

*CalsMUN 2019*  
*Future Technology*

**Research Report**

**Forum:** General Assembly Six

**Issue:** Undocumented immigrants entering Europe

**Chairs:** Raphael Ridder and Jonathan Thijs



## Personal Introduction

### Raphael Ridder

I am a student at the Stedelijk Gymnasium Haarlem (SGH), in my fifth year. I have participated in 21 conferences. I take part in the organisation of my schools very own HMUN as Head of Content. Furthermore, I am initiator of the annual TEDXYouth@Haarlem conference, whereof we will organise the second edition this year. I also am part of the Learning Across Borders organisation, the charity of the SGH. I was politically engaged from a young age, which my parents stimulated tremendously, by always encouraging me to question things and debate about issues we disagreed on. This interest has grown out into now a somewhat of an obsession, that I have been able to express in MUN and many other organisations I have been part of.



### Jonathan Thijs

Hey! I am Jonathan, sixteen years. I live in Leiden (near to The Hague in the Netherlands) and I go to the Stedelijk Gymnasium Leiden. My free time is mostly spent on debating and on other activities around the field of politics. For example, I participate in 'regular' debating tournaments, I am active at a youth organization of a Dutch political party and I am eligible for the next elections of a layer of our government called the Provinciale Staten, with the hope of increasing my activity in those circles as well. However, I have set my eyes on studying something more scientific and exact – areas I am fond of as well – in a year, after a high school filled with debates. Furthermore, I play the piano, do water polo and like baking and cooking around. I will not be there the Saturday, as I unexpectedly have to be at a finale from another debating tournament, but the Sunday I will be present. Looking forward to the conference!





## Introduction

We've all seen the boats, filled with refugees flying to Europe. These immigrants try to enter the European borders without the necessary papers, which therefore is illegal. They do succeed often, creating difficult situations in Europe. Sometimes they hide in the country they arrive in, sometimes they are to be found and thrown in to a big bureaucratic pile of immigration processing, and sometimes they die during the journey. In most of these situations, they cannot easily be sent back to their home state as it often is uninhabitable at that very moment. Therefore, the immigrants stay in Europe.

Here, they are sent to one of the countries that opens its borders to them. Most of the places they will wind up in are seriously overfilled and do not have the best living conditions. Also, the massive taking in of refugees antagonises some of the, often right-wing, citizens of the country. For the immigrants, however, this still is an improvement from the situation they came from and therefore they keep coming. The questions that pose right now are what effort the European countries have to make to aid these immigrants, whether they could be sent back to their home countries and how we can make sure the constant flow of refugees diminishes.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Immigrant

A person entering the EU with the intent to live there, coming from outside the EU. This means someone who is travelling inside the EU does not qualify as an immigrant, but someone who was not born in the EU doing the same thing does. This has been the rule ever since the Schengen agreement, when the EU decided to join their borders.

We can classify the undocumented immigrants crossing the border into two different groups: the ones fleeing for a better economic situation and the ones who are fleeing as their home land was not safe anymore. The second group is the root of this problem, as they cannot be sent back to their countries easily.

### Visa

A visa is a paper that allows you to enