for the sake of this deliverable and research project (cf. glossary), hoping to add to more insights in this field of study instead of staying stuck in processes of defining and conceptualising. The origin or the creation of **perceptions** on Europe – which should be mainly interpreted at the individual level – is very situational, especially since discourses and

narratives in the immediate surroundings influence it. These narratives are sometimes based on or inspired by hopes and dreams – given the lack of having actual information on Europe – (Mandic, 2017; McMahon & Sigona, 2018) or shaped by information and remittances sent within migrant networks and communities and family networks in the country of origin (Boccagni, 2017; Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2018; Bakewell & Jolivet, 2015; Uberti, 2014). **Narratives** on migration to Europe emerge from an action or single event that transforms from a prior to a later and resultant state (Genette, 1983). These narratives need to be relatively coherent, consistent with available information and comprehensible (Boswell et al., 2011). Furthermore, **discourses** on Europe and their impact on migration to Europe, especially when written or said by authoritative figures, or constructed by the media, may also be dominant in the shaping of perceptions and narratives on migration to Europe and impact these heavily (Boomgaarden et al., 2010; Helbling, 2014). Finally, it is important to note that the colonial discourse is based on the alleged superiority of Europe, which is associated with progress, while colonies are associated with backwardness. This narrative is still embedded in the culture and imaginaries in the postcolonial world, and is present in the epistemic coloniality that presents Western knowledge as the only valid knowledge, and Western universities as the best ones, but also in globalisation and mass media that is dominated by Western production (Adeyanju & Oriola, 2011).

When looking at literature concerning ‘**misperceptions**’, most research seems to struggle with the conceptualisations of this term and struggles to really set out a fitting definition. Authors using the concept seem to surpass the Thomas theorem, as they seem to suggest that there exists something like ‘true’ or ‘false’ perceptions. In the PERCEPTIONS project, instead of being misguided by the idea that perceptions can be true or false, we aim to focus more on how individuals develop particular perceptions and what channels of information and social networks contribute to the shaping of these perceptions. As such, perceptions are always ‘right’, as they relate to how a particular individual perceives something (i.e., migration patterns, opportunities, abilities, Europe, etc.). More interestingly, it could be more revealing on how ‘cultures of migration’ (cf. EUMAGINE project), prevailing narratives and discourses are shaped – which in some cases can be referred to as ‘**myths**’, ‘**false narratives**’ and ‘**fake news**’. Again, by evaluating the extent to which these narratives, discourses and shared ideas and beliefs are ‘true’ or ‘false’, we would find ourselves on thin ice. Nevertheless, we could compare these narratives and discourses – as they are shared by larger groups and in media and other communication channels – to some extent with existing policies, actions and possibilities (Boomgaarden et al., 2010; Helbling, 2014). Given the amalgam of definitions, lack of conceptual clarity on these topics and difficulty of evaluating what is ‘true’ and ‘false’, previous research is not very concluding on this. Similarly, there may be several histories and narratives that can be told, all having a sense of truth in them as they are approached from distinct perspectives. This is also the main goal of the PERCEPTIONS project, namely to map these distinct perceptions on Europe, and from this multi-perspective view, connect these perceptions with the impact these perceptions may have on migration to Europe. As always in migration research, there are – often coinciding and overlapping – drivers of migration (Castles, De Haas & Miller, 2014).

Finally, when discussing perceptions, narratives and discourses on Europe and migration to Europe, it is difficult to study this separately from ‘threats’, securitization and border issues (cf. securitization theory, Buzan, Waever & De Wilde, 1998). **Securitization** discourses, narratives and perceptions need to be included in these discussions, as they are used to **frame migration policies**, and may hinder inclusionary practices and the implementation of multicultural policies in host societies (cf. **security-migration nexus**). These securitization discourses – often departing from the perspective of the host

society – are particularly of interest as they could work as self-fulfilling prophecies. Departing from securitization theory, perceptions, narratives and discourses on migration may include some anxiety as well, as it is related to some threats that are linked with migration, regardless of whether these threats are founded or not, or disproportional to the real threats. Hence, migration and security have been linked together already since the 90s, and are also studied as such in the PERCEPTIONS project. More specifically, perceptions, narratives and discourses apply certainly not only to migrants solely and should be studied from a broader perspective that captures the policies and issues that facilitate/hinder or even stop migration; that have important side-effects, such as human smuggling, and bring along more threats, such as the presence of criminal networks, that are perceived to accompany migration. Especially because of its easy visualisation, securitization and border issues need to be considered when studying perceptions, narratives and discourses. These threats may apply to migrants themselves, to host societies as well as to other actors. Furthermore, these threats may find their sources in the presence of migrants themselves, state agents, organised crime, and can be source of radicalisation and extremism, or even terrorism. Finally, these threats vary considerably in nature and refer to economic, political, humanitarian, cultural, environmental and social factors. Within securitization discourses, distinctions are made between ‘soft’ security issues, such as the functioning of the welfare state, and ‘hard’ security threats, such as those with a military nature (Buzan et al., 1998; Huysmans, 1995). Within this line of thought, explicit attention is given to the **securitization of borders** (Buzan et al., 1998) as it impacts how the EU border regime is developed and perceived by migrants and migration stakeholders, and changed.

The current research aims to delve deeper into the impact of perceptions, narratives and discourses on migration to Europe. Nevertheless, one should be aware of the impact of such perceptions, narratives and discourses, on the distinct aspirations and abilities to migrate (Carling & Schewel, 2018) and the interplay between economic, political or safety-related, cultural, social, familial, environmental, and humanitarian migration drivers as well as the opportunities to migrate to destination countries (Castles, De Haas & Miller, 2014). In migrants’ first decision to migrate, Europe is not always conceived as the final destination (Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2018). Furthermore, this relationship between narratives and perceptions of Europe and migration to Europe, could differ across migrant groups, change along their migration trajectories (Belloni, 2016; 2019a; 2019b) and depend on specific features of these migrant groups (e.g., specific migrant demographics such as minors, people with disabilities or from LGBTQ+ communities, e.g., Bayramoğlu & Lünenborg, 2018). In this deliverable, we will focus on how policies, migrant groups, host communities and politicians develop counter-narratives and undertake countermeasures to go against prevailing and misleading narratives and discourses on migration. This could lead to the reshaping of existing images of Europe or encouraging/discouraging migration to Europe. We will depart from this overview of literature, policies and actions, as a starting point for the empirical research in the PERCEPTIONS project.

# 1 Stakeholder overview, involvement roadmap & engagement strategy of the PERCEPTIONS project

In this first section, and to better understand the PERCEPTIONS project, we first provide an overview of all stakeholders that can be contacted, and set up an involvement roadmap and engagement strategy that can be used throughout the project, which is based on deliverable D2.1. Again, in this first phase of the PERCEPTIONS project, it becomes clear that we do not only wish to focus and include stakeholders within the partner countries of the PERCEPTIONS project, but also outside these countries, and in particular, outside Europe who are neighbouring the EU. Six groups of stakeholders are distinguished: 1) migrant groups, 2) NGOs and other host society groups, 3) policymakers, 4) media, 5) LEAs and other first line practitioners and 6) academic stakeholders.

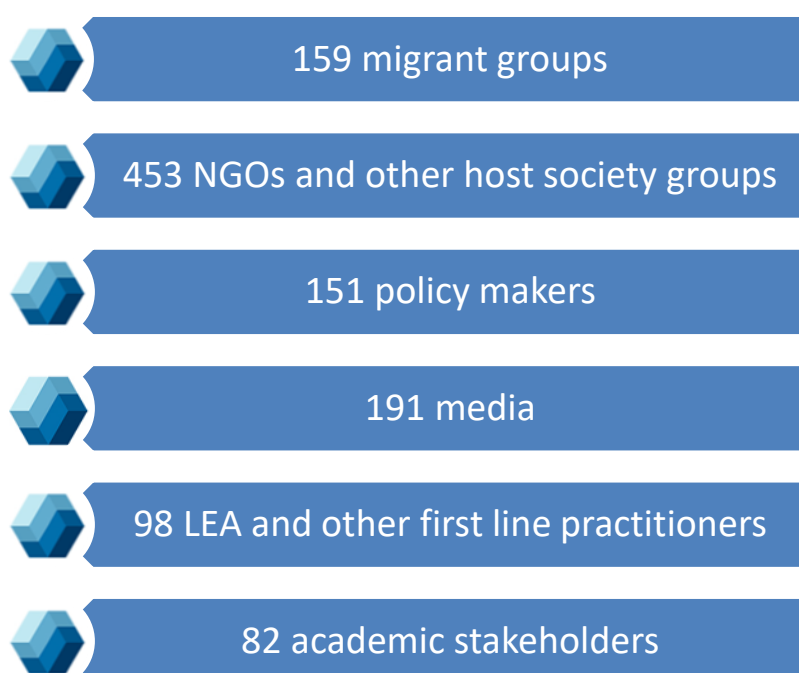


Figure 1. Stakeholders overview PERCEPTIONS project

Following a comparable methodology across the project partners, the number of stakeholders will be continuously collected and monitored throughout the project. Nevertheless, we can already mention that the stakeholder group of the NGOs and other host society group, by far, largely outnumber the other stakeholder groups. While there were already 453 numbers of NGOs and other host society groups, the other stakeholders had ‘only’ 159 (migrant groups), 151 (policymakers), 191 (media), 98 (LEA) and 82 (academics) entries. Important here is that in the stakeholder collection, **issues of ethics and personal data protection** need to be carefully dealt with (cf. D2.1. for an overview).

## 1.1 Involvement roadmap

Based on this continuously changing and growing collection of stakeholders, that will be monitored throughout the project, an **involvement roadmap** was made. This is a ‘step-by-step practical plan on how to initially involve different stakeholder groups in the various stages of the project’. In this project, we will refer to involvement as the initial process of including a stakeholder within the project network. The aim of developing an involvement roadmap is to increase and create awareness of the

PERCEPTIONS project, to identify and encourage participation of relevant stakeholders and ensure the dissemination and exploitation of the final results. The main function of this involvement roadmap is to set out the distinct responsibilities by project members and by consortium body (boards, co-ordinating entities, work package and task leads) as well as focus on the involvement by stakeholder group and by project stage. Important to note here is that the focus of the project is mainly on the 'migrant groups' and 'media channels'. Hence, their involvement is a precondition for the success of the project. Migrant groups are needed to fully understand how perceptions matter for the final migration flows and individual migration aspirations. Media channels, including both social and traditional media, are the arenas in which perceptions are formed, intensified, exaggerated or diminished, and shared to a wider audience. Both NGOs and other host society groups and policymakers matter as they shape and structure migration flows and policies as well as they impact the settlement and integration processes in the host societies. LEAs and other first-line practitioners are the ones who have to materialise the policies, inspired by narratives on migration and the perceived threats they generate. Finally, academic stakeholders are crucial for their critical and advising role and potential for dissemination the projects' results. In general, the poor engagement and involvement of these stakeholders largely jeopardizes the project's success and functioning.

The **involvement strategy** varies across groups of stakeholders. First, **migrant groups** are contacted, considering the legal status or legal entity of their group, and informal social networks. The nature of how these migrant groups are organised and have a legal status, will matter for the degree of formality used in the communication. In many cases, physical contact with representatives of migrant groups will need to be conducted. In doing so, it is important to consider the internal hierarchies and power relations within these networks as well. Special attention should be given to the vulnerability of these migrant groups and this needs to be safeguarded at all times. Second, **NGOs and other host society groups** may be part of governmental and non-governmental structures, and be susceptible to funding cuts, limitations on activity, physical and non-physical threats to entities and their representatives and hate speech. Threats to these civil society actors, will also be content-wise taken into consideration throughout the project. Contact with NGOs will be established through a wide range of communication channels (e.g., via official letters, e-mail communication, phone calls, voice and non-voice communication via messaging applications and personal meetings) as well and the degree of formality will depend on previously established contacts and familiarity with the organisation. Third, concerning **policymakers**, political fluctuations, resulting in policy and personnel changes throughout the project, is inevitable and need to be taken into account when interpreting the findings of the project. Policymakers are contacted through official channels. Fourth, the **media** consists out of a wide diversity of formats, such as printed, solely digital, combined with social media outlets that could be both personal, professional and organisational in nature. While main media channels could provide interesting information on prevailing media discourses and narratives, personal social media channels give an excellent testimony of the impact of perceptions on migration to Europe and therefore cannot be disregarded. In the latter case, privacy regulations should be considered as well. In addition, attention should be paid to media ownership before analysing the data. Finally, a diversity of editorial focus need to be identified as well to understand how these media outlets frame migration and related issues. Fifth, a wide range of **LEAs and other first-line practitioners** will be included to maximise the outreach of the project and to include as much as possible first hand experiences with migrants and migration related issues. These partners include law enforcement partners' expertise and professional networks, first-line practitioners as well as relevant medical, social and judicial stakeholders. When selecting stakeholders in this group, we aim to select both those with a high awareness on migration-

related issues and those who are less knowledgeable, but willing to learn and apply project's findings in their everyday professional practices. Sixth, **academic stakeholders** could give advice, enable access to particular stakeholders and allow us to disseminate the project's results for a broader audience. These academic stakeholders will be contacted by other academics and are (partly) selected based on their involvement in other European projects working on the same topics (i.e., EUMAGINE, MEDI4SEC, REMINDER, PERICLES, MICADO, MIGRANT-MILIEUSMIICT, ASGARD, EUROROADMAP and POLITIS).

## 1.2 Engagement strategy

Although engagement may be overlapping with involvement, the working definition of **engagement** is to achieve the stakeholders' sustained support to project activities and uptake of results within the project lifetime and beyond. The engagement of stakeholders will consist out five phases: 1) **information provision**, 2) **consultation**, 3) **involvement**, 4) **collaboration**, and 5) **empowerment**. (Dinges, Wang & Köngeter, 2017). Throughout the project, the engagement of each stakeholder should be redefined and made explicit. To establish and maintain sustainable relationships with stakeholders, we aim to strive for diversity and non-discrimination, do gender mainstreaming, apply an intersectional perspective and multidisciplinary approach throughout the project, and strive for non-politicization (unless it is in the nature of the stakeholder). The engagement strategies of each stakeholder group vary (cf. Table 5, p. 24, D2.1). **Migrant groups** are involved throughout the entire project duration but mainly during the initial phases of the project, in order to inform and consult, in order to explore how attitudes and perceptions shape migratory movements; and to disseminate some public parts of project findings and platforms. **NGOs and other host society groups** will be involved in all stages of the project, ranging from research to joint evaluations of publicly shared information, articles, guidelines and toolkits, as well as during stakeholder events. In addition, **policymakers** will be engaged throughout the entire project, as they give insights in their views on the projects' progress and findings, from investigation to joint evaluations with civil society, as well as validations to test the (counter) measures, methods, approaches, and policy toolkits. **Media channels** play a dual role in the entire engagement strategy, as they are both research subjects as potential dissemination channels of the project's findings. Furthermore, given the nature of the PERCEPTIONS project, **LEAs and first-line practitioners** are involved during all project phases, from the investigation phase to the validations of test measures, methods, approaches and policy toolkits, as well as in tests and stakeholder events. Finally, **academic stakeholders** are asked to inform and reflect upon the project's findings and processes.

Apart from involving and engaging stakeholders throughout the PERCEPTIONS project, we also established an **Expert and Advisory Board (EAB)** to ensure the impact of the project's results on the scientific community and relevant practitioners. The main objective of this EAB is to engage entities coordinating and participating in related EC-funded projects to build much needed effective relationships; to contribute to the wider-than-Euro-centrist perspective by also including non-EU partners from within and outside Europe; and to include in project deliberations selected policymakers and other stakeholders of particular importance for the project outcomes. The main aim is to involve the members of the EAB through **communication, consultation** and **collaboration**.



## 2 Narratives, perceptions and discourses on Europe and their impact on migration to Europe

### 2.1 The impact of perceptions, narratives and discourses on migration decisions to Europe

Considering the results of the systematic literature review in D2.2 (Secondary analysis of studies, projects, and narratives), there are several factors that are considered during migration decisions: these are inspired by perceptions, narratives and discourses on Europe. As shown by this systematic literature review, many of these factors stimulate migration as they add to the shaping of a **positive image** of Europe and more in particular, migration to Europe. These factors concern the **presence of co-ethnics** (helping in the provision of documents, family reunification potential, integration opportunities), **perceived economic opportunities** (in specific job sectors interesting for migrants) and/or **opportunities to obtain money and status** and **integration possibilities** due to multiculturalism/welcoming/tolerant/solidary society. Nevertheless, some other hindering factors, such as **the treatment of migrants by the local population**, in the form of discrimination, **housing issues, immigration controls and security issues** (e.g., human trafficking / exploitation), as well as **perceived safety** and/or **lack of corruption**, nuance and complicate this positive image. These perceptions are strengthened by persistent beliefs in particular successful stories and the resistance to belief otherwise. Additional factors, such as the available resources/money one has to migrate, or the experiences of discrimination in transit countries or European host countries, matter for final migration outcomes. In contrast to these positive images people are found to have about migration to Europe, some negative factors were also mentioned, tempering the wish to migrate to Europe. These factors refer to the **inabilities of host societies to deal with the (huge) inflow ('wave'/'attack'/'flood'/'invasion') of migrants, fear of being treated negatively or seen as a threat to European societies, culture and identities** (e.g., as a terrorist, or posing economic/criminal/cultural/social threats, being dehumanized as a migrant). The consequences of this process are stereotypical, racist, xenophobic narratives and attitudes towards migrants or the upholding of migrants' human rights, **misinformation about the actual conditions and opportunities in Europe, and having a distinct approach to different types of migrants**, according to their characteristics (e.g., skills/educational level, gender, age, region of origin).

These perceptions are embedded in wider narratives of why people decide to migrate and what factors are decisive to migrate, which are largely considered to be the result of the **combination of push- and pull factors in both sending and receiving countries**. Despite the fact that these binary views on migration factors are often surpassed in migration research (Castles, De Haas & Miller, 2014), they remain prevalent in people's ideas about migration-related decisions. Nevertheless, when delving deeper into the narratives of migrants themselves and their decisions about destinations, routes and modalities, research shows that these decisions are often very **strategic** and **structured by different circumstances** (political, legal, etc.), **limiting also the impact of migrants' agency to decide whether to migrate, where to go and how to undertake this migration trajectory** (Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2018). This could imply that the impact of perceptions of Europe and migration to Europe, as well as the impact of narratives on actual migration decisions and trajectories may be limited. The latter could be subject of empirical research in the PERCEPTIONS project.



## 2.2 The transmission of narratives and channels of information

Apart from the levels on which perceptions, narratives and discourses are situated, a main condition for the creation of narratives and discourses, as well as how they possibly affect individual's perceptions, is that they are shared by a larger group of people through different communication and information channels. The systematic literature review (D2.2) already identified a wide range of platforms used for the transmission of narratives as well as alternative channels of information, ranging from social and digital media to mainstream media. **Social and digital media** are especially important for sharing information and for communicating **through interpersonal networks**. In this sense, these narratives are biased and influenced by people's variety of social strong and weak social ties (cf. Granovetter, 1983). **Mainstream media** has, in comparison to the upcoming importance of social and digital media, a different way of shaping **larger discourses on migration to Europe and Europe itself, and remains influential**. However, these discourses can also be biased as they are more easily impacted and shaped by dominant figures, leaders, politicians and/or political views of mainstream media channels.

The main conclusion of this systematic literature review study is that especially **interpersonal networks** and **communication channels** are found to be important ways to share information within and across migrant groups and networks, and appear to be key in shaping the perceptions of people, which in turn may influence their decision on whether they aspire to migrate to Europe. **'Word of mouth'** is especially important for the decision to migrate (Kuschminder, 2017). These information and communication channels matter throughout several phases of migration trajectories. They shape initial perceptions on Europe, and migration to Europe, influencing migration aspirations to Europe. Furthermore, they matter to decide which migration strategies to undertake and guide migrants throughout their migration project and trajectories until their arrival near or in Europe, and beyond. Consequently, the impact of perceptions, narratives and discourses on Europe and on migration to Europe can change throughout the migration project and trajectory. More explicitly, previous literature on this topic already revealed that narratives play a complex role in both perceptions and experience of threats by both hosts communities and migrants. To spread this information, narratives and discourses, **social media** has especially been important way to share this, which is closely intertwined with the introduction of **smart phones and the accessibility of the internet** (e.g., Belloni, 2019a). Again, here the usage of these devices change along the migration route and after arrival (Gillespie et al., 2018). When transmitting these narratives, shaping perceptions and developing discourses, one aspect cannot be ignored, namely **'trust'** that migrants have in information and people spreading information, which can help to understand the reliance on interpersonal networks and communication channels (UNHCR, 2020).

Given the fact that most of this information is shared within one's own networks, relying on personal information, interpretation and selection of information, which is not has been subject to reviewing procedures and external control, these interpersonal networks have also been found to be potential sources of 'misinformation' and 'disinformation' about migration procedures, living circumstances and possibilities and much more. Finally, **social media has both advantages and disadvantages**. On the one hand, it could **work empowering** as it offers in a discrete and unofficial way an important source of insider knowledge on migration (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014) and facilitates the possibility for activism (Bayramoğlu & Lünenborg, 2018). On the other hand, it could create **a burden and put additional stress** on migrants as people in the countries of origin could more easily contact their relatives, demand remittances and put pressure (Hunter, 2015; Witteborn, 2015). Furthermore, the

**truthfulness of information** is questioned (e.g. Fiedler, 2019). However, research that differentiates between different types of social media platforms, how they are used, with whom and which kind of information is shared, is currently still lacking.

**Mainstream media** also plays a crucial role in the shaping and transmitting narratives on Europe and narratives on migration to Europe. The systematic literature review showed that four main types of narratives are shared through mainstream media: **solidarity, xenophobia, crisis and victimisation**. **Humanitarian narratives** depict more ideas concerning solidarity towards migrants and refugees whereas **securitisation narratives** focus more on xenophobia. On some occasions, the securitization narrative is also used to justify humanitarian interventions. Interesting to remark here is that many narratives that are shared through mainstream media are also **politically motivated**, which also biases the shared narratives in the press and contributes to the active/conscious creation of certain discourses on migration to Europe and on Europe. These ‘campaigns’ often involve distinct communication channels, such as traditional media channels, including TV ads, educational radio programs, newspaper campaigns, and cinema spots (Fiedler, 2019). Additionally, mainstream media can frame particular migration flows in specific terms, e.g. exaggerating the size of migrant flows, which can result in specific perceptions by host societies about threats related to migration. This was, for instance, the case in the ‘migration and refugee crisis’ of 2015 (Hintjens, 2019). Finally, some scholars are concerned with the national responses to such representations of migrants in the mass media, focusing for instance on how social media and traditional media reports on ‘death’ (e.g., Lenette & Miskovic, 2018; Bevitori & Zotti, 2019).

## 2.3 Threats and security issues

Following previous WP2 deliverables, we depart for this section from **securitization theory** that posits that, in order to understand how security issues emerge and evolve, one should study how these issues are framed through discourses (Buzan, Waever & De Wilde, 1998). In doing so, three key issues need to be considered: 1) **referent objects** (i.e., what is under threat), 2) **referent subjects** (the source of the threat) and 3) the **type of threat** (Balzacq, 2011).

Regarding migration, the analyses of D2.2 shows us that mainly migrants are identified as **key referent objects** in most literature, followed by the sovereignty of countries that are endangered by migration resulting in the criminalization of migration. Other referent objects include the functioning of the European Union itself; the threats posed to society due to failed integration of migrant groups in host societies; the security of dominant groups in host societies; the preservation of social cohesion and values, economic and political stability. The majority of the studies focus on **migrants** (especially refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants) who are under threat, often by criminal networks, such as human traffickers and smugglers (e.g., Albahari, 2018; Ambrosini, 2017; Maher, 2018), and especially during the migration journey. Important in these perceived referent objects, is that the **type of classification** matters, referring to different deservedness of protection and rescue (e.g., Magazzini, 2018; Moreno-Lax, 2018). Migrants’ vulnerabilities may even be strengthened through **false information** on the migration journey.

Concerning the **referent subjects**, or put differently, the sources of threats – both perceived and experienced – the primary referent subjects identified are migrant groups, criminal networks, extremist groups and state agents. The first group of reference subjects, namely **migrants themselves**, especially men, are perceived to pose a **threat to the host societies** as they are perceived to **destabilise social, political and economic cohesion**. They are also perceived to lead to an increase in **organised**

**crime, source of terrorism, radicalisation and extremism** (e.g., Alkopher & Blanc, 2017; Leidig, 2019). The presence of migrants is also perceived to give rise to the presence of more reference subjects, including **criminal networks** and **state agents**. Both pose a **threat to migrants**, through financial extortion, discrimination, detention, exploitation and violence and the cooperation of both, threatening the stability of state institutions, host societies and the wellbeing of migrants (e.g., Sanchez, 2017).

As previously noted, the referent objects and subjects vary, as they depend on the **type of threat**. Threats related to migration as such could pose a **threat to both migrants and host societies**. Thus, in some cases, migrants themselves are seen as the ones posing threats or giving rise to threats to the host society, while in some other cases, they are seen as the ones that are under threat, given their vulnerable position before, during and after their migration trajectories. Resulting from the systematic literature review (D2.2.), the most **prominent threats to migrants** are death, detention and deportation, discrimination, human trafficking, violence and abuse. For the host societies, the most dominant perceived threats include radicalisation and terrorism, crime, economic threats, civil unrest and disease. Finally, it should be remarked that some threats might be applicable for both host societies and migrants. These **mutual threats** include human smuggling and trafficking, corruption, domestic violence and extremism and environmental threats.

To conclude, one can state that securitization theory not only helps to gain better insights in the perceived threats posed by migration, but also to clarify that threats are often approached simultaneously from different perspectives. In that sense, it results essential looking at migration from a policy perspective, from the perspective of the host society or that of the migrant matters for the conceptualisation of perceptions, narratives and discourses on Europe and migration to Europe. This will help to understand how these issues related to migration are turned into a threat.

## 2.4 Border issues

As demonstrated in deliverable D2.2, in the prevailing literature, there is a wide variety on how border issues are conceptualised, as it is multidisciplinary in nature. Four main categories of conceptualisations can be distinguished: 1) the securitisation of EU borders, 2) legal borders, 3) physical borders/externalisation of EU borders and 4) symbolic borders.

Firstly, building further on the previous paragraph, securitization theory adds to a better understanding on how narratives and discourses on migration are shaped through security practices. The **securitization of borders** emerged as an overarching theme that affects how the EU border regime is developed and perceived by migrants and migration stakeholders (Buzan et al., 1998). In most studies, **securitization actors** refer to political actors and entities (e.g., D'Amato & Lucarelli, 2019; Hintjens, 2019), international and supranational organizations (e.g., Ceccorulli & Lucarelli, 2019), media (e.g., Ceccorulli, 2019) and to a lesser extent practitioner (e.g., Borbeau, 2015). This securitization was often framed in terms of 'interdependency' leading to the focus on borders and migration. Other authors focused more on the framing in terms of 'war' and/or 'crisis' of border operations and migration management, resulting in securitization. Remarkably, these threats are often referred to as both security and humanitarian threats (e.g., Hintjens, 2019). These securitization issues and processes resulted in the militarization of border infrastructure and practices, change of border security practices; outsourcing of border security through privatization, and border externalization to countries of origin and transit outside of the EU. These securitization practices are supported by the

deployment of advanced technologies and surveillance systems. Finally, there has also been a trend in **collective securitization practices** of borders, because of the harmonization of Member State border policies through the EU's border regime.

Secondly, a second research strand that emerged is the focus on **legal border issues**, including treaties, policies and regulations. Several topics seem to arise. Studies focused on the impact of policies on migration flows, experiences and perceptions and the everyday practices of migration management practitioners. Other studies highlighted the impact of the 'criminalisation of migration' on migration patterns and responses (e.g., D'Amato & Lucarelli, 2019). Finally, some other studies focused on the legal status of migrants and the enforcement of migration laws.

Thirdly, attention was given to the **physical borders**, in particular to border infrastructure and practices, and border dilemmas. Issues related to border infrastructure involved the impact of the hardening of land borders for sea borders; the use of technologies to enhance borders, the strategic use of islands in maritime border management; its framing as a crisis, and so on. In addition, border practices are often the result of changing policies, perceptions on security management and the level of organization. They are seen as critical for stopping human trafficking, and subject for blame for migration by the host society. Moreover, the organization of these border controls, in terms of private/public, militarization, and their partners is also subject to research. Finally, some border dilemmas are discussed, leading to two options due to the side effects some border policies may have. For instance, strict and hard policies to reduce human smuggling and abuse, as a way to protect migrants better in the future, may be even more harmful for migrants themselves. The study of such side effects may also be crucial when focusing on the impact of physical and symbolic bordering practices during and after the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants' perceptions of certain European countries. For example, Italy has been fragmented into (old, but newly stronger) regional borders.

Finally, both the externalization and internalization of borders is a topic of study. **Externalization of borders** refers to a transfer of border controls to non-EU countries. Simultaneously, there is also a tendency for **internalization of borders**, referring to practices that extend borders to within the territorial boundaries of the host state (Ceccorulli & Lucarelli, 2017; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss & Cassidy, 2018; Musarò, 2018; Nancheva, 2016). These debates may represent a deterritorialization of the European Union, decreasing the visibility of borders but omnipresent across and beyond EU borders. The impact of the externalization of borders is studied concerning migrants, the EU and member states, non-EU member states. The impact of internalization of the EU borders is studied with regards to its effects on EU borders themselves and how they are secured.

When discussing border issues, in the previous sections, we mainly discussed actual borders. However, and especially relevant about the study of perceptions, narratives, discourses on Europe and migration to Europe, we should also reflect on **symbolic bordering**. This concept, as developed by Chouliaraki (2017) refers to the whole of – often discursive – exclusionary practices that actually keep migrants out of symbolic spaces of representation and deliberation in EU host countries. These symbolic borders are found in society, culture, ideology, identity and cyberspace. The practices in which symbolic bordering takes place include for example the emphasis on national identity and sovereignty (e.g., Ceccorulli, 2019), the creation of hierarchies between EU members states (Cantat, 2015), the deservedness of migrants (e.g., Triandafyllidou, 2018), the ideological and political construction of

borders (Cuttitta, 2014; Leurs & Ponzanesi, 2018), processes of othering (e.g. Boukala & Dimitrakopoulou, 2018) and the elicitation of emotional responses (e.g., Leurs & Ponzanesi, 2018).

Finally, envisaging the following Work Packages in the PERCEPTIONS project, it is important to critically reflect on how institutions and bureaucracy within Europe pose threats both to migrants and host countries. This is especially the case when transnational and national policies of the European Member States conflict with each other. Such conflicting policies add more confusion both within countries as by migrants. Therefore, while analysing migrants' perceptions of Europe, the representation of institutions, bureaucracy, and practices have to be taken into account. The awareness of migrants on the functioning of institutions in Europe requires some key elements to define identity to let them stay here (document, visa etc.). Migrants could ask themselves what kind of data should they present after migration and focus on how to present themselves at best to authorities in the host countries (Pelizza, 2019).

### 3 Policies on migration issues

Summarizing the PERCEPTIONS deliverable D2.3, an overview will be given of the underlying rationales of policies and policy measures addressing security threats linked with perceptions of Europe or a particular country. This adds to a better understanding on the aims of such policy measures. We base ourselves on data collected in twelve countries where the empirical research will take place, namely Algeria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kosovo, Spain, Tunisia and the United Kingdom. The policies and policy measures addressing security threats related to migration focus on: asylum, irregular migration, migrant integration, return, border management, radicalisation, and the addressing of online disinformation. Most policies do not solely focus on perceptions as such, but rather on the reduction of (perceived) threats, often through legal measures, but sometimes also through dissuasion campaigns that aim to inform people about the dangers associated with irregular migration or the provision of alternatives (e.g., legal migration procedures, employment opportunities). This could shape others' perceptions on migration. Furthermore, most policies depart from a particular migration domain, such as asylum procedures, migration integration in the host country, return migration, irregular migration, border management and control, and policies against human trafficking, and concentrate on particular moments in migrants' trajectories. Since the so-called "refugee crisis" of 2015, the scope of most migration policies has expanded and have become increasingly focused on present and expected threats and securitisation. While some policies have included the use of new technologies and media, the lack of evidence on this topic has diminished the inclusion of this topic in existing policies.

#### 3.1 Migration related policies

Present and expected threats are intertwined with policy narratives, referring to the threats migrants pose to the 'maintenance of Europe', which is seen as problematic from a security perspective. In that sense policies can be seen as responses to threats. This narrative has shaped a large number of policies relating to migration.

As described in PERCEPTIONS deliverable D2.3, concerning **policies in the area of asylum** since 2015, the reconsideration of migration policies became high on the agenda, and became a priority for many governments and institutions. Many of these reforms were partly inspired by existing, but also by new threats posed by migration, as well as migrants' perceptions on asylum procedures in and outside Europe. Policies focus on the "disproportionate" number of asylum seekers arriving in their countries, assuming that the large influx of migrants represent a threat to countries' stability and capacity to host asylum seekers. In addition, the possibility of abuse of legal protection claims by migrants is also seen as a threat to the welfare system services and available resources of governments. Countries aimed to revise their migration policies, to reduce necessary costs from a human rights perspective related to asylum, by speeding up procedures, and avoiding practices of migrants to lengthen their stay in the immigrant country or usage of the Reform of the Dublin Mechanism. For example, in transit countries located at the external border of the EU, such as Greece and Cyprus, the threat of disproportionate influx of asylum seekers and the strain it poses on public budgets and government resources led to the creation of hot spots – also supported by the European Commission – and the involvement of law enforcement in asylum procedures. This approach has helped frontline member states to alleviate the pressure and provide operational assistance to identify, register, fingerprint, and debrief newly arriving migrants and asylum seekers, as well as support return operations. Beyond these initiatives, on the 1<sup>st</sup>



of March 2020, the Government of Greece decided to temporarily suspend all new asylum applications introduced. The decision was justified with the extraordinary circumstances and the necessity to confront what is referred to as an “asymmetric threat to the national security”, which prevails over the application of EU law and international law regarding asylum procedures. Asylum seekers are in these discourses underlying the developed policies often framed as ‘irregular’ (also in non-EU countries). Finally, some policies have been developed to prevent migration to undermine the sovereignty of countries.

D2.3 further lists different approaches to **policies addressing irregular migration** that can be distinguished across types of countries (origin, transit and destination). The categorisation of these countries should also be seen in relative terms and it does not exclude other migration patterns. Countries of origin and transit, such as Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt, apply a “**crimmigration approach**” in which irregular migrants, including asylum seekers, are criminalized. In some of these countries, (illegal) attempts are made to push migrants outside their territories. In Algeria, where many sub-Saharan African migrants settle on their way to Europe, additional legal, structural, economic and security measures to counter irregular migration are set up. European countries with an external EU border, such as Bulgaria, Italy and Greece, invested in fencing policies, enlarged border capacities in coordination with Frontex, and promoted awareness or dissuasion campaigns regarding migration to Europe. The latter is for instance the case in Italy, who designed an “Aware Migrants” campaign, to reduce the number of deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, directed at various West- and Northern African countries. Similar ‘preventive’ policies were set up in some destination countries, like Belgium, complemented with the implementation of changes in laws and regulations facilitating the repatriation of migrants who stay irregular at their territory (e.g., who committed crime in the EU). In addition, for many European countries, repatriation of illegally staying criminals is outlined as an important priority for policy development.

**Border control policies** in and outside the EU are found to vary according to the geographic position of countries and the threats linked to the physical borders. When reviewing these border policies, a distinction between both symbolic and physical borders needs to be made. Recently, there has been a change in bordering practices due to an increase in the perceived security threats due to migrants’ presence within the EU. This led individual EU countries to impose new restrictions and checks within their country, to ensure the safety of their territories. Additionally, transit migration has been worrying many EU countries (and the UK), resulting in the development of initiatives to counter this type of migration and migration pathways. While many of these bordering practices were set up, after the so-called “migration crisis” of 2015, some of these potential threats are now considered as a constant, demanding the maintenance of heightened measures, such as border control with another EU member-state. Importantly, narratives concerning border controls include these border controls as an essential element of an integrated migration management strategy.

**Migrant integration policies** could in the end contribute to migrants’ perspectives on destination countries and create narratives on life in these destination countries and in the EU more generally. These integration policies are often designed at various levels (European, national, regional and local). Many of these policies are becoming increasingly specialised and/or targeted at specific migrant groups, and their specific needs and challenges. This refining of migrant integration policies in destination countries often stems from the idea that the threats migrants pose to host societies often derive from their lack of integration in these societies. Furthermore, this idea results from the finding that third-country nationals perform less, compared to EU citizens, in employment, education and



social inclusion, and more often live in poverty. Perceived threats related to the lack of integration are ongoing radicalisation and a rise in criminal activities. This also led to some initiatives to prepare migrants before departure (e.g., language preparation, or professional training), when taking up a job or reunifying with their families. This is facilitated by the use of social media and the use of technologies, during different processes of the migration trajectories and after arrival in the destination country. Finally, some initiatives are undertaken to prevent some threats to migrants in the host society, such as discrimination and hate speech.

The policy analysis of D2.3 further shows that **return policies** are mainly designed to correspond to irregular migration and streamline the dynamics between countries of origin, transit and destination. This is due to the fact that irregular migration itself is often seen as a security and a symbolic threat to these host countries, and increases migrants' vulnerabilities and exposure to exploitative informal economies and criminal networks. Analogue to border policies, these return policies depend on the cooperation between states. Measures to facilitate return decisions are designed to counter threats related to irregular migration and migrants' involvement in criminal activities. Some countries even advocate the repatriation of "undesirable" individuals who are considered to pose a security threat to host countries. In many EU countries, voluntary return programmes aim to give an incentive to migrants to return to their countries of origin by providing additional financial resources and offering reintegration programs for (rejected) asylum seekers and other migrants.

Finally, **policies addressing human trafficking** are approached from mainly two perspectives. The first perspective approaches human trafficking from penal law. Building further on the Palermo Protocol (UN Anti-trafficking protocol), the fight against human trafficking can be seen as a way to ensure security. The second perspective approaches human trafficking from a human rights perspective. In this line of policy measures, there has been a shift from penal, to the protection of victims and to the prevention of trafficking. One of the leading initiatives is that, following the European Directive 2011/36/EU, the EU member states have adopted and implemented anti-trafficking legislation at the national level that strives to combat and prevent human trafficking. In the context of migration, human trafficking should be prevented by reporting victims of trafficking found in asylum application systems and declare organised criminal groups abusing asylum procedures. Also outside the EU, anti-trafficking policies are in place. A wide range of initiatives have been undertaken, such as the use of a holistic approach and awareness campaigns in Kosovo, awareness campaigns to stop abusing children to beg in Algeria, informational booklets in Egypt or social work programmes to address forced labour in Tunisia (cf. deliverable D2.3).

### 3.2 Security related policies

Security related policies are in many cases designed for the entire population. Nevertheless, some of these policies disproportionately impact migrant groups compared to other groups, or specifically target migrants, such as criminality among migrant groups. Here, we mainly focus on policies addressing criminality among migrants and policies addressing violent extremism and radicalisation. For instance, in the UK, new policies are developed that target all kinds of migrants (non-UK citizens) with a criminal background and relate to refusal of entry, permission to remain and deportation. In Belgium, new policies focus on petty crimes of migrants, such as shoplifting, to start deportation procedures.

Developing **policies addressing criminality among migrants**, and in particular irregular migrants, has been put high on the political agenda by many governments. The threat that criminal activities pose to public security and economic activities may be straightforward, however, the responses to address

these threats are not necessarily in line with the nature and severity of the threat. In these policies, criminal acts are related to detention and deportation. According to EU rules, deportation is only possible when the offender poses a severe, genuine threat, but these regulations do not specify which type of behaviour can be considered as a serious threat. Furthermore, intelligence led enforcement of immigration laws and rules aim to tackle involvement with organized crime groups, fraud and deception.

**Policies addressing violent extremism and radicalisation** are lately frequently linked to migration after a series of terrorist attacks in Europe. Consequently, many debates discussed and hinted relationship between migration and terrorist threats. Not only host societies, but also migrants are seen as threatened, due to their vulnerable position in society which makes them also more vulnerable for extremist propaganda (spread by social media). Several European countries developed policies and mechanisms to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. Some countries, like Belgium, focused on religious speeches as a way to prevent hatred speeches and reduce recruitment of people with a migrant background in extremist groups. Also outside the EU, policies are set up to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism.

### 3.3 Technology, social media and information policies

Two types of policies can be distinguished: **ICT policies** and **information policies**. When looking at an overview of **ICT policies**, countries have set up joint databases (e.g., National General Database (BNG) in Belgium; Central Register of Foreign Nationals (AZR) in Germany), involving distinct institutions and ministries (at various levels), in order to use all the potential of technologies, to counter threats posed related to the lack of information on migrants' criminal records and perceived threat to public security. Additionally, **information policies** and campaigns have been used to "rectify" narratives on European life and to inform migrants about the dangers they undertake to reach Europe, such as the Integrated Communities Strategy Action Plan in the UK. These information campaigns have also been used to facilitate or ensure the success of migrant integration processes in host societies by providing information about asylum rights and procedures, creating awareness on vulnerable groups. For example, as part of the hostile environment policies, the UK government designed information campaigns such as the "Go Home" vans", which toured areas with high immigrant populations with slogans recommending that irregular migrants should "go home or face arrest". Though it ran in 2013 and was stopped after a month due to public outcry, it is a good example of information campaign that overtly displays the narrative of irregular migrants as threats and that is used as an internal bordering strategy. Other information campaigns should be seen as dissuasion campaigns through social media and aim to prevent migrants from reaching particular destinations.

### 3.4 Policy measures directed at perceptions on migration

Recently, the rise in securitization of migration in Europe and beyond seems to have shaped the common understanding of potential threats related to migration. Furthermore, this securitization trend has called for a more defensive and strict approach informing policymaking in- and outside the EU. This securitization trend is relevant to note for future research in the PERCEPTIONS project as this securitisation framework has changed the perceptions of measures, policies or operations that were once perceived as extreme, unjustified and inhumane and normalised these measures. Moreover, the impact of the securitisation of migration applies to different stages of people's migration journey.

**In the area of asylum**, especially the large number or flow of migrants coming to Europe has been seen as alarming, as these large numbers are considered to put the stability of the destination countries

under pressure and the capacity to host asylum seekers would become insufficient or too costly. Especially so-called ‘abusive practices’ concerning asylum procedures have been marked as a threat. To limit the risk of such ‘abusive practices’ countries like Belgium and Germany, for instance, measures have speed-up the asylum procedures in an attempt to reduce the associated costs significantly. This securitization approach could have both positive and negative side effects for asylum seekers (e.g., some asylum seekers have faster replies; but also give them less measures to respond to negative responses). Despite these side effects, it was not the main rationale to design these policies. Despite these side-effects, it was not the main rationale to design these policies. In Tunisia, asylum seekers that entered the country illegally are even sanctioned and treated as offenders, as they did not cross the borders in a legal way. Hence, those in detention are not able to reach UNHCR in order to submit their asylum claims, which is a strong disincentive for prospective asylum seekers.

**Measures addressing irregular migration** have been put to the fore as well, especially since ‘irregular migration’ as such is perceived as a threat. Two types of measures have been implemented: gatekeeping and fencing policies, which can both be categorised as external (i.e., when entering the country) and internal (i.e., concerning residence in the immigrant country) (cf. Vogel, 2016). Gatekeeping measures aim to check the eligibility to access the territory or to be eligible for other rights that come along with accessing the territory. Hence, gatekeeping measures are mainly external. Nevertheless, internal gatekeeping refers to procedures directed to prevent access to obtaining a particular legal status or permission, employment opportunities, housing, health care or welfare support. Fencing approaches aim to stop the prevalence of irregular migration. The external dimension of these fencing approaches refers to border controls outside ports of entry. The internal dimension hereof includes police controls and labour market inspections. The previously mentioned measures also overlap with measures taken in the **area of border control**. Besides, border management is implemented through cooperation between countries’ homologue institutions. In some of these policies, also resources are given to third countries to facilitate border management.

In some cases, **policies oriented at migrant integration** have been ‘accused’ of attracting more migrants. However, as shown by numerous statistical reports on a wide variety of domains (e.g., employment, education, housing, health, etc.), migrants and people with a migrant background are still worse off compared to people without any migration background. Nevertheless, some destination countries have set up different policies that aim to facilitate migrant integration, for instance, by rewarding integration efforts (and this works incentive-based) or by asking migrants to ‘proof’ their successful integration in the host society, thereby putting the responsibility for integration on the migrant and thus failing to put into practice the common conception of integration as a two-way process that also requires efforts from the receiving society. This is for instance the case in Belgium where non-EU foreigners have to demonstrate their willingness to integrate in order to keep their residence permit.

As mentioned before, some **return policies** are said to restore the stability of a destination country, by encouraging voluntary return for those who are able and willing to do so, or by deporting by force those with criminal records who are considered a risk to the public order. In addition to what has been mentioned earlier, policies on the **combatting and prevention of human trafficking** are being executed through anti-trafficking legislation. Apart from the prevention and controlling of human trafficking, some measures also aim to address the demand for goods or services that are produced or offered through exploitation or trafficking of human beings. This way, policies aim to disrupt a chain, and reduce the benefits that accompany human trafficking and smuggling.

## 4 Threats perceived by security practitioners, policymakers and civil society organisations

By including institutional actors and their perceptions on migration and associated perceived threats, the PERCEPTIONS project aims to fill in one of the gaps in the prevailing academic literature on this topic. The type of perceived threats changes according to the actors who produced it. While academics and think tanks seem to focus on a wide range of aspects related to security in broad terms, documents produced by security practitioners have a more specialised focus, and reports from civil society organisations pay more attention to human trafficking and the vulnerable position of groups such as migrant women and children. Also, because of the large potential for new ICT technologies, the inclusion of reports on the use of ICT in security issues and ICT as a threat is necessary as it can be used by organised crime and human trafficking as well as by host societies. Furthermore, there is a clear **security-migration nexus** present in prevailing narratives impacting how people perceive threats. When looking at how migration is related to security-related policy areas, two main themes emerge: perceived threats related to violent radicalisation and terrorism as well as border control and management. Additionally, we have also included minor, serious and organised crime, as it received great attention in academic literature, and human smuggling and trafficking, because it increasingly worries migrants and becomes a problem.

### 4.1 Phrasing of threats

When starting from the systematic literature review of PERCEPTIONS deliverable D2.2, the phrasing of the threats requires some attention, starting with the references that are made to the largest threat for migrants, namely **'life'**. This threat is often associated with illegal border crossing over sea and over land, and in most of these documents reviewed in D2.4 portrayed as avoidable, if coordination across countries or rescue operations would have been set up or better supported. To a lesser extent, but still noticeable, death is seen as a threat for migrants who need to live in horrible conditions or become part of gangs. **'Deportation and detention'** are considered to be a threat for migrants, both for the ways in which these practices are executed as for the final outcomes. Deportation diminishes or hinders migration objectives, and is seen as threat as it makes migrants more vulnerable for exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, forcing people to return to their region of origin may bring along additional threats. Detention yields the risk of putting migrants in difficult living conditions and bereaves them from their freedom. In addition, deportation and detention are seen to, for instance, increase the likelihoods to develop extremist ideas, violent radicalisation in prisons and become part or subject of terrorist organisations. This yields the risk of developing mental health issues, including self-harm, and suicide (Athwal, 2015; Canning, 2017; Cohen, 2008; No Deportation, 2015). Finally, also outside the EU, for instance in Libya, the situation in detention centres can be seen as a threat to migrants. Despite the fact that discrimination is a driver of migration, **'discrimination'** is mainly perceived as a threat in the host societies. Different types of discrimination are referred to, such as racism and xenophobia. Furthermore, migrants are frequently confronted with (mainly negative) prejudices and stereotyping (e.g., seen as potential terrorists, etc.). **'Violence and abuse'** are threats often coincide with other threats, such as discrimination or human trafficking. **'Violent radicalisation and terrorism'** is both perceived to be a threat for the host society and the migrants themselves. Especially in reports in destination countries, many reports refer to the complexity of the multiple causal factors related to violent radicalisation and terrorism. Larger groups of migrants are even

perceived to increase this threat, as they are harder to control and monitor. In a similar vein, **‘domestic violent extremism’**<sup>1</sup> is mentioned, that do not harm larger groups, but give rise to more extremist ideas concerning migrants and could lead to xenophobia. **‘Minor, serious and organised crime’** is frequently associated by host societies to be related to migration, as the latter gives rise to drug, human trafficking networks, prostitution, and increased vulnerabilities of migrants to participate in crime. **‘Economic threats’** are seen as one of the oldest, soft threats perceived by many citizens, politicians and policymakers in host countries. Migrants are perceived to be an economic threat, as they can jeopardize the functioning or put a burden on the welfare state, public budgets, and cost a lot of money due to the investments in integration programmes and so on. These threats are not necessarily linked to newly arriving migrant groups, but also apply to migrant groups who have already spent a longer period of time in the host country. **‘Civil unrest’** or political instability can be the result of migrants’ dissatisfaction with ongoing policies and the government. **‘Health problems and diseases’** are often seen as a threat for host societies in the documents, in the form of bringing new diseases to Europe, but certainly also apply for migrants during their migration journey and arrival in host society<sup>2</sup>. **‘Human smuggling and trafficking’** are often studied together, although they have distinct meanings. They are frequently discussed together, because they both give rise to organised crime and new businesses. Associated with human smuggling and trafficking, you have the threat **‘corruption’**, that happens when state officials allow criminals to operate freely and turn a blind eye to their businesses. Similarly, corruption also occurs when border police or coastguards allow criminal organisations to cross their borders with large groups of migrants. **‘Environmental threats’** in the countries of origin have recently been as a reason to migrate, threatening people’s living conditions. As revealed from the document analyses, despite the large threats posed by environmental changes urging people to migrate, certain host societies interpret environmental threats related to migration, in terms of the significant increase in pollution and garbage due to overcrowded refugee camps. This shows the lack of reflexivity by host societies in terms of the threats they perceive and the failure to approach environmental threats from multiple perspectives. Finally, more threats are mentioned that do not fall into these categories and for instance stress vulnerabilities/threats to women and children/unaccompanied minors when migrating, lack of solidarity and disturbing social cohesion.

## 4.2 Categorisation of threats

When organising the **perceived threats by type of organisation who authored/published the report**, authors, most reports focus on the threats of the host societies, which can be traced down to large worries about violent radicalisation and terrorism. For migrants themselves, deportation and detention are considered to be the largest threats in these documents. When considering migrants and host societies together, human smuggling and trafficking are seen as largest threats. Interestingly, there are differences in focus according to the authors that produce the reports Academic institutions and think tanks focus primarily on threats for host communities and host countries and migrants, paying a lot of attention to violent radicalisation and terrorism stand out and human smuggling and

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<sup>1</sup> Domestic violent extremism is sometimes difficult to differentiate from violent radicalisation and terrorism. In this case, domestic violent extremism does not imply the link of the individual with violent actions of terrorist organisations, but it can harm both migrants and host countries as citizens can become extremists over the issue of migration and right-wing parties’ importance increase. This could refer to xenophobic or exclusionary measures that negatively influence social cohesion. (cf. D2.4)

<sup>2</sup> The document analyses are conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic and this ‘health threat’ may undergo significant changes in future reports (cf. Conclusion).

trafficking. NGOs mainly focus on threats posed to migrants during their migration trajectory and in the host country, and in particular to detention and deportation, violence and abuse and discrimination. This is similar to governmental and policy-making bodies, albeit that they give less attention to violence and abuse compared to civil society and NGOs. Finally, security practitioners, law enforcement agencies and border agencies mainly perceive those issues linked to minor, serious and organised crime as threats related to migration, followed by violent radicalisation and terrorism, and human smuggling and trafficking.

With regard to **perceived threats by level of organisation**, the level of organisation matters, given the different responsibilities, issues they are confronted with and the power they have to change this. Reports from international organisations focus on a wide array of threats, and especially on detention and deportation. Due to the geographic scope, they refer to all possible threats affecting migrants, host societies and their combination. European organisations focus more on minor, serious and organised crime, followed to a lesser extent with a focus on human trafficking and smuggling and violent radicalisation and terrorism. Additionally, national organisations concentrate on issues related to violent radicalisation, and to a lesser extent to minor, serious and organised crime. Finally, regional/local organisations deal with human smuggling and trafficking as well as with violent radicalisation and terrorism.

When examining the **threats according to the countries affected**, we should note that given the objectives of the PERCEPTIONS project, the reports focus on migration to Europe. Hence, most of the threats are perceived to apply to continental Europe. One country, namely Greece, stood out, in terms of the number of perceived threats, which can be explained by the border position with Turkey, the route through the Balkans and the diversity of migrants it receives from various countries. After continental Europe, also the MENA region (the Middle East and Northern African countries) are a locus of attention, which could be related to the Mediterranean Sea as a transit route to Europe.

When classifying **threats according to the type of countries affected, their place in the migration trajectory in terms country of origin, transit or destination** matters considerably. This is of course understandable given the fact that migrants face distinct challenges and vulnerabilities throughout their migration trajectory. Countries of origin and transit mostly see threats that affect migrants and host countries, such as human smuggling and trafficking. Additionally, countries of origin also refer to domestic violent extremism in destination countries influencing both migrants and locals, as well as detention and deportation. This can be understood from the finding that these countries worry about (potential) migrant's futures in their destination countries and the migration process itself. Transit countries as such are concerned with the migration trajectory itself. Destination countries mainly focus on threats related to their territory, and mainly focus on violent radicalisation and terrorism, and minor, serious and organised crime.

Focusing on **threats created in different security policy areas**, provides a view on how the threats are perceived to be connected. Reports on border security deal with border-related issues, such as identification, detention or stay in reception centres for asylum seekers, as well as some associated issues such as corruption and power abuse by border police, illegal detentions and forced-return, problems related to border policies and misuse of the asylum system. When discussing these issues, especially women and even more unaccompanied minors are considered vulnerable to these threats. Border security reports also focus on the passing of borders of migrants assisted by human smugglers and traffickers. In addition, when examining reports on law enforcement policies, many threats posed



by migrants are related to the security of the host countries. Interesting to note is that border issues and migration have been the centre of the development of the European migration agenda.

Although not included in the previous deliverables, we should reflect upon how to categorise COVID-19 as a threat, as it is changing the narratives of migrants and people living outside Europe (e.g., Africa, Shiferaw & Mucchi, 2020). The geographic spreading and location of the COVID-19 pandemic is changing existing ideas of thinking about Europe and this cannot be ignored in our further research.

### 4.3 Threats related to ICT, social and digital media

The use of ICT can play a double role during migration projects. On the one hand, **it can add to the organisation of displacement procedures, help to provide better information about the destination country, connect migrants with each other, share information about migration routes and risks associated with migration**, mainly when it reduces risks associated with death, violent and abuse, and deal with problems faced in the host society, such as discrimination. Important here is the framing of posts on migration trajectories. While failed or distressed migration journeys are hardly shared on social media, successful journeys or arrivals are often very popular, and accompanied with messages of gratitude (Szczepanikova & Van Criekeing, 2018). At the national and international level, new technologies open up new communication opportunities, ways to impact public opinion and the development of extensive social networks. These technologies help to support the creation of digital communication platforms and bring countries of origin and destination closer together.

On the other hand, **social and digital media can also worsen the conditions of displacement and associated threats**. At the national and international level, the digital era also creates new sources of power and global competitiveness. While many reports do not explicitly mention the use of ICT, social and digital media, when they do, they mainly refer to threats such as violent radicalisation and terrorism, human smuggling and trafficking, discrimination, minor and serious crime, unaccompanied minors and cultural threats. Nonetheless, it remains important to also consider the role of social and digital media as a threat for migrants as it could cause issues of surveillance and lack of privacy and hence, threaten migrants' freedom. An example of the use of technology in relation to the criminalisation of asylum seekers in the UK is the debit card on which they receive their weekly allowance since 2017, and which, according to various media and organisations, is sometimes used to track if purchases are made out of their dispersal area, which can be used to cut their support (The Independent, 2019; Right to Remain, 2019; Poggrund, 2019).

In general, the use of new technologies is a two-edged sword, in a sense, that on the one hand, they could bring people and countries closer together, making the world a smaller place, and spread more information. On the other hand the misuse of these new tools could distort perceptions on migration, exaggerate threats related to migration and facilitate the setting up of criminal networks. Future research should consider also new usages of ICT technologies and how they pose a threat to privacy, misinform people (i.e., fake news), or use such technologies to distort political opinions and decision making. This is for example the case when it comes to troll farms, which are institutionalised groups of internet trolls who aim to interfere in political opinions and decision-making. The latter is for instance the case through the reporting of opponents' expressions on social media as 'inappropriate' or by posting a lot of random information, which masks the initial message.



## 5 Good practices

In general, it is very hard to fully categorise practices to be “good” or not, since they should always be evaluated in light of preconditions that need to be met and insights should be given on how these practices are implemented. As noted in D2.5, ‘**good practices**’ are defined as ‘those practices, measures, tools and strategies for (counter-)acting on threats caused by narratives or perceptions and ‘misperceptions’ of migrants about Europe, taking in mind that ‘misperceptions’ are always a matter of perspective’. Focusing on Juzwiak et al. (2014), six criteria can be distinguished to define a good practice oriented at the integration of migrants, refugees and asylum: practicality, innovation, successfulness, transferability, sustainability and strategic fit. Similarly, Mateus and Pinho (2018) characterised good practices in terms of: technical feasibility, efficacy and success, respect of the human rights and equity framework, replicability and adaptability, inherent participation, network coordination, gender sensitiveness, innovation, awareness, education, employment, entrepreneurship, governance, housing and settlement, political and public participation, social network and welcoming. These latter characteristics were also applied to this project.

Despite the difficulties to define good practices, it is important to gain insights in what has been done for future research and policymaking, and to better prepare possible solutions. Deliverable D2.5 did so by systematically mapping out all existing practices, measures, tools, models, and strategies for (counter-)acting (directly or indirectly) on threats and expectations caused by a mismatch of expectation and reality due to different narratives on behalf of migrants. Currently, it seems that most practices are developed to address a specific threat posed either to host countries/border security or to migrants themselves. Based on a dataset of in total 149 relevant sources that were gathered by different members of the PERCEPTIONS consortium, it becomes clear that practices that were active from 2015 until 2020 (mainly 2017-2019), are situated at distinct levels of governance (international, European, national, regional and local) and designed and implemented by a wide variety of stakeholders, including governmental bodies, NGOs and civil society organisations, public authorities, LEAs and border control agencies, the general public and migrants themselves. Interesting to note here is that 20% of these practices also proposed some kind of training/knowledge sharing to other relevant stakeholders as a counterstrategy, but also included awareness-raising to migrants on various issues and the design of new integration procedures. Additionally, 25% of practices were project-based funded and 40% used new technologies (e.g., mobile applications, e-learning platforms, etc.). Most practices, however, used a combination of strategies.

Overall, the good practices included in the dataset have been divided into **six broad categories**: 1) migrant integration in the host country (education, employment, housing, cultural integration), 2) tackling radicalisation, hate speech, extremist behaviours and/or terrorism, 3) review of media representations of migrants and other fake news, 4) awareness raising on the migrant journey and the risks associated with irregular migration routes (human trafficking, migrant smuggling, deaths, etc.) along with policies to tackle them, 5) addressing negative public perceptions racism and xenophobia towards migrants in the host country, and 6) protection of human rights of migrants and protection against other threats related to them in the host country (policies). Below, we briefly discuss the good practices collected according to these six categories.

First, **migrant integration in the host country (education, employment, housing, health, and cultural integration)** has been put high on the agenda, given its inclusion in the Sustainable Development Agenda (UNSDG, 2019), and the fact that, in theory, integration is seen as a two-way acculturation

process, between migrants and host societies (IOM, 2020). This first topic is especially relevant as ‘initiatives, practices, measures, and tools around migrant integration in the host countries can directly and/or indirectly enhance the perceptions migrants have for the latter’. The procedures focused on the integration of migrants in each country further shape the narratives of migrants around host countries and can affect the truthfulness of the stories migrants share among themselves and are important to include for awareness-raising and the setting of expectations before migration to Europe. Most of these practices seem to be located at the national level. However, some practices also included online-learning platforms, digital portfolio of personal achievements, combined strategies including welcome cafés, training manuals, social networking and physical activities, buddy system and co-housing, etc.

Second, practices **tackling radicalization, hate speech, extremist behaviours and/or terrorism** are inextricably linked with the threats that are caused due to migrants’ false narratives about Europe. In most cases, these issues require coordinated actions and are therefore situated mainly at the international, European, and national level. One influential policy comes from the EU, which has strengthened its strategic communication with common narratives and factual representation of conflicts. Moreover, in 2011, it has established the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) (European Commission, Migration and Home affairs, 2020). Examples of practices include Counter-Islamophobia Kit (CIK) project, educational and training sessions with young people and educators of Muslim youth and/or young people with an immigrant background to confront ethnic-nationalist ideologies, clips against hate crime appointed to stakeholders and crime prevention policies.

Third, practices focusing on the **review of media representations of migrants and other ‘fake news’** are mainly important due to the significant rise in fake news over the last five years (cf. google trends). Important here is that ‘fake news’ itself mainly refers to ‘deliberate attempts and distortion of news, the use of filtered versions to promote ideologies, confuse, sow discontent and create polarization’ (Martens et. al., 2018). In general, the listed practices do not only focus on ‘fake news’, but also on the misinformation people receive by several websites that distribute untruthful and misleading information. While misinformation may be seen as both intentional and unintentional acts, fake news is increasingly interpreted as a deliberate act of providing misinformation, which in the end, creates a more toxic environment for information provision. Despite influential initiatives of the European Commission to counteract misinformation, most practices entail some kind of journalism where platforms are developed to give space to the voices of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers themselves to be represented and counteract narratives that are used against them or to portray them as a threat. Additionally, these practices also focus on the formulation of ethical codes that journalists have to follow when dealing with such phenomena. Examples of these practices include e-Media toolkits, online databases and labs, workshops, codes of practice and handbook for journalists, online campaigns etc.

A fourth category of practices includes those focusing on **awareness raising on the migrant journey and the risks associated with irregular migration routes (human trafficking, migrant smuggling, deaths, etc.) along with policies to tackle them**. This awareness aims to highlight the increasing risks associated with migration trajectories over the past years, such as physical risks (e.g., boat travels, trucks), financial risks (e.g., medical risks, human smugglers, etc.), and the other risks that affect specific population groups, such as women and children (e.g., physical abuse). Over the past 10 years, the European Commission has already developed policies that aim to reduce risks associated with such dangerous migration trajectories, for instance by setting up the Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling

(European Commission, 2015). Two types of actions were set up: one focusing on raising migrants' awareness of the risks associated with undertaking such migration journeys, and one focusing on policy development and changes in legislation, addressing the threats of human smuggling, trafficking, and deaths of migrants. Most practices are developed by governmental and policy-making bodies, followed by civil society and NGOs. Examples include campaigns, communication strategies, mobile cinema screenings, theatre plays, etc.

The fifth category of practices **addresses negative public perceptions, racism, and xenophobia towards migrants in the host country** (cf. also the second category). While over the last decades, many European initiatives are set up to counteract racism and xenophobia, increasingly initiatives are undertaken that focus on specific target groups, such as religious groups, etc. Most of them are set up by civil society organizations and NGOs. These practices include workshops, online platforms for story and data sharing, campaigns, and art-driven programmes and the writing of reports.

Finally, the sixth category comprises practices focusing on the **protection of human rights of migrants and against other threats related to them in the host country (policies)**. These practices are important as the human rights of many migrants are often jeopardized during their migration journey. Many of these practices refer to policy practices and recommendations for changes, such as the fair distribution of responsibilities for EU member states to provide practical, humanitarian (equipment and personnel) and financial assistance to the countries of first entry. These practices also refer to providing assistance for hosting migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Recommendations focus on the compliance of state authorities with their international obligations, the conditions and infrastructures at the reception centres and how to deal with vulnerabilities (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic). Practices include photographic exhibitions, policy recommendations, online platforms, etc.

Concluding, the overview of these practices concerning misinformation and misperceptions of migrants coming to Europe demonstrate that, while some practices address threats perceived by migrants, most practices seem to be directed at a specific threat posed to either the host countries/borders or to migrants themselves. More research and documentation is needed to assess the impact and effectiveness of these policies and measures. While doing so, one should not only pay attention to the impact evaluation but also assess how these practices further impact different target groups differently and the impact depends on cultural differences, historical, socio-economic background and the general country context.

## PART II – The migration context in 13 research countries

In the PERCEPTIONS project, research is conducted in 13 countries. In Part II of this Baseline Report, we aim to give some background information on the migration context in each of these countries, based on publicly available statistics and literature of each of the involved countries. This overview should not be read as a broad and in-depth analysis of the different national contexts, but rather is intended to provide some basic contextual information that may further guide the empirical research, analytical efforts and other work that will be developed in the project.

The countries where research is conducted have been chosen based on their geographical location – including EU countries with and without EU external borders as well non-EU countries – and are intended to cover the three categories along the migration journey, i.e. countries of origin, transit and destination. The countries are (in alphabetical order): Algeria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kosovo, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, and the United Kingdom. While Morocco was not initially included, it has been added as a research country because of its relevant geographic location with its transboundary area of the Ceuta and Melilla Spanish enclaves and Moroccan cities of Castillejos-Tétouan and Nador; where border crossings typically account for half of all rejections of overland border crossings into the EU. Moreover, and similar to the other EU-neighbouring countries, Morocco has traditionally been an emigration country that more recently became a key country of transit or even destination, mainly for sub-Saharan citizens. Indeed, the brief country overviews illustrate that whether a particular country is predominantly a country of origin, transit or destination is not static and can change over time, as reflected in the literature review deliverable D2.2. Furthermore, the three categories are not mutually exclusive as countries – and especially those that are located at the EU external borders – can be both a place of origin for some and of transit/destination for others, while countries that are typically considered countries of transit may turn into countries of destination for many.

The country-specific provided below follows the same structure for all of the 13 countries, and is the result of a joint effort of various PERCEPTIONS partners with relevant experience and knowledge of the local context. For each country, we first outline the country's institutional structure, highlighting relevant policy-level(s) for immigration, international protection, migrant integration as well as border control, and briefly describe the countries' recent migration history. Furthermore, for each country, some key developments since 2015 are empathized, including data on the flows of refugees and asylum seekers as well as reflections of the impact of migration on society and politics.

In general, the period beginning in 2015 was characterized by high numbers of people arriving in the EU via the Mediterranean Sea or overland, which is often referred to as the 'migration crisis' or 'refugee crisis'. Even though the large majority of refugees are received by countries outside of the EU, this so-called 'crisis' marked a change in the political discourse across many European countries that led to an increasing securitization of migration and normalization of policies and measures that were once perceived as extreme, unjust or inhumane (see also deliverables D2.2, D2.3 and D2.4). The PERCEPTIONS project mainly focuses on this post-2015 period, but at the same time also acknowledges that recent developments are always embedded in a broader context that includes historic movements and displacements of people, colonial legacies and structural inequalities.

## 6 Country-specific information

### 6.1 EU countries

#### BELGIUM

*Authors: UANTWERPEN*

##### **Institutional setting**

Belgium is a federal state with a complex institutional structure in which policy responsibilities and decision-making powers are divided between governments at the federal level, the level of the three (territorial) regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels Capital Region) and the level of the three (language) communities (Flemish community, French-speaking community and German-speaking community). Issues related to immigration and international protection are a federal responsibility, while integration is mainly a competence of the different communities. Economic migration used to be a shared responsibility between the federal state and the different regions but has been largely transferred to the regions and communities in 2014 as part of the sixth and most recent state reform (EMN Belgium, 2019). However, the federal state remains responsible for the entry to the territory and the right to reside in Belgium, as well as for issuing work permits for migrants with a temporary residence permit for reasons other than 'employment', e.g. in the case of asylum seekers (EMN Belgium, 2019). Issues related to border security are a federal responsibility and border controls are carried out by the federal police in cooperation with the border control department of the Immigration Office (ECRE, 2018). Belgium is part of the Schengen territory, and most people seeking international protection arrive in the country after so-called 'secondary movements' from another European country to which they arrived first (EMN Belgium, 2019). In this case, they are not subject to border controls when entering Belgium.

##### **Short migration overview**

In recent history, Belgium has been predominantly an immigration country or a 'country of destination'. Immigrants have come, and continue to come, mainly from neighbouring and other EU countries (Myria, 2019; Lafleur et al., 2019). However, significant groups of immigrants from outside the EU started arriving especially in the wake of World War II, when the state began to actively recruit workers from abroad to fill low-paid labour-market demands in the heavy industry and coal mine sector (Lafleur et al., 2019; Geldof, 2016). At first, these so-called 'guest workers' mainly came from southern European countries. Later, in the 1960s, Belgium also began recruiting workers from outside the EU, mainly targeting Morocco and Turkey. While this labour migration was initially considered to be temporary, many ended up permanently settling in the country and became Belgian citizens. The economic recession of the 1970s resulted in an official 'migration stop', putting an end to the practice of 'guest workers'; however, immigration continued, mainly through family reunification and political asylum (Lafleur et al., 2019; Geldof, 2016). At the same time, Belgium's colonial policy of exploitation and segregation in what is today the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (since the 1880s) and Rwanda and Burundi (after World War I) – which implicated forced displacement, abuses, and deaths of millions of people – did not involve active recruitment of its citizens, and their presence in Belgium remained rather limited until the 1980s and later (Lafleur, 2019; Demart, 2013). In the period 1980s-2000s, Belgium saw a rise in asylum seekers as a result of geopolitical conflicts and human rights

violations in various regions and after the enlargement of the EU, immigration from Eastern European furthermore increased significantly (Geldof, 2016).

Today, many people in Belgium, and especially in its larger cities, have ‘roots in migration’ with many different countries of origin. In Brussels, for instance, around two-thirds of the population has a migration background, while in the country’s second-largest city (Antwerp) this is the case for almost half of its inhabitants (Geldof, 2016). At the same time, Belgium also stands out as a country in which migrants and people with a migration background face significant barriers in crucial life domains such as education and employment and are highly overrepresented in the un(der)employed statistics and have a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the native population (OECD, 2010; Burggraeve & Piton, 2016).

### **Key developments since 2015**

In 2015, Belgium saw a significant increase in the number of asylum applications (35,476 applications compared to 17,213 in 2015). These asylum applications mainly came from Iraqis (7,772), Syrians (7,554) and Afghans (7,099) (CGVS, 2016). While Belgium saw the highest number of applications since the year 2000, asylum seekers still only represented a small part of immigrants entering the country each year (Burggraeve & Piton, 2016). In the years after 2015, asylum applications decreased again to 18,710 in 2016, slightly increasing to 19,688 in 2017, 22,565 in 2018 and 27,505 in 2019 (CGVS, 2019). This decrease was mainly as a result of more restrictive rules and legislation (e.g. the limitation of asylum registrations per day, dissuasion campaigns, etc.) (Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, 2019). Of all decisions made in a given year, the percentage of applicants that received a positive decision (i.e. granting of refugee status or subsidiary protection) went from around 50 per cent between 2015 and 2018 (with a slight increase to 57.7% in 2016) to a mere 36.9 per cent in 2019 (CGVS, 2019).

In recent years, the term ‘transmigrant’ – or ‘transit migrant’ – has also become part of the vocabulary politicians and the media use when talking about issues of migration and border control (de Massol de Rebetz, 2018). While this term has no legal meaning, ‘transmigrants’ mainly concern refugees from conflict areas in Africa and the Middle-East who want to go to the United Kingdom (for a variety of reasons) and do not apply for asylum in Belgium (EMN, 2019; Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, 2019). Since the authorities claim no responsibility for refugees who do not apply for asylum in Belgium, they have no access to reception facilities and mostly end up living on the street in very precarious circumstances. It has been mainly NGOs and networks of local citizens that step in to provide these groups with food, clothing, health checks and legal advice (Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, 2019).

More generally, and similar to many other European countries, Belgium has seen a surge of the extreme right as well as increases in xenophobia, islamophobia and anti-refugee sentiment (Lafleur et al., 2019). The relatively high number - compared to other countries - of radicalised Belgian Muslims that left Belgium to fight in international conflicts in Syria and Iraq, and more recently the fear for their return, as well as the terrorist attacks of March 2016, also led to an increased focus on national security and have made the fight against radicalisation and terrorism a political priority (EMN, 2019).



## BULGARIA

*Authors: CSD*

### **Institutional setting**

In Bulgaria, border control, immigration, international protection and migrant integration are the responsibility of various state authorities, while other actors play an important role as well. This is detailed below

Border control is the primary responsibility of Border Police Chief Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, whose activity is regulated by the Law on the Ministry of the Interior of 27 June 2014 and various acts of secondary legislation. It is a specialized police structure, working in the border zone, border checkpoints, international airports and seaports, internal sea waters, territorial sea, border rivers, etc. Immigration is the prerogative of the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior and finds its regulation in the legislation on the work of the Ministry and, in substance, in the Law on Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria and its secondary legislation. The Migration Directorate regulates migration processes, exercises administrative control over the residence of foreigners in Bulgaria and counters irregular migration. The Migration Directorate also manages the pre-removal detention centres, where foreigners are placed before their return to their home countries.

Regarding international protection, relevant proceedings and the reception of persons seeking international protection are among the powers of the State Agency for Refugees, which is regulated in the Law on Asylum and Refugees from 1 December 2002 and relevant secondary legislation. The Agency manages reception centres, where foreigners seeking international protection are placed. Integration of foreigners having received asylum or international protection takes place under a special regulation<sup>3</sup>, stipulating an integration agreement with the mayor of a specific municipality willing to accept the foreigner. Responsibilities are also assigned to the State Agency for Refugees, which facilitates the process of agreeing and creates the foreigner's integration profile, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Education and Science, which facilitate foreigners' access to, respectively, employment, social services and education, and the Ministry of Health, which facilitates the access to healthcare. The regulation on integration manages formally the participation of international organizations and NGOs in migrants' integration. In fact, what is noticed is that integration in Bulgaria has so far been mainly NGO-led, with organizations providing various services to foreigners and facilitating their interaction with institutions and access to employment, healthcare, education, etc. (Ilcheva et al., 2019).

Strategically, the inter-institutional National Council leads the state's effort in the above areas on Migration, Borders, Asylum and Integration, which encompasses all the above institutions and other government ministries, the state agencies of intelligence and national security, anti-trafficking authorities.

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<sup>3</sup> Regulation on the Conditions and Order for Concluding, Executing and Terminating Integration Agreements of Foreigners who have been given Asylum or International Protection, 19 July 2017, <https://dv.parliament.bg/DVWeb/showMaterialDV.jsp?idMat=116399>



### Short migration overview

Two instances of Bulgaria accepting refugees in the period between the two World Wars have been widely cited: the Armenians seeking to escape the genocide in Turkey, and the White Guard Russians fleeing the Bolshevik revolution (Krasteva, 2019). Krasteva further divides contemporary Bulgarian migration into five global periods: i) communist period, ii) post-communist period, iii) 'European period', iv) period of migrant/refugee crisis and v) period of post-migrant crisis. The communist period relates to the post-war period to 1989, characterised by strong politicisation of migration policy and very strong control over both emigration and immigration. Some significant immigrant groups included students from the then so-called 'Third World'; citizens of the Soviet Union, working in industry and education or spouses of Bulgarian citizens and Vietnamese migrant workers. The post-communist period began in the 1990s to until the early 2010s, when markets and globalisation drove immigration. The 'European' period started in the mid-2010s until the migrant/refugee 'crisis' and saw an increased number of applications for Bulgarian citizenship because of Bulgaria's EU membership. During the period of migrant/refugee 'crisis' between 2014 and 2016, Bulgaria became more clearly aware of its role as an external border of the EU. This resulted in a change in political discourse, allegedly phrasing refugees not as a humanitarian but as a security issue. Finally, during the period of post-migrant 'crisis', 2017–present, a trend of populist securitisation and its adoption by mainstream parties continues, regardless of the significant decrease in migration flows.

From 1993, when Bulgaria ratified the UN Refugee Convention and the attendant Protocol, until 2012 the country faced a relatively low refugee inflow with an annual average of 1000 asylum applications. Significant change in this trend took place with the increase in the inflow of persons seeking international protection mainly due to the wave of displaced persons fleeing from the conflict in Syria and Iraq. (Mancheva & Ivanova, 2017).

### Key developments since 2015

In the period 2014–2016 Bulgaria experienced an unprecedented number of around 20.000 asylum applications per year in 2015 and 2016. Since 2017, there has been a sharp decline in the number of asylum applications – down to around 3700 in 2017 and 2500 in 2018. Krasteva (2019) notes that, in terms of country of origin, the profile of asylum seekers in Bulgaria reflects the global refugee flows, with top three countries of origin being Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. However, while in 2015 there was a significant number of asylum seeking Syrians who were fleeing from the military conflict in their country and who were granted international protection, in 2016 and 2017, the largest share of international protection seekers in Bulgaria were citizens of Afghanistan, the trend continuing also in 2018 and 2019. Krasteva (2019) also notes that the asylum seekers from some of the top countries of origin – Afghans, Syrians, Iraqis, Pakistanis and Palestinians – have immigrant communities in Bulgaria, which (except for Pakistanis) are also among the largest immigrant communities from the Near and Middle East in the country. In terms of gender, while Syrian migration during the crisis was mostly made up of families, the post-crisis refugee flow is considered predominantly male.

The extreme changes in both the volume and the demographic structure of asylum-related migration has put Bulgaria into a new policy situation requiring urgent development and restructuring of the systems of reception and integration in the country (Mancheva & Ivanova, 2017). The sharp rise in the number of asylum applications found the country's reception and integration infrastructure largely unprepared, with significant number of CSOs and volunteers directly supporting the work of institutions to meet asylum seekers' basic needs. Racist and xenophobic narratives also saw a great

rise. After the initial period of difficulties, large infrastructural improvements and significant capacity building took place among asylum-related authorities and cooperation with IGOs and NGOs was largely streamlined. After the decline in the number of asylum applicants, expectations were for integration policies to be further developed and simplified. However, apart from an increase in the awareness of municipalities and employers of the opportunities of migrant integration, the overall process of migrants' settlement in society remains insufficiently structured.

## CYPRUS

*Authors: KEMEA and Caritas Cyprus*

### Institutional setting

The Republic of Cyprus is a Presidential republic located in the eastern Mediterranean and is the third largest island following the Italian islands of Sicily and Sardinia. Following the end of British colonial rule, Cyprus gained its independence on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August of 1960. Intercommunal tensions between the majority Greek Cypriots and the minority Turkish Cypriots characterized the years following independence. Despite the deployment and continued presence of a UN peacekeeping force, Turkey left the island tragically divided after a military intervention in 1974 that displaced over one-third of the island's entire population. Since then, a substantial number of Turkish troops remain on the island, which became part of the European Union in 2004. The southern part of Cyprus is under the control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. While the northern part is administered by Turkish Cypriots, it is not recognized by any country other than Turkey and the EU's rules and regulations, the 'acquis communautaire', remains suspended there (CIA World Fact Book, 2020). Trade and crossings over the "Green Line" that separate the two sides have been possible since 2003; many asylum seekers enter the Republic irregularly after arriving somewhere north of the "Green Line".

Within the Government of the Republic, border control is the responsibility of the Aliens and Immigration Unit of the Cyprus Police. It conducts necessary checks on foreigners as provided by the Aliens and Immigration Law, provides for the security of the Republic of Cyprus, primarily at the entry and exit points of the Republic (airports and seaports). Issues relating to immigration and international protection are managed by the Civil Registry and Migration Department of the Ministry of Interior (CRMD). The Asylum Service of the Ministry of Interior was established in 2004 and "coordinates and supervises the operation and management of reception and accommodation centres for applicants of international protection and their families according to the Refugee Law" (Asylum Service Republic of Cyprus, n.d.). So far, the Kofinou Reception Centre remains the only Government-operated reception centre but has been used at maximum capacity in the past two years. This has resulted in high levels of urban displacement and homelessness faced by newly arrived and even established migrants in Cyprus (UNHCR, 2018a). In response to the increase in the number of asylum applicants and the pressure to improve the haphazard reception process, a First Registration Reception Centre was opened in Kokkinotrimithia in 2019, intended to better manage the large number of arrivals by concentrating the registration and medical procedures required for an asylum application. While this centre improved some aspects of reception, most asylum seekers leave without adequate information or access to accommodation and services. As a result of this limited governmental support, civil society organizations have been offering humanitarian, legal and social support. They also provide integration services, conduct research and raise awareness on issues affecting migrants and refugees.

Regarding integration, the UNHCR and other NGOs have pushed the Cypriot authorities to establish an action plan that is yet to be implemented. As such, the integration of migrants is done with little to no

preparation of both the newly arrived and the local communities. This, coupled with the linguistic communication barriers several newly arrived migrants face (many of which are from francophone and Arabic speaking countries of origin) creates additional challenges for migrant integration (UNHCR, 2018a).

### **Short migration overview**

Cyprus has an extensive history of migration and forced displacement, having experienced two waves of migration in its recent history. The first wave was linked to large-scale emigration of Cypriots abroad in the early twentieth century in search of better standards of living. In addition, between 1960 and 1975, especially following the Turkish invasion of the island in 1974, Cypriots emigrated to countries such as the UK, the United States and Australia. However, in the 1990s, due to improved economic circumstances, this trend has been reversed and Cyprus employs many EU and third-country nationals. It also imports labour to work in sectors of the economy where there are labour shortages, for example in homes and on farms.

Between the years 2003-2007 Cyprus received asylum seekers from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ukraine, and Iran due to civil wars and conflicts in these areas, marking the first initial rise in asylum claims in Cyprus. The accession of Cyprus to the European Union in 2004 also contributed to the increase in the number of EU citizens migrating to Cyprus for work and improved living conditions. Greece especially has a strong connection to Cyprus due to the cultural, linguistic and religious commonalities between the two countries. The 2011 financial crisis and the resulting economic downturn, however, resulted in outflows from Cyprus; illustratively, in 2015, Cyprus experienced the highest rate of emigration in the EU.

### **Key developments since 2015**

During the so-called refugee 'crisis' of 2014, 1.887 new asylum applications were submitted and over 2.000 new applications were filed in 2015. The demographic composition of Cyprus has changed because of incoming migration flows with over 12% of the resident population originating from other EU countries and 7% from third countries (Crepaldi & Pepe, 2019). Over the past years, Cyprus has also witnessed a consistent rise in the number of people seeking refuge and/or asylum. In 2018, the numbers of asylum applicants almost doubled from 4.582 in 2017 to 7.761 by the end of 2018 (Droussioutou & Mathioudakis, 2019). In 2019, the numbers of first time asylum applicants seemed for double for the third year in a row to around 19.000 applicants, of which 12.258 were first time applicants (Droussioutou & Mathioudakis, 2019). In a population of approximately 1 million, this keeps Cyprus in the position of being the country with the highest number of asylum applications per capita in Europe (Droussioutou & Mathioudakis, 2019).

The flows arriving in Cyprus and the rise in the numbers can be attributed to various factors such as the ongoing conflict in Syria and the lack of routes to get to mainland EU. However, it should be noted that in 2019, Syrian nationals constituted only 25% of all asylum applicants. In 2019, other important countries of origin of asylum applicants included Georgia, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Cameroon (Droussioutou & Mathioudakis, 2019). Another important factor is the lack of a comprehensive migration policy and lack of access to long-term solutions for many migrants in Cyprus. Close to 50% of asylum applications are submitted by persons who have already been in the country on student and work visas. Furthermore, the increase in flows from West African countries, due to ongoing conflicts, poverty and trafficking have also contributed to the rise in the number of applicants but also the of vulnerable cases especially survivors of sexual and gender based violence.

Overall the Cypriot community has had a mixed response to the increase of asylum seekers in Cyprus. Though there are underlying seeds of xenophobia and racism, these have mostly not yet come to fruition. The rise in the numbers of asylum seekers has captured the attention of the Cypriot local population nationally, this has resulted in local community interest in supporting the newly arrived (UNHCR, 2018b). In March of 2020, the Council of Ministers announced some measures intended to help manage the growing numbers of asylum seekers in Cyprus. Some features of the announced plans include shortening the review period of asylum applications and shortening the time allotted for appeal before the court. The implementation of many of these measures is still pending largely due to the Covid-19 crisis (Droussiotou & Mathioudakis, 2019).

## GERMANY

*Authors: EUR and SINUS*

### Institutional setting

The federal authorities for migration governance in Germany are the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). Other federal ministries, such as the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), implement migration-related measures in their areas of jurisdiction. Day-to-day administrative services for immigrants, such as visa interviews and issuance of permits, are handled by local immigration offices (*Ausländerämter*).

The Federal Police and state police administer Border security matters, including detention and deportation. Asylum and deportation reviews are handled by administrative rather than criminal courts; however, the Federal Criminal Police is responsible for human trafficking and other serious border crimes.

A federal Commissary for Migration, Refugees and Integration advises the government concerning asylum and integration, and the Foreign Office assists in the dissemination of accurate information. However, many aspects of integration policy and practical matters of asylum support are administered on a state rather than a federal level, and detailed information on state-level policies and services is sometimes difficult to locate, especially in languages other than German. Civil society (German Red Cross, Raphaelswerk, Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Diakonie, Caritas, and many local organizations) plays an important role in disseminating information and providing asylum and integration services such as legal aid, psychological and pastoral counselling, and social and community support.

The major federally administered voluntary return programme is REAG/GARP (Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum Seekers in Germany/Government Assisted Repatriation Programme), a collaborative initiative of the BAMF and IOM that provides financial and logistical support for return migration. The StarthilfePlus programme provides supplementary assistance. Additional programmes are administered on a state and local level. Both the federal and state governments maintain bilateral agreements with certain countries of origin regarding the provision of reintegration assistance and services.

Germany has received comparatively positive ratings from migration governance monitoring programmes. The IOM Migration Governance Indicators 2018 report mentioned e.g. transparent policies, provision of basic rights and services (to legally recognised migrants), recognition of foreign qualifications, and access to residency for skilled workers as strengths and the lack of an integrated national migration policy and administrative coherence among states as weaknesses (IOM 2019). The

Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015 rates German policy as favourable or slightly favourable on the dimensions of labour market mobility, access to nationality and permanent residence, and political participation; dimensions found lacking are anti-discrimination, family reunion, education, and health (MIPEx, 2015).

### Short migration overview

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Germany was better known as a country of emigration than immigration. Industrialisation in the 1880s-1900s began to change this. From the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century on, the balance has shifted toward immigration, which has occurred in several waves. During a first wave (ca. 1944-1950) war refugees from central Europe, mostly ethnic German (*Heimatvertriebene*) but also non-German (*heimatloser Ausländer*) arrived to the country. Between 1955-1973 so-called 'guest workers' (*Gastarbeiter*) arrived from Italy, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia. During the 1980s-1990s asylum-seekers, including ethnic Germans, from Central and Eastern Europe started to arrive. The period between ca. 2005-2016, was characterized by regular labour migration and gradually increasing humanitarian migration in response to policy reforms, spiking in 2015-2016. Finally, more recently (2017-2020) there was a drop in humanitarian migration in response to tightening policies, international agreements (e.g. the EU-Turkey deal), and geopolitical shifts.

In 2015, 890,000 refugees and asylum seekers reached Germany. This influx was largely unforeseen and presented a stress test for administrators and lawmakers. Overarching measures were developed by the ministries concerned, and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees increased its personnel. Various administrative processes related to the asylum procedure were adjusted (BAMF 2019). Some legal changes were also made, including the expansion of the list of safe countries, the removal of barriers to deportation, an expansion of integration offers for asylum seekers, and increased subsidiary protection and toleration opportunities. Some of these liberalising measures have since been reversed (see further).

As of 2019, every fourth person in Germany is of immigrant background (BAMF 2019), meaning that for 25,5% of the population, they or one of their parents were not born a German citizen. A spectrum of civil society groups represent the interests of migrants in Germany, as segmented by legal status (e.g. Pro Asyl, Flüchtlingsrat Berlin e.V., etc.) and/or national or ethnic background (e.g. Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland e.V., Verband Deutsch-Syrischer Hilfsvereine e.V., Zentralrat der Serben in Deutschland e.V., etc.). Umbrella organisations also exist (e.g. Bundesverband Netzwerke von Migrantenorganisationen e.V., DaMigra e. V.).

Public attitudes toward migration have fluctuated over the years. During the period of 'guest worker' migration, the majority of policymakers and citizens perceived Germany as an ethnic nation rather than a country of immigrants. This narrative changed on an official level in the 1990s-2000s, with the implementation of partial birth-right citizenship. However, anti-migrant sentiment remains a criterial attribute of the German right wing, and since the perceived 'crisis' of 2015-2016, public opinion has swung against immigration policy liberalisation.

### Key developments since 2015

While the 2015-2016 spike in humanitarian immigration did pose a real challenge to Germany's migration infrastructure, its most profound effects were political and cultural. Initial responses were largely welcoming. However, increased inflows from Muslim-majority regions coincided with high-visibility security incidents across Europe, aggravating longstanding anti-Islamic and racist sentiment

within the right-wing, while lack of control over European migration policy aggravated Euroscepticism. These trends converged to drive the rise of the Alternative für Deutschland party (AfD) and a shift in its priorities from Eurozone scepticism toward nationalism and populism. In the federal elections of 2017, the AfD gained 94 seats, making it the largest opposition party.

Germany's government responded to these political and infrastructural challenges by tightening some asylum and social welfare policies, pushing forward 'migration management' agreements between the EU and important transit countries, incentivising return migration by irregular immigrants, and revising integration policies and labour market access for protected and tolerated immigrants. Current policy debates revolve around these issues and the need to improve economic competitiveness by attracting skilled workers in key sectors (e.g. via a points-based system).

The number of third-country nationals found to be undocumented in Germany peaked at 376,435 in 2015, while asylum applications peaked at 745,160 in 2016. Since then, both statistics have fallen consistently. Between 2014 and 2018, most asylum seekers came from Syria (32.8%), followed by Afghanistan (11.4%) and Iraq (10%) and to a lesser extent Albania (4.8%) and Eritrea (3.5%) (BAMF, 2019). Among asylum applications filed in 2018, nearly 20% were filed on behalf of children born in Germany, under one year old. Legal titles issued for family reunification, too, dropped by about 15% between 2017 and 2018 (ibid.). From 2018 to 2019, net migration also dropped from 416,000 to below 400,000 (Migrationsbericht 2019, BAMF). About two-thirds of immigrants in total come from within Europe.

These fluctuations have had a complex impact on the German security situation. After 2015, crime committed against migrants as well as by migrants rose (SVR 2019). Xenophobic violence rose in 2015 with the arrival of greater numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in Germany. As these numbers dropped in 2017, so did the number of registered xenophobic crimes. Criminal acts committed by migrants increased; this remains true even if cases related to overstayed visas and undocumented border crossings into Germany are considered. One probable explanation is that the lengthiness of asylum procedures lead to insecurities about the future and frustration, which may be conducive to crime (SVR, 2019).

## GREECE

*Authors: KEMEA*

### Institutional setting

Greece or Hellas (officially called "Hellenic Republic") is a unitary parliamentary republic situated in the Balkan Peninsula (South-East Europe) and shares land borders with Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Greece is also surrounded by three seas, i.e. the Ionian Sea to the West, the Aegean Sea to the East and the Sea of Crete to the south, featuring many islands, of which 227 are inhabited. With 13,676 km of coastline, Greece has the longest coastline on the Mediterranean Basin (The World Factbook, 2020).

Border control fall under the responsibility of the Hellenic Police, responsible for both the external and the internal land borders, and the Hellenic Coastguard, responsible for the internal and external maritime borders. Other actors involved in border control include the European Border and Coastguard Agency - FRONTEX and the European Asylum Support Office, which was deployed in 2016 initially at Idomeni and later in the 'hotspots' to assist with asylum processing, as well as the Greek Asylum Service. The implementation of the 'hotspot' approach informed by the European Agenda on



Migration, began in late 2015, with the closure of the Western Balkan route in early 2016 and the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016. This initiated a legal reform in Greece, a different asylum process on the islands and in the mainland and a broader division between the five islands of the north Aegean and the rest of the country as regards reception, asylum processing and services offered to asylum seekers (Dimitriadi & Sarantaki, 2019).

This Asylum Service is an autonomous body in charge of the examination of international protection claims and reports directly to the Minister of Citizen Protection. It is composed of the Central Administration and 24 Regional Asylum Offices and units where asylum seekers can submit their asylum claims. Registration with the Hellenic Police on arrival is a necessary step to submit an asylum application. Issues related to migration policy, residence permits, asylum and social integration are the responsibility of the Ministry of Migration & Asylum. The effective management of third country nationals who cross the Hellenic borders without legal documents and/or procedures is the task of the Reception and Identification Service, an independent agency under the General Secretariat of Migration Policy, Reception and Asylum, and Special Secretariat of Reception of Ministry of Migration and Asylum. On the regional level, local authorities, municipalities, and other local actors along with civil society organisations and NGOs, as well as international government agencies such as UNHCR, play a pivotal role in the reception and integration of migrants and refugees, providing a large array of social services in the area of health, education and social and childcare. They are also responsible for maintaining the social infrastructure of cities where many ethnic and migrant communities live.

### **Short migration overview**

Historically, Greece has been a country of both emigration and immigration. As far as emigration is concerned, Greece has observed two important waves of mass emigration: one from the late 19th to the early 20th century and another following World War II. The first wave was incited by the economic crisis of 1893 and resulted in one sixth of the Greek population emigrating mostly to the United States, Australia and Egypt creating a large Greek diaspora. After World War II, more than one millions Greeks along with other populations from Southern Europe migrated to the industrialized nations of Northern Europe (primarily Germany), as well as to North America and Australia, for economic and political reasons both connected with the consequences of a 1946-1949 civil war and the 1967-1974 period of military junta rule that followed. The majority of these emigrants came from rural areas and supplied both the national and international labour markets of the destination country. However, the economic blooming of Greece after 1974 and the restoration of democracy led almost half of the emigrants of the post-war period to return to Greece between 1974 and 1985. (Korma, 2017; Labrianidis & Pratsinakis, 2016; Tziovas, 2009)

The Greek government-debt crisis that started in late 2009 led to a loss of confidence in the Greek economy and resulted in severe austerity measures. During the economic crisis, and a new wave of emigration emerged. Between 2010 and 2013 more than 350,000 - mostly high-educated - citizens left Greece. According to statistics, the vast majority of them head to European countries (Germany and UK in particular closely followed by the Netherlands, Sweden, France, Belgium, Austria, and Switzerland) as well as to the United States and Australia. (Korma, 2017; Labrianidis & Pratsinakis, 2016; Tziovas, 2009)

After the geopolitical changes of 1989 and the collapse of Central-Eastern European communist regimes, Greece also turned into a country of destination with a huge and unexpected influx of immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, as well as from several Asian,

African or even South American countries. Furthermore, the numbers of incoming migrant populations till the 2000s have also been increased by the arrival of co-ethnic returnees, notably the Pontic Greeks that came from the former Soviet Republics (Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Armenia), immigrants of Greek descent, notably ethnic Greek Albanian citizens (Vorioepiotes) and a smaller number of returning Greek migrants from northern Europe, United States, Canada and Australia. The geographic position of the country, as well as its economic growth during the 1980s and its accession to the European Economic Communities (EEC) in 1981 coincided with other factors, such as a rise in the educational level and living standards of many Greeks. However, many immigrants ended up working in conditions of informality, while in parallel xenophobia and racism increased from the mid-1990s onwards, also marking immigration as an increasingly important political issue. (Dimitriadi & Sarantaki, 2019; Korma, 2017; Anagnostou, et.al., 2016; IDEA Policy Briefs, 2009; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005; Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004).

Today, according to statistics since 2018, the immigrant population with a legal residence status consist mostly of Albanians (more than half of the total foreign population), Bulgarians, Georgians, Rumanians and Pakistanis. As far as gender is concerned, it is balanced among men and women, with the number of men to be slightly dominant. The stay permits mostly refer to family reunification and other reasons, while statistics from 2013 show that migrants are mainly occupied in the tertiary sector, with a large representation of Albanians, in all three sectors (Greece Immigration Statistics 1960-2020, 2020).

### **Key developments since 2015**

Traditionally, Greece (along with Italy and Spain) is a major entry point for (irregular) migration, mostly through its border with Turkey at via the Evros River and the islands of the eastern Aegean across from Turkey (mainly Lesvos, Chios, Kos, and Samos). Since 2015, due to different geopolitical evolutions, Greece has seen an increase in migrant populations (primarily from Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Albania) that used these routes. UNHCR estimates show that after 2015 until the end of February 2020 118,000 refugees and migrants remained in the country, 76,000 of them on the mainland and 42,000 on the islands. In 2015, the number of migrants arriving via the sea was 5 times higher than in 2014. According to UNHCR, in 2015 alone, 856,723 people entered through the Greek maritime border, of which Syrians constituted almost 60%, followed by Afghans (20%). They included more families, women with children and unaccompanied minors than had previously been the case. Since then, the arrivals fluctuate and the nationalities are mainly Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, Turkish and Pakistanis (UNCHR, 2020b; UNCHR 2020c).

The asylum applications from 2015 to 2016 presented an increase of 287.1%, while after 2018 there was a slight decrease of 3.3%. Overall, this situation has led to the overcrowding of the existing camps and the Reception and Identification Centres on the Aegean islands (also known as “hotspots”). In Moria camp, for example, more than 9000 people had to live in a space designed to host for maximum 3100. (UNCHR, 2020a; UNCHR 2020b). International organizations such as the Human Rights Watch have made severe criticism on the conditions of the camps. This increasingly unstable situation in which Greece receives more people than it has the capacity and infrastructure to accommodate, has ignited contradictory sentiments among the Greek citizens: on the one hand they strive and do their best to welcome refugees, on the other hand racism, xenophobia and discrimination has increased, especially during the harsh economic crisis and the austerity measures that have increased unemployment and poverty among Greek citizens.

This unexpected increase of immigration and refugee flows had a substantial impact on the existing Greek Migration and Asylum Policies. Recently, the Government of Greece decided to suspend all new asylum applications for 30 days (March 1st, 2020 – April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020) due to the extraordinary circumstances and the necessity to confront what is referred to as an “asymmetric threat to the national security”(Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2020). The announcement also referred to a lack of capacity to process asylum applications that would be submitted during the “illegal mass entry into the country” within a reasonable period of time. This measure, however, was heavily criticized by UNHCR and human rights organisations who stated that the temporary suspension was in breach with international and European legislation (ECRE, 2020).

## ITALY

*Authors: SAPIENZA and UNIBO*

### Institutional context

Italy is a democratic parliamentary Republic with a three-way division of power. Executive power is exercised by the Council of Ministers, legislative power is vested primarily by the Parliament, and the judiciary power is independent of the executive and legislative branches. The State has powers of control - subjected to constitutional limitations - over 15 ordinary regions and 5 regions with special autonomy. The Presidency of the Council of Ministries coordinates the migration and integration policies. Ministry of Interior is responsible for enforcing the immigration issues (immigration and asylum, citizenship and religious confessions). Especially through the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration, it contributes to the implementation of the migration policies of the Government, also to ensure both the reception and assistance of asylum seekers and the first aid to irregular migrants on national territory. The link between the central government and local entities is represented by the Territorial Councils for Immigration, set up in each prefecture, with the task of conducting a needs analysis and promoting interventions to be implemented at the local level (Minister of Interior, 2016). Other ministries also play an important role in the organization of Migration and Asylum Policies, namely, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (EMN, 2019).

Integration policy is based on a multilevel national working group in the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of the Interior (EMN, 2019). The Protection System of Beneficiaries of International Protection and for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (SIPROIMI) is managed by the network of local authorities that carries out “integrated reception” projects by accessing to the national foundation for asylum policies (AMIF) and services.

Regarding border control, police forces are involved under the coordination of the Ministry of the Interior. Expulsions of foreigners who represent a danger for public order and security or are illegally resident in the country can be issued by administrative authorities (Ministry of the Interior and Prefects) or by judicial authorities, as a consequence of a criminal proceeding (Terlizzi, 2019). Since Italy is part of the Schengen Area, all EU and EEA (European Economic Area) nationals do not need a visa to cross Italian borders. Non-EU/EEA foreigners are instead required to have a valid passport if required, a visa issued in their country of origin. A proof that the foreigner has adequate financial means to cover her or his stay in Italy and return to the country of origin may be required (Terlizzi, 2019).

## Short migration overview

In recent decades, Italy has transformed from an emigration into an immigration country. During the first part of the 20th century, the country was characterized by mass emigration and only at the end of the 1970's it started to receive relevant migration flows becoming in the following years one of the principal destination countries in southern Europe (Ambrosetti & Cela, 2015). Italy belongs to the so-called "Mediterranean Southern European model of migration" (King, 1999) characterized by a lack of immigration policies, a large underground economy attracting undocumented immigrants, a strong segmentation of the labour market and the use of regularizations. First, migration flows came from North Africa, especially from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. At the beginning of the 1990s flows from Balkans countries, particularly Albania, and from other eastern European countries has started to become relevant. Since 2007, a large part of the migrant flows is composed of immigrants coming from Eastern Europe. Over the last years, also flows from Asian countries started to be relevant in Italy. From 1996 to 2019 the foreign resident population increased from 737,793 to 5,255,503. When considering also non-resident regular and irregular immigrants, this number rises to 6,222,000 (ISMU, 2020). Indeed, irregular immigration constitutes a relevant part of the total immigrant population. One of the characteristics of immigration in Italy is the globalization of the immigrants 'origins. Romania, Albania, Morocco, China and Ukraine are the principal countries of origin of immigrants resident in Italy (Ambrosetti & Paparusso, 2018).

The increase of immigration in Italy is strongly linked with the arrival of consistent inflows of labour migrants. The possibility to easily enter the labour market has constituted an important pull factor for migrants. The growth of immigrant stock in the last years is due also to migration networks and family reunification, caused by the stabilization process of some communities (Ambrosetti & Cela 2015). In general, the employment rates of immigrants are higher in comparison to the rates of Italians, however, they are mainly employed in low-skilled jobs and a relevant amount of immigrant workers are over-educated for the employment position. They mostly work in activities connected to care services (Ambrosetti & Paparusso 2018). Despite being considered a 'new country of asylum', Italy has received a not negligible number of asylum applications in recent decades, especially during the Yugoslav wars from the 1990s to the early 2000s, and the unrest in Northern Africa in 2011. Around 400,000 applicants claimed asylum in Italy between 1985 and 2013 (Eurostat, 2020).

## Key developments since 2015

From 2015 to 2018 the number of migrants arrived in Italy has increased. Migration flows rose from 250,026 to 285,500. The number of migrants from non-EU countries increased from 186,522 to 228,117. The so-called 'refugee crisis' of the years 2015-2016 has changed the characteristics of migrants arriving in Italy. Those arrived from non-EU countries for work and family motivations slightly decreased between 2015 and 2016, to increase again in later years because of the stabilization of the phenomenon of immigration in Italy. Between 2015 and 2017, the number of migrants arriving because of asylum and humanitarian motivations increased by 54%. However, in 2018, the number declined below the level of 2015. The growth in immigrants seeking asylum and protection was caused mainly by the lack of political and economic stability in most North-African and Middle-Eastern states. During the same period, Italy has experienced a relevant increase of people arriving by sea via the Central Mediterranean Route (in 2016 181,436 arrivals). In 2018, the arrivals were only 23,370 (ISMU, 2020). This decline is the result of the Memorandum signed between Italy and Libya that has de facto moved the Italian (and the EU) border to Africa and has caused a huge debate about the respect of human rights for migrants in the detention centres in Libya.

In 2016, the Italian Government and IOM launched the campaign *Aware Migrants* to dissuade potential newcomers from attempting the journey across the Mediterranean Sea (Musrò, 2019). From 2015, daily news and images depicted the flows of asylum seekers as an invasion and described it as a crisis (Musrò & Parmiggiani, 2017). In the 2018 report, CENSIS depicts a generalized and sorrowful sense of the loss of national sovereignty, accompanied by an upsurge of fear of ‘the other’ (CENSIS, 2019). Migrants’ flows are mixed in kind, with highly diverse individual profiles, original motivations or migratory trajectories and experiences, which are difficult to unravel. However, only a small part of the migrants arrived in Italy are entitled to apply for asylum (Ambrosetti & Paparusso, 2018). The refugee crisis of the last years has certainly contributed to the persistence of international immigrations in Italy, but this is still due in prevalence to other factors and to economic, demographic and social imbalances existing between Italy and countries of origin of these flows (Bonifazi, 2017). Top-down decision-making produced conflicts between national and local governments alongside bottom-up innovation to connect asylum seekers’ reception and integration with local development. The reform of national policies on asylum<sup>4</sup> provoked the shutting down of many reception facilities with a consequent fall into irregularity.

## SPAIN

*Authors: URJC*

### Institutional setting

Spain is not a federal state but a rather decentralised one. It is among the most decentralised countries in Europe, along with Switzerland, Germany and Belgium, structured as a so-called “Estado de las Autonomías” (State of Autonomies). Policy responsibilities and decision-making powers are divided among three levels of government: i) the central/national government, ii) autonomous communities (totalled 17, plus 2 autonomous cities: Ceuta and Melilla) and iii) municipalities (local governments that amount for 8.131). Issues related to immigration and asylum are a central/national responsibility; the central government is in charge of issuing legislation while integration is mainly a competence of autonomous communities (immigration plans) and municipalities.

In the area of economic migration, the two higher levels of government (i.e. the central government and the governments of the autonomous territories) share responsibility. Autonomous governments are in charge of supporting those who live in their territories when incorporated to municipal records (*padrón*), for instance in terms of education and health services. The central government is responsible for asylum applications and the right to reside in Spain, as well as for issuing work permits for migrants with a temporary residence permit for humanitarian reasons or for seeking a job.

Issues related to border security are a federal responsibility, and border controls are carried out by the National Police (in authorized border crossing points) and by Guardia Civil that is in charge of controlling the rest of the border territory and sea. The Spanish EU external border is not easy to control. In addition to the mainland, its territory also includes two archipelagos: the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa, and the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean Sea. The African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, make Spain the only European country to have a physical border with an African country (Morocco). FRONTEX places Spain at the end of the Western Mediterranean Route of migration but

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<sup>4</sup> Law n. 46 of 13 April 2017 on “Urgent provisions for the acceleration of proceedings in the field of international protection, as well as measures to combat illegal immigration”

also at the edge of criminal activities such as the smuggling of drugs. The last step in the path to Europe is crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Morocco.

### **Short migration overview**

From the mid-1850s until 1979, Spain was primarily a country of emigration. The change towards an immigration country began in the 1980s and culminated in the 1990s after Spain enters into the then European Community. Different factors explain that gradual change: restrictions on emigration imposed by receiving countries as a result of the economic crisis of the 1970s, along with improving economic conditions in Spain. By the 1980s the country gradually became a country of immigration and by the mid-1980s, Spain was receiving substantial numbers of immigrants attracted by the beginnings of the economic boom that coincided with its entry into the EC (Hazan, 2014; Hazan & Bermejo, in press).

Through the 1990s, however, the immigrant population grew at a relatively slow pace. In 1981, there were 233,000 immigrants, representing 0.6 per cent of the population. In 1998 there were 637,085, or 1.6 per cent of the population. Immigration accelerated intensely at the end of 1990s and continued into the 2000s. Between 1998 and 2007 Spain received around 500,000 immigrants each year. In the peak year of 2007 alone, it received 957,000 immigrants. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a surge of immigrants from North Africa and Eastern Europe. In the boom years of this century, the country also attracted large numbers of immigrants from Latin America, where most of the countries are former Spanish colonies that in those years were confronting major economic crises. These included Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, and the Dominican Republic, which together surpassed Morocco as the largest immigrant contingent after 2000, and to a lesser extent Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants showed a striking growth between 2001 and 2018 and approach the numbers of those Latin Americans groups that came in the 90s (Hazan & Bermejo, in press).

Nowadays, Moroccans remain the largest non-EU national immigrant group followed by the Romanians, whom since 2007 qualified for the communitarian regime following Romania's accession to EU membership (Hazan & Bermejo, in press).

In terms of integration, a study carried out by the Ortega-Marañón Foundation and Princeton University indicated in 2013 that “the integration of second-generation immigrants is rising in Spain: their aspirations and expectations are improving, their identification with the country is increasing and very few feel discriminated against” (Portes & Aparicio, 2013). The authors of the study conclude that “overall, it can be said that the bulk of the second generation is integrating at a good pace and that their differences with the native youth are diminishing, although they are still significant” (Portes & Aparicio, 2013). Moreover, from 2007 to 2014, the years of the economic crisis, in the areas of social relations and citizenship favourable integration paths were maintained. While in economic and labour matters, significant disadvantages of the immigrant population persisted; however, these were attenuated in the second part of the crisis, due to a worse relative trajectory among the native population (Rinken et al. 2019).

### **Key developments since 2015**

In the period 2011-2018, most of the immigrant groups have remained relatively stable, except several non-EU nationalities: Ukrainians (from 86,316 in 2011 to 106,987 in 2018), Chinese (from 167,132 to 215,970) Venezuelan (from 59,805 to 95,633), Pakistani (from 70,165 to 82,874) and Russian (from



53.166 to 73.930) (Hazan & Bermejo, in press). 2017 is the year in which the immigration/emigration balance begins to resemble the situation before the economic crisis.

In previous years, Spain remained untouched by the arrival of refugees from Syria and Iraq to the EU, since it was geographically out of their way. In 2019, the main trends of the last two years have continued: a steady increase in inflows and a reduction in outflows, a sustained increase in asylum figures and a considerable number of irregular arrivals by sea via the Southern Border. A trend that has been attenuated throughout 2019, following the significant increase in arrivals in 2018, when Spain became the main entry point for migrants from the Mediterranean, overtaking the eastern and central routes.

The total number of people who crossed the Spanish borders irregularly in 2018 was 63,298, i.e. 131 per cent more than in 2017 (27,834). This was expected after the closure of routes in the central Mediterranean. 57,498 arrived on boats and the rest, 6,800, by land. Arrivals to the Canary Islands grew a 207.5% from 425 people (20 boats) to 1,307 (69 boats). There was a very relevant increase in the number of arrivals to the Continental Spain and Balearic Islands (165,4%), from 20,611 to 54,703 persons (from 1,198 to 1,955 boats). UNHCR has been calling the attention over the increase in the number of deaths in the Mediterranean Sea and particularly in the geographical area of Spain, due to the deaths in the Gibraltar Strait. According to their reports, the figure in 2018 is more than three times higher than in 2017, when 223 people died, and comes together with the increase of irregular arrivals by sea. One of the major issues, not only in Spain but also in Europe during the last 5 years, has been the humanitarian boats that rescue immigrants in the Mediterranean (Hazan & Bermejo, in press).

An updated report of Portes and Aparicio published in 2017 assures that "the majority of Spanish second-generation immigrants feel "at home". According to the report, 79.1% of the children of expatriates born on national territory or who arrived in the country at an early age feel Spanish. Portes and Aparicio (2017) relate the causes of this favourable situation to the high rate of integration, including, on the one hand, the equal treatment in the education and health system and, on the other hand, the good reception of the Spanish population.

## UNITED KINGDOM<sup>5</sup>

*Authors: UNN, SU and CENTRIC*

### Institutional setting

The UK is a unitary parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy that consists of four constituent countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Home Office is responsible for immigration, security, law and order in all four constituent countries. Border Force is the law enforcement command within the Home Office that is responsible for conducting immigration and customs checks, patrolling the UK coastline, gathering intelligence and alerting the police and security services (UK Government, n.d). Although not part of the Schengen Agreement, the UK has contributed to FRONTEX operations since 2015 (Taylor, 2017) and is allowed to conduct border controls on the French side of the channel. Integration strategies are the responsibility of the devolved governments (see HM Government, 2019; Scottish Government, 2018).

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<sup>5</sup> Although the UK officially left the European Union on January 31 2020, the country is included in the list of EU-Member States due to its EU-membership when the PERCEPTIONS project began.

The UK signed the Refugee Convention in 1954. Protection is provided via the UK asylum system and via resettlement programmes such as the Gateway Protection Programme, the Mandate Scheme, the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme, or the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme. The UK has a selective relationship with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). It participates fully in the Dublin System—to determine which Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in the EU—and the Eurodac database of the fingerprints of asylum seekers (European Union Committee, 2019). However, the UK is already out of step with EU asylum standards as it chose not to opt into the most recent round of CEAS Directives on reception conditions, asylum procedures, and qualification for international protection. UK withdrawal from the Dublin System after Brexit may result in the loss of a safe, legal route for the reunification of separated refugee families in Europe. Vulnerable unaccompanied children would find their family reunion rights curtailed, as Dublin offers them the chance to be reunited with a broader range of family members than under current UK Immigration Rules. The UK has never taken part in European responsibility sharing mechanism for asylum seekers (hotspot system) that was presented by the Commission as part of the European Agenda on Migration of April 2015.

Although the UK left the EU on 31 January 2020, it remains subject to EU law and part of the EU customs union and single market during the transition period that is set to end on 31 December 2020. To preserve their rights to live and work in the UK, EU, non-EU EEA, Swiss citizens, and their eligible family members living in the UK must apply to the EU settlement scheme (UK Government, n.d.). Although migration policy is not devolved, the Welsh government has responsibility to economic migrants living in Wales under its housing, health, education, social service functions. Policies towards economic migrants coming to Wales in order to work are developed in the context of the Welsh Government's strategic agenda, specifically the Equality Act 2010 and the Programme for Government (2011). In its 2017 White Paper on Brexit and Fair movement of people, the Welsh government is calling for a managed but more flexible approach to migration, making a strong case for regional policy variations and closely linking migration to employment to address skill shortages and gaps in construction, manufacturing and hospitality.

### **Short migration overview**

Although the UK has a long history of migration, it only became an immigration country in recent years. Before the mid-1980s, the number of UK citizens emigrating to the United States, Canada and Australia was higher than the number of immigrants coming from the former colonies (Fassmann & Reeger, 2012). In 2018, net migration to the UK was 258,000 (Sumption & Vargas-Silva, 2019).

Until 1962, all Commonwealth citizens could enter and stay in the UK without any restriction. As the need for labour increased after the end of World War II, the UK encouraged this immigration by, for instance, bringing citizens of the West Indies to work in the UK on board of the SS Empire Windrush (Taylor, 2020). Eastern European refugees living in camps in Germany and Austria were brought to the UK after the war via the European Volunteer Worker scheme (Kay & Miles, 1988). Immigration from India and Pakistan also increased after independence. In 1968-1976, unrest in Kenya and Uganda led to many African-Asians to settle in the UK as Commonwealth citizens. With the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 and Immigration Act 1971, however, immigration controls for Commonwealth countries became stricter (Hardill, Graham, & Kofman, 2001). In contrast, the 1988 Immigration Act facilitated immigration from Europe by allowing freedom of movement in the European Community (ONS, 2016). Although non-EU citizens continue to account for a slightly larger share of immigration compared with EU citizens, this gap has been narrowing in recent years (ONS, 2016).

In 2018, people born outside the UK made up an estimated 14% of the UK's population (Varlas-Silva & Rienzo, 2019). The main countries of birth represented were Poland (8.9%), India (8.9%), Pakistan (5.7%), Romania (4.2%), and Ireland (3.9%).

In the 1970s, the UK adopted multicultural policies, through which the state sought to enable ethnic minorities to be represented and maintain their cultural identity (Favell, 2001). However, since the 2000s, and in particular, the 2005 London bombing, commentators have proclaimed the “death of multiculturalism” (Back, Sihna & Bryan, 2012, p.140). A narrative shift was observed that criticised multiculturalism for undermining common values, supporting reprehensible practices, and facilitating the emergence of terrorism (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). This narrative was framed around the conception of immigration as a threat and was used to legitimise the implementation of restrictive immigration policies (Back et al., 2012).

### **Key developments since 2015**

Net migration dropped in the year 2012, before reaching a peak of over 300,000 in 2015 (ONS, 2015). From 2010, UK's migration policies shifted towards stricter “population control” measures aiming to cut net migration “from hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands” (Conservative Party, 2010: 21). The stricter migration control measures approved by the Parliament in 2012 restrict access to welfare benefits, the renewal of residence/work permits and mostly focus on non-EEA nationals such as irregular migrants, over stayers and asylum seekers denied refugee status (Cangiano, 2016). It has since then decreased again, dropping down to 240,000 in 2019 (Sturge, 2020). 2015 also witnessed a peak of 32,414 asylum applications (UK Government, 2016). Applications mainly came from nationals of Eritrea (3,729), followed by Iran (3,248), Sudan (2,918) and Syria (2,609) (UK Government, 2016). Although this was the highest number of asylum applications in the UK since 2004, it remains a small number compared to the 441 800 claims made in Germany (Eurostat, 2016), the 1,255,640 asylum applications made in the EU (Eurostat, 2016), and the 65.3 million people who were forcibly displaced worldwide that year (UNHCR, 2015).

Yet, the so-called “refugee crisis” was largely covered in mainstream media and fuelled negative narratives in political discourses that were used to justify the intensification of the border regime (Goodman, Sirriyeh, & McMahon, 2017; Ibrahim & Howarth, 2018; Webber, 2019; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss & Cassidy, 2018). The Immigration Act 2016 provides that employers who hire undocumented migrants face criminal sanctions, and migrants who do not have permission to be in the UK can have certain privileges revoked, including their bank accounts and driving licenses. It is also a criminal offence for a landlord to knowingly rent premises to a migrant in an irregular situation. These controversial new laws are designed to supplement the immigration system and create what former Home Secretary Theresa May has openly called “a hostile environment for illegal immigrants” in the UK (Kirkup & Winnett, 2012). A notable consequence of the hostile environment policies implemented in the Immigration Act 2014 and 2016 is the “Windrush scandal”. By forcing employers, bank staff, NHS staff, and private landlords to conduct immigration checks, these policies led members of the “Windrush generation”, who had been brought to work in the UK from the Caribbeans in the 1960s, at a time when they were considered as British citizens, to provide evidence that they had lived in the country legally. This led to people who arrived in the UK legally, and had lived most of their lives, to be wrongly deported, or denied access to essential services such as housing, employment and health care.

The so-called “refugee crisis” also had an impact on the 2016 referendum to leave the Europe Union, as images of people intending to seek safety in Europe were used to fuel the narrative of “migrants”

as economic and security threats that justified the need to take back control of the UK borders (Virdee & McGeever, 2018). However, Brexit vote was also a result of anti-immigrant sentiments towards Eastern European migrants in the UK (namely Polish, Bulgarian and Romanian migrant workers) and not just refugees/asylum seekers.

The narrative of migrants as threats is also embedded in recent policies such as the new points-based immigration system, which highlights the aim to “take back control of our borders”, “improve security”, and “reduce overall levels of migration and give top priority to those with the highest skills and the greatest talents” (UK Government, 2020).

## 6.2 Non-EU countries

### ALGERIA

*Authors: CREAD and SYNYO*

#### Institutional setting

According to the framework for Africa's migration policy and action plan (2018-2027), the lack of social and economic opportunities; the rule of law, poor governance, nepotism, corruption, political instability, conflict, terrorism and civil strife are key driving (pull factors) such as political structures, economic systems, demographic structures and other such factors influence mobility in often unique ways. Real or perceived opportunities for a better life, higher incomes, improved security, higher education level and health care, are attractions factors in destination countries. Many of other factors that facilitate migration compound push and pull dynamics. These include lower migration costs, improved communications, particularly social networks and the Internet increased availability of information, and the need to join relatives, families and friends.

Algeria is defined, like many countries, as a sender and receiver of migration, which makes it a transit country for a large number of migrants from the African Sahel. The vastness of its border band has also contributed to it being a destination for migrants heading north. A priori, Algeria has never adopted a reference migration policy, therefore no explicit formulation of a policy, with its principles, its objectives, much less budgeting in accordance with international norms and standards. Nevertheless, this absence of migration policies has not left Algeria without a regulatory mechanism governing the entry and exit of foreigners. Ordinance No. 66-211 of 21 July 1966 on conditions of entry and residence was the first law promulgated by the Algerian Authorities. Under this ordinance, foreigners travelling to Algeria with a valid national passport or travel document are required for ordinary entry to Algerian soil. Ordinance No. 66-211 of 21 July 1966 regulates in its texts the so-called “particulars” entries of two groups: asylum seekers and refugees through Algeria's accession to various international conventions, in this case, the ratification of the 1951 Geneva Convention (adopted in 1969), as well as the ratification of the OAU regional treaty (refugees in Africa). The same ordinance also deals with particular exits, including deportation measures that may be taken against any foreigner who violates the regulations governing the entry of foreigners into Algeria, their circulation and their stay.

Algeria has acceded to multilateral international conventions enabling it to strengthen its legislative framework at two levels, the first concerning human rights and the second concerning workers' rights: Human rights conventions (including e.g., The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted in 1979 and ratified in 1996), conventions on workers' rights

(including e.g., Convention 89 on women's night work (revised) of 1948), and country-specific conventions with France, Belgium, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania, Niger, and Mali.

### **Short migration overview**

Historically, migration in Africa is generally categorized into three main periods: migration during the pre-colonial period, during the colonial and post-colonial era. Colonialism and post-independence ties to the former colonial powers, largely shaped the patterns of migration observed today and will continue to influence future trends (Masoud, 1985). This is also the case in Algeria. The country's recent history is marked by difficult stages since the beginning of the French occupation until after independence. This has affected the Algerian internal as well as international migration, which has been predominantly forced and compulsory (Masoud, 1985). When in 1954 the liberation revolution emerged, migration movements were affected significantly. When the war intensified and spread, the French military administration wanted to make rural Algeria unpopulated and forced the people who were living there to migrate to other regions. Consequently, between 1954 and 1962, nearly all rural areas became vacant of their civilian population, except for a few citizens that were part of the National Liberation Army, who had fled and had no specific housing. The rural population migrated collectively to disadvantaged areas in and around the cities, living in huts and informal housing, largely unemployed and experiencing other social and economic problems. Widespread unemployment in addition to other problems that led to a low standard of living eventually became a push factor for international migration, particularly to France (Menna et al., 2020).

More recently, due to its strategic location, Algeria has also become a transit centre for the circulation of people between the two shores of the Mediterranean. As such, Algeria became an important destination for people forced to seek asylum outside their country of origin. According to UNHCR, more than 1,000 asylum seekers seek protection each year through their office in Algiers and mainly come from Mali and Syria, as well as from other countries (Labdelaoui et al., 2013). At the same time, Algeria also became a country of settlement for many migrants, particularly from sub-Saharan Africa, who are irregularly staying in the country and initially considered it as a transit point to the European Union. Moreover, routes to reach Europe have evolved and diversified. With hardly any possibility to legally reach the EU, both refugees as well as Algerians (who are faced with difficulties to obtain visas to enter foreign countries), attempts to reach the EU are not only made via the Algerian coast, but also by using new routes via Turkey and Greece. They are mostly young Algerians who resort to irregular migration and are often referred to as "Harraga", an Arabic word meaning burners. Burning borders means leaving without passing the legal channels (ICMPD, 2013). In 2019, 2,774 "Harragas" 3,810 non-Algerian refugees attempting to cross the border were intercepted by the Algerian authorities (MDS, n.d.).

### **Key developments since 2015**

The irregular situation in which thousands of migrants find themselves in Algeria makes them vulnerable to many risks. Over the past years, several incidents and security threats involving migrants have been recorded, the most important ones involving clashes between migrants and local communities. Since 2015, 3 major incidents were identified. The first incident involved the murder of a local citizen by an African migrant in March 2016 in the district of Ouargla, the south-eastern part of the capital. This incident ignited violent clashes between the local population and African immigrants, and 8 African immigrants were injured. During a second incident, the local population entered in a violent confrontation with the African migrants in the city of Dely Ibrahim in Algiers. The residents

refused the presence of the migrants in their neighbourhood due to the illegal activities practised by those immigrants (drug dealing, prostitution, illegal alcohol selling and consumption). The most recent incident occurred in July 2017, in the district of Jijel East of the Algerian capital, where four people were injured during violent clashes between locals and African migrants. According to the local residents, these violent clashes were sparked by a dispute between a young local citizen and an African migrant. In all these incidents, the Algerian authorities reacted by deporting all the migrants who had settled in the places mentioned above, presumably to maintain the public order. In a similar vein, Algerian authorities deported 105 Malian migrants, after accusing them to be members of a terrorist organization "Ansar Al din" (Menna et al., 2020)

Overall, between 2016 and 2018, the Algerian authorities deported more than 12,000 sub-African migrants to the neighbouring countries (Menna et al., 2020). Besides the risk to be deported, migrants in an irregular situation are facing the risk to be involved in the organized crime or to be incarcerated. The Algerian police recorded a lot of crimes committed by undocumented migrants, with most of these crimes being related to drug dealing and smuggling (Menna et al., 2020). Other incidents were recorded but are considered isolated acts, such as the gang rape of Cameroonian women by eight Algerians in the district of Oran west the Algerian capital, and the homicide of an African migrant by his comrades in the capital Algiers (Menna et al., 2020).

## EGYPT

*Authors: ECITD*

### **Institutional setting**

Egypt is a major receiver of migrants and refugees in the region and has signed treaties and conventions relating to the protection of refugees and migrants (both legal and irregular) on their territories, including the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Additionally, Egypt, as well as other South Mediterranean countries, are all transit-turned-destination countries along three different but popular migration routes leading to Europe (i.e. Western Mediterranean route, Central Mediterranean route and Eastern Mediterranean route).

Back in 1983, the Egyptian Ministry of foreign affairs and Ministry of international cooperation issued the liberal emigration policy, which was referred to in the 1971 Constitution and formed the basis of Law No. 111 of 1983 on Emigration and Egyptians' Welfare Abroad. This law also allows for dual citizenship, and defines temporary workers abroad and permanent migrants. The Constitution guarantees the right to emigrate, and Law No. 111 recognizes the rights of permanent migrants, such as their exemption from paying taxes in Egypt. The 2014 Constitution provides several guarantees that can be relevant to the situation of detained non-citizens, including the right to challenge detention (Article 54). However, legislation reforms are still required. The Law of Entry and Residence does not contain any provisions guaranteeing rights to detained migrants, such as access to a lawyer (CP, n.d.).

In March 2014, the Egyptian government formed the National Coordinating Committee on Combatting and Preventing Illegal Migration (NCCPIM), an inter-ministerial committee designed to lead on migration policy. Since its foundation, the NCCPIM has been tasked with drafting counter-smuggling legislation (ultimately passed in 2016) and conducting fieldwork studies on economic migration of Egyptian nationals. Today, it effectively operates as front-of-house for the Egyptian government's dealings with the EU and other actors on migration. The NCCPIM also works alongside the IOM and



other international agencies to produce awareness-raising material, principally aimed at Egyptian nationals in Egypt to dissuade them from attempting irregular crossings in the Mediterranean. In 2010, the Egyptian Ministry of foreign affairs established the National coordination committee for combatting human trafficking under the Law 64 of 2010 on combating human trafficking portrays migrants as victims and criminalises those who are complicit in the trade-in people with coercion and for exploitation. This law foresees prison sentences of up to 15 years or in some cases life, and a fine between 50,000 and 200,000 Egyptian pounds or the amount of the profit of the crime, whichever is greater. The law came into force on 10 May 2010 and it went further than UN protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the convention against transnational organised crime in its definition of trafficking and in extending Egypt's jurisdiction to those involved in human trafficking.

### **Short migration overview**

Concerning outward migration, migration flows to Europe, and especially to Italy, they increased over the past two decades accounting an almost 70% of permits holders to Italy. More than 4 million Egyptians are living abroad. The vast majority of Egyptian expatriates resided in Arab countries, many in Saudi Arabia (MPC, 2016).

As far as incoming migration is concerned, in 2018, 230,340 people of 58 different nationalities were registered with UNHCR Egypt. More than half of them are from Syria (UNHCR, 2018c). Moreover, there is an estimated number of 500,000 unregistered Syrians in Egypt, who are not yet reflected in formal registry documents. In 2015, registered Syrian refugees decreased from 138,000 to 117,000. The Egyptian Refugee Multicultural Center estimated in 2015 that 10,000 Syrian refugees went to Turkey, hundreds were resettled in the West and many chose to take the perilous Mediterranean route to get to Europe.

Since Egypt has a large informal economy, some migrants and refugees found ways to integrate into large informal economies, and have been able to secure employment without authorization (Farzanegan et al., 2020). In this respect, international organizations and domestic organizations intervened to provide essential services. Since the issue of migration was not yet highly politicized, it did not gain prolonged traction in media or amongst the national population. By allowing migrants and refugees to integrate through minimal government intervention and by relying on international organizations to provide primary services, host states derive international credibility while only exerting minimal state resources (Pellegrina et al., 2014; Michael, 2019).

The vast majority of refugees and migrants reside in Cairo. However, other coastal cities such as Alexandria have become popular locations as well since they are a common transit region to Europe, and - for Syrian refugees - due to historical connections between Syrian and Egyptian merchants in the area. An important element that makes Cairo an attractive destination for refugees is the existence of a large resettlement programme, both through the UNHCR presence as well as private sponsorship programmes.

After 2013, Egypt moved toward a more repressive strategy that involves active policing while the country also chose to redeploy resources to engage with migrants and refugees. On the other hand, restrictive measures were put in place including limitations of obtaining a residency permit for longer than three to six months.

### **Key developments since 2015**

In Egypt, the majority of asylum seekers and refugees continue to come from Syria. In 2018, UNHCR registered 140,000 Syrian refugees, followed by respectively 5,000 asylum-seekers, 15,000 refugees and 100,000 migrants from Sudan/South Sudan (UNHCR, 2018c). Other important countries of origin include Somalia, Iraq, Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNHCR, 2018c).

Since the 2015 Valetta Summit on migration, in which Egypt led the African delegation, cooperation between Egypt and the EU has intensified. The EU has signed-off on one Egypt-specific programme under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa known as Enhancing the Response to Migration Challenges in Egypt (ERMCE). The 11.5 million EUR programme includes 1.5 million EUR for “strengthening Egypt’s migration governance” through capacity-building projects with government agencies working on migration, as well as another 9.8 million EUR for “increasing protection and socio-economic opportunities for current or potential migrations, returnees and refugees in Egypt” in an attempt to influence migration choices (GDP, 2019).

## KOSOVO

*Authors: KCSS*

In Kosovo, the Department of Citizenship, Asylum and Migration, which operates within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration of the Republic of Kosovo, is the key for implementing the State Strategy on Migration and Action Plan (2013-2018)<sup>6</sup>, laws and policies dealing with migration. This department is responsible for coordinating the migration process and for the development of migration policies, for regulating and controlling the migration of foreigners residing in Kosovo and accompanying foreigners who are subject to deportation or expelling to the state border.

According to Kosovo’s secondary legislation, the applicant shall apply for international protection at the Kosovo Police, at a border crossing point, at a police station or the Centre for Asylum. While, in cases when the applicant is objectively unable to appear to the aforementioned bodies, then the Directorate for Migration and Foreigners (which operates within the Kosovo Police) will develop the initial procedure at the location where the applicant is situated.

Regarding migrant integration, the Kosovo Government’s Regulation No. 09/2019 for the Integration of Foreigners states that the following benefiting categories from the integration are: applicants for international protection, persons with the refugee status, persons with subsidiary protection, persons with temporary protection, persons with stateless status, persons with temporary residence, persons with permanent residence, and family members of the beneficiaries of the abovementioned categories in case of the family reunion. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and its bodies ensure that in the shortest time possible will equip foreigners with a residence permit and travel documents as a requisite for their access to the integration process.

Based on the Law No. 04/L-072 on State Border Control and Surveillance, border control is in the competence of Kosovo’s Ministry of Internal Affairs and the border police within the Kosovo Police perform duties dealing with border control. Furthermore, the Law No. 06/L-013 on Amending and Supplementing the Law No. 04/L-072 on State Border Control and Surveillance, Amended and Supplemented with the Law No. 04/L-214, states that this law applies to all persons who cross the state border of the Republic of Kosovo, without violating the rights of refugees and persons seeking

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<sup>6</sup> This is the old strategy which is not valid since 2018, however the new Kosovo’s state strategy on this field has not been launched and approved yet by the relevant Kosovo institutions.

international protection, by respecting the principle of non-refoulment. Moreover, during the implementation of this law, state bodies act in full compliance with basic human rights and freedom defined in the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, European Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the international law that is binding to the Republic of Kosovo, including the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, dated 28 July 1951, and obligations related to obtaining international protection along with the principle of non-refoulment. In accordance with the general principles of domestic legislation, the decisions, according to this law, shall be taken on an individual basis.

### **Short migration overview**

No accurate and holistic evidenced-based studies have been undertaken in Kosovo to analyse, deconstruct and explain the country's recent immigration/emigration history. Thus, information and data can be gathered mostly from reports published by state institutions that indicate the number of Kosovo citizens emigrating abroad, mostly to Europe, the United States and other countries. Accordingly, based on data released by Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2014), it is estimated that between 1969 and 2011 the Kosovo population (including ethnic minorities) who emigrated abroad is considered 550,000 residents. The main reasons for Kosovo's population emigration during this period were socio-economic reasons, and before 1999 political reasons due to war in Kosovo caused by Serbia.

In addition, more recently, Kosovo citizens continue to seek asylum abroad, mainly in EU-member states. Data show that the number of asylum seekers from Kosovo nearly doubled between 2012 and 2013, increasing from 10,205 to 20,215 (Avdiu, 2015). The number of Kosovar asylum seekers furthermore continued to increase in the following years. A study of the European Policy Institute of Kosovo indicates that between 2008-2018 a total of 203,330 Kosovo citizens applied for asylum in an EU-member state with the main countries of destination being Germany (69,060), Hungary (54,860), France (38,400), Belgium (13,540) and Sweden (10,630) (EPIK, 2019). Moreover, in that same period of time, another 141,330 Kosovo citizens were found to be living in an irregular situation across different EU-member states, mainly in Germany (46,600) and Hungary (63,070) and to a lesser extent Austria (9,195) and France (8,760) (EPIK, 2019).

### **Key developments since 2015**

Kosovo is not only a country of origin of people migrating and seeking asylum in EU and beyond, but has also come to be considered a gateway to the European Union for migrants who arrive from other parts of the world. Indeed, regarding arrivals of migrants, Kosovo received a great number of migrants from 2016 until now however the country was not their final destination. Therefore they used Kosovo as a transit country to move towards other countries (most probably EU member states). It is estimated that asylum seekers were staying in Kosovo for an average of 26 days.

Since the majority of migrants that arrive in Kosovo do not apply for asylum in Kosovo, the number of asylum seekers that have been registered in Kosovo have been rather low: 70 asylum seekers in 2015, 307 asylum seekers in 2016, and 147 asylum seekers in 2017. It is important to note that the decline in the number of asylum seekers in 2015 is related to measures that were undertaken to prevent the movement of people from the countries in regions affected by emigration. Another reason is the assumption that Kosovo did not coincide with the corridors of movement and easier penetration of asylum seekers to the Western countries. In 2018, however, Kosovo saw a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers, which rose to 600 in total. With 2,100 persons seeking for asylum in Kosovo

in 2019, the country saw another a sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers, and in January 2020 there are 300 others registered as asylum seekers in Kosovo. Asylum seekers mostly come from Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Morocco, Palestine and other countries.

## MOROCCO

*Authors: FUNDEA*

Morocco is formally defined as a parliamentary constitutional monarchy, even though the Constitution of 2011 consolidates the sovereign's vast powers, which dominate the political field (El Mossadeq, 2014). The country has implemented a Project of Advanced Regionalisation in recent years, yet the territory is *de facto* subject to a considerable level of centralisation under the aegis of the monarch (Ojeda-García & Collado-Suárez, 2014).

Competences on immigration, international protection and migrant integration fall within the scope of the central government, which launched in 2013, the National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum under the auspices of King Mohamed VI (Alioua, Ferrié & Reifield, 2017). In that framework, after ten years of inactivity in 2013 Morocco reopened the Office for Refugees and Stateless Persons (Bureau des Réfugiés et Apatrides), which is in charge of the legal and administrative protection of refugees and reports to the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Additionally, the Government created an inter-ministerial Commission for the Regularization of Refugees Registered with UNHCR. Nevertheless, Morocco has not yet developed a national asylum system. The adoption of a law-regulating asylum is still pending, even though a bill is ready since 2017 (Projet de loi 66-17 relative à l'asile et aux conditions de son octroi). The Ministry of Employment regulates economic emigration: it grants permits to foreigners wishing to exercise a professional activity on the national territory and authorises to maintain service for those citizens and foreigners who have reached the age of retirement.

Centrality also characterises border control, which is assumed by the Interior Ministry. Irregular migration is tackled by the Directorate of Migration and Border Surveillance. Morocco has an excellent cooperation relationship with the European Union regarding border surveillance and migratory flows control. This could be exemplified by the €101,7 million financial support granted by the EU to Morocco to help its fight against irregular migration and human trafficking in December 2019. Likewise, since 2003, Spain and Morocco have a working group on migration. There are mixed patrols of the Moroccan Royal Gendarmerie and the Spanish Civil Guard controlling air and land maritime spaces, and cooperating in the exchange of information to fight against criminal networks.

Additionally, the entity for emigration is the Ministry in Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs, whereas the Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad, established by Mohamed VI, is competent for monitoring and evaluating the public policies of Morocco towards its nationals abroad.

### Short migration overview

Morocco's geographic proximity (14 km from Europe) has shaped two-way migration flows from ancient times between this region and Europe. The imposition of the French-Spanish Protectorate (1912) and the Tangier International Zone (1924) favoured dense cross-border mobility from Europe to Morocco during decades. In the years following independence (1956), major flows of European repatriated to their French and Spanish metropolis, especially after nationalisation and "Moroccanisation".

The Spanish civil war and the two World Wars enrolled tens of thousands of Moroccans from the colonial troops to fight in Europe. Additionally, most members of the vibrant Moroccan Jewry (over 250,000; the most populous community in the Arab world) massively left the country between 1948 and 1964, mainly migrating to Israel (the second largest Jewish community after the Russian), but also to France, Canada, Spain and Venezuela. Migratory flows boosted during the 1960s, when European countries were in need for workforce (Belgium, France, West-Germany, the Netherlands). In the 1970s, the economic crisis shifted those policies, though family reunification kept the migration flow going. Spain's accession to the European Community in 1986 deeply affected the mobility of Moroccans. From 1991, Moroccan citizens required a visa to enter EU territory, according to the Schengen Treaty, activating irregular migration into Spain whilst discouraging circularity and return, which was widely practised by Moroccans.

Besides being a significant migrant country, with more than four millions of its citizens living abroad (mainly in France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany), in the last three decades, Morocco has also become a transit country, mainly for sub-Saharan Africans on their way to Europe. In the last two decades, Morocco has become a host country for those migrants (Khrouz & Lanza, 2015). Morocco's strategic position has favoured the establishment of privileged relationships with the EU in different areas, including a close control of migratory flows, which remains controversial (Benamar & Ihadiyan, 2016; Carrera et al., 2016), as the treatment of immigrants arriving in Morocco is often harsh, especially in the case of sub-Saharan Africans.

Even nowadays, migratory flows between Europe and Morocco are not unidirectional: a sizeable amount of Europeans migrate to Morocco for retirement or economic opportunities (the 2007 recession motivated many Europeans to migrate, especially Spaniards). Moroccan official data may not accurately reflect this reality (e.g. the French embassy registers a higher amount of French residents) as the government is quite tolerant with these so-called expatriates, many of whom stay irregularly in the country for years, renewing their three-month tourist visas. Data from the World Bank, however, indicate that the migrant population in Morocco went from around 92,400 in 2015 to around 98,700 in 2019, with the main countries of origin being France, Algeria and Spain (UNDP, 2019).

### **Key developments since 2015**

Morocco is consolidating as a host country, mainly for sub-Saharanans, many of whom reside irregularly. Undocumented migrants in Morocco face similar issues as undocumented migrants in Europe: labour exploitation, ethnic profiling, difficult access to health care and schooling, and major obstacles to regularise their residence status. The measures against them may be considerably harsh (refoulement to the Algerian border, sometimes in desert areas). Discrimination and ill treatment from both LEAs, and some citizens represents a major problem (CEAR, 2015). In that vein, civil society has recently developed campaigns like *"I'm Moroccan, I'm African"* or *"Neither slave, nor Negro. Stop that's enough"* to combat hate speech and racism. Morocco launched two regularisations of migrants in an irregular situation (in 2014 and in 2016), granting residence and access to the national health system and education. Nevertheless, serious human right abuses occur (Amnesty International, 2018).

The number of refugees and asylum seekers is increasing (9,756 in 2019; 25% more than in 2018 when the number was 7,775). Syrians are the most numerous nationals among refugees and asylum seekers (3,676 in 2019). Yemenis are next, followed by Central Africans and Ivorians. Although refugees come from 39 different countries, the majority of them (92% in 2019) are African (Guinea, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Nigeria, Central African Republic, South Sudan, the Congo) followed by Syrians and

Yemenis. As for asylum seekers (3,100 in 2019), most came from the Republic of Guinea (732), Cameroon (687) and Ivory Coast (457).

Morocco has consolidated its role as a key transit country to Europe, mainly for sub-Saharan migrants; but also continues to be a country of origin for Moroccans migrating to Europe, whose number is notoriously increasing. In the last years, the Western Mediterranean route has acquired greater prominence compared to other routes, such as the Central Mediterranean route (FRONTEX, 2019). Irregular migrants departing from Morocco reach the EU by sea, arriving in Andalusia. In that vein, the main rescue port for Gibraltar Strait crossing is Algeciras; and Motril and Almería for the Alboran Sea. Ceuta and Melilla fences allow irregularly accessing to EU territory by land. On a smaller scale, the West Africa route is another way of reaching the EU from South-western Moroccan and West Saharan (in dispute) coasts to the Canary Islands.

## TUNISIA

*Authors: ICMPD*

### Institutional setting

In Tunisia, municipalities are increasingly playing a more active role in policymaking, but local migration policy remains limited and municipalities have little input in formulating migration policies (ICMPD, 2018). The Secretary of State for Migration and Tunisians Abroad (SEMTE) was created within the Ministry of Social Affairs to elaborate the national migration strategy, in coordination with other institutions, which are involved in different aspects of migration governance (ICMPD, 2018). The Secretariat was a short-living initiative. Other institutions were created to support the drafting and implementation of holistic migration policy, including the National Observatory of Migration, and the Office of Tunisians Abroad (OTE), which underwent a drastic reform (De Bel-Air, 2016).

Although the country is a signatory of the Geneva Convention and the new constitution of 2014 guarantees the right to seek asylum, there is no asylum policy or protection legislation in Tunisia (Mixed Migration Hub, 2018). The absence of these legal frameworks translates into hardships for asylum seekers who are often criminalised and refugees, as determined by the UNHCR (Badalic, 2019). These challenges affect access to work, healthcare, education, housing and freedom of movement.

The Tunisian authorities in charge of border management are mainly the Ministry of Interior, through two main institutions: (1) the Border Police Directorate under the General Directorate for National Security, and (2) The Border Guard General Directorate of the National Guard. The Customs General Directorate under the Ministry of Finance as well as the National Army are also integral parts of border management (ICMPD, 2018).

### Short migration overview

Tunisian emigration started shortly after the country's independence, with workers recruited to France and Germany in the 1970s. In the 1980s, Italy became a destination for labour migrants, given the proximity of the two countries (Lixi, 2018). This movement was largely circular. In the 1990s, when European countries introduced visa restrictions on Tunisian citizens, irregular migration to Europe became a salient issue and was used by regimes before 2011 as a bargaining chip with European countries. In 2011, following the fall of the Ben Ali regime, the highest peak of arrivals reaching the Italian coast was registered. Border controls were eventually re-established and the number of irregular migrants arriving decreased to the hundreds. With the ongoing political instability, migration



policy remains a low priority for the government and the country remains without an asylum law (Badalic, 2019).

In addition, to being a country of origin for migrants through regular and irregular channels, Tunisia is also a country of transit, and to a lesser extent of destination for many migrants seeking to reach Europe through the Central Mediterranean Route. Although there are many migrants who fled the war in Libya and settled in Tunisia, there are no official numbers of how many Libyan nationals are currently living in Tunisia and very few have registered with the UNHCR (Mixed Migration Hub, 2018). There are around 57,700 migrants currently living in Tunisia, and 767,200 Tunisians living abroad. The countries of origin of migrants in Tunisia are predominantly Algeria, Libya, France, Morocco, and Italy. Tunisian migrants are predominantly living in France (394,506), the United States (118,931), Italy (109,565), Germany (41,471) and Israel (22,962) (European Commission Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography, 2018).

### **Key developments since 2015**

Since the start of the civil war in Libya, the Tunisian government has taken different measures to control movements across borders and counter security threats from the neighbouring conflict. Since 2016, borders with Libya have closed for extended periods of time before reopening and border crossings are more closely monitored. Tunisia has also built a 200-kilometre barrier stretching over half of its land border with Libya to counter attempts of ISIS fighters trying to infiltrate the border (Mixed Migration Hub, 2018).

It is estimated that more than 10,000 sub-Saharan migrants are living in Tunisia irregularly. It is assumed that, following the developments in Libya, more migrants perceive Tunisia as a country of transit to Europe, a claim that is reinforced by the increasing number of sub-Saharan African migrants intercepted off the Tunisian coast while attempting to reach Europe by boat (REACH, 2018a). As far as registered asylum seekers are concerned, UNHCR data indicate that between 2015 and 2017 the number of asylum applications hovered around 700, increasing to 1,330 in 2018 and 1,665 in 2019, with the majority of asylum applicants coming from Syrian (UNHCR 2016; 2017; 2018d; 2020d).

The deteriorating economic conditions in Tunisia following the Arab Spring in 2011 and the subsequent unrest and terrorist attacks targeting the touristic industry has affected young Tunisians' aspirations to leave the country in search of a better future. Over the last 9 years, more Tunisians have left the country irregularly towards Europe. In 2018, Tunisians became the largest group reaching Italy through sea arrivals (REACH, 2018b). The number of returns has also increased over the years, with forced returns increasing by 133 per cent between 2016 and 2017 (REACH, 2018b). This comes in part because of increased cooperation between the EU and Tunisia and the conclusion of the readmission agreements with individual countries.

## Conclusions and future research recommendations

This deliverable has offered an overview on the perceptions and narratives of Europe and how these impact migration in academic literature (PERCEPTIONS deliverable D2.2), in policies on migration issues (D2.3), and how threats are perceived by security practitioners, policymakers and civil society organisations and NGOs (D2.4) and good practices (D2.5). This comparison led to some interesting insights concerning the conceptualisations of “perceptions and misperceptions on migration”, “perceived threats” and “narratives and discourses”.

When considering migrants’ perceptions, we note that policymakers, academics and civil society organisations are mainly concerned with ‘unrealistic’ or ‘false’ expectations of migration trajectories and life in Europe. This is expected to lead some migrants to make risky decisions, such as engaging with criminal organisations to achieve their goal, leading to frustrations when initial expectations are not met. As this may be an important concern, at the same time, this concern also conveys some paternalism. High expectations of (life in) Europe are often seen as misperceptions as they do not necessarily immediately apply to migrants due to e.g. restrictions to access social welfare systems, labour and housing markets, etc. Or to put it differently, people that live in Europe may feel confident to categorise other people’s perceptions as ‘misperceptions’. For instance, people in Europe may think that migrants might be led by images on television and the internet about people living in nice houses, with good jobs, having access to health care and social security. Concerned with ‘informing’ migrants that these conditions will not immediately apply to them, and are thus seen as being evaluated by migrants in an overly positive manner, this kind of reasoning seems to forget that many migrants have long term perspectives, migrate to achieve ‘relatively’ better lives for them and their children, and often also do not (feel like they) have a real choice to stay. Categorising people’s perceptions as ‘misperceptions’ seems therefore inappropriate, as it reflects the dominant discourses deciding which perceptions are ‘false’ and which ones are ‘true’. This is especially the case since there is no such thing as a ‘right’ perception about what to expect after migration to Europe. Additionally, the living conditions in Europe are also very heterogeneous.

When examining the perceived threats by host societies or their representatives, it becomes clear that in these host societies considerable attention is given to the threat of radicalisation and violent extremism. Compared to the number of migrants arriving and living in Europe, this threat is of relatively low importance and could thus be considered as a ‘false threat’ or ‘misperception about migration’; yet this is not being done. As we depart from security practitioners and policymakers’ perspectives, one could argue that all risks should be avoided, and to ‘better be safe than sorry’. Therefore, it could also be equally dangerous to categorise these threats as ‘misperceptions’ or ‘false threats’. However, when using these threats as a starting point for the design and implementation of research on migration policies, this may distort migration policies and policy recommendation as it disproportionally singles out specific threats, oriented at the maintenance of imagined stability and social cohesion in host societies, and does not consider other potential threats from a multi-actor perspective. Consequently, given the additional ‘threats’ related to the increasing popularity of securitization theories and ideas in migration policies, one could argue whether it is necessary to frame migration as a security issue (Collyer, 2006). Two main comments about these securitization discourses from host societies need to be made here. Firstly, while reflecting on the arrival of migrants, public discourses and discourses reflected in migration policies hardly ever refer to actual numbers of migrants that are arriving, which gives rise to wild imaginations of huge ‘migration waves’ that are

overwhelming host societies. Secondly, when perceiving migrants as a 'threat' for social cohesion in the host society, it is important to remember that these host societies are also not homogeneous in terms of values and norms. Furthermore, it should be noted that many policymakers still largely frame security issues from the perspectives of host societies, and to a lesser extent reflect and/or include the security threats for migrants. Finally, most policies under discussion focus on the reduction or prevention of such threats, and not on perceptions related to these threats and migration.

Given the growing acceptance of this securitization perspective, more extreme actions that connect minor crimes with disproportionately large consequences for migrants' lives become normalised in public opinion. An additional perceived threat for immigrant countries is the 'the arrival of large flows of migrants' in a particular country. In many cases, the number of people arriving as such is not necessarily the problem rather how these countries deal with this. This differs for countries of transit that collaborate in organising the arrival of migrants in their country and across Europe. As policymakers frame this as a threat and even demonise migrants as something impossible to deal with, when they arrive in large numbers, it seems to prevent them from designing policies that allow dealing with larger immigrant flows in their country, setting up new policies, making more budget available and investing in new infrastructures, etc.. Moreover, the idea that the arrival of migrants is only feasible in low numbers to be able to avoid the disruption of social cohesion and social, political and economic stability of the particular country, ignores existing heterogeneity in society, and increases in- and outgroup imaginaries.

Resulting from this analysis, it has become clear that the naming and categorising of 'perceptions' as 'threats' is not necessarily equal, in terms of the actors that decide what should be seen as a 'threat' and what as a 'misperception'. This asymmetry in the approach to 'perceptions'/'misperceptions' ('true/false perceptions') and 'threats' coincides with those who evaluate these perceptions/threats, and the reference subjects and objects of the threat posed, as formulated in terms of securitization theory (Buzan, Waever & De Wilde, 1998). While disproportionally a lot of attention is paid to 'threats' posed to host societies, hardly any references are made to 'misperceptions' of security practitioners or policymakers. Simultaneously, although mentioned especially by civil society and NGOs and in the academic literature, threats posed to migrants receive little attention when designing migration and securitization policies. The use of the concept 'threat' in migration policies seems to be increasingly shaped by the growing entry of securitization ideologies and discourses, set up by some policymakers and politicians. Many perceived threats are largely based on fears of the population and policymakers, but do not necessarily have a profound and well-established scientific ground. These securitization approaches and concepts are slowly but steadily entering public opinion and migration policies, without critically reflecting upon the discourses applied. However, something that could be studied further is the impact of such securitisation approaches has on perceptions on Europe and its impact of migration to Europe.

Overall, some recommendations can be made for future work in the PERCEPTIONS project.

- We need to move beyond binary categorisations of narratives, discourses and perceptions as 'false'/'correct', 'true'/'false', 'accurate'/'inaccurate'.
- It is important to highlight that narratives of 'migration as a threat' are in themselves threats to both the individuals who migrate and the societies they cross/intend to reach (by closing legal migration routes and imposing strict border and immigration policies that foster the creation of illegal routes). Hence, we have to be careful when focusing too much on perceived threats related to migration. This study approach may itself become a reality when it frames

migration solely as a threat, in line with dominant discourses that prevails in many European and other Western destination countries.

- When applying a multi-perspective approach that includes the perspectives of migrants, policymakers and practitioners, attention should be given in a balanced way to the views and perceptions of all actors involved, and not only those that are currently dominant or expressed by powerful actors
- In empirical research, we should try to get a better understanding of:
  - how all these actors evaluate perceptions, narratives, discourses and how they make a distinction between ‘fake’/‘false’/‘inaccurate’ vs ‘true’/‘correct’/‘accurate’ and study which sources they rely on
  - what countermeasures of perceiving migration as a threat could look like according to these different actors
  - the (limited) impact of migrants’ agency to decide whether to migrate, where to go and how to undertake this migration trajectory (Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2018). This way, we could better understand the impact of perceptions of Europe and migration to Europe, as well as the impact of narratives on actual migration decisions and trajectories.
  - how border issues and policies are perceived and approached by authorities and migrants, and how side-effects of physical and symbolic bordering practices impact migrants’ perceptions of certain European countries (e.g., during and after the COVID-19 pandemic).
- When analysing migrants’ perceptions of Europe, attention should be paid to the representation of institutions, bureaucracy, and practices and how migrants perceive and approach institutions related to border control in Europe. This is important to consider as migrants’ representations of their identities impact their residence permits and access to documents (Pelizza, 2019).
- Apart from the already mentioned transmissions of narratives and channels of information, we could also reflect on and ask about the cultural influence via films, literature, etc., as well as colonial heritage.
- Attention should be given to the dual role social and digital media can play concerning security issues in host countries, and how these pose additional threats to migrants.
- Applying a regional perspective on the evaluation of good practices could be a subject for further research, given the fact that distinct cultures, institutional structures and practices of dealing with problems across regions and countries may also impact the implementation and success of the good practices. This will strengthen the understanding of the preconditions for good practices and the applicability of such practices across European countries and beyond.
- Finally, and recently very new and important is to consider how perceptions, perceived threats, narratives, discourses of migration to Europe, policies and border issues are changed and impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, attention should be given to the categorisation of the COVID-19 pandemic as a threat, and its relationship with other threats. The different health and ‘exit’ measures taken across countries in and beyond Europe, the crisis strategies and narratives, and the impact on people’s perceptions on Europe, the increasing border controls within Europe and travel or mobility restrictions across the globe could have a significant impact on the results of the PERCEPTIONS project.

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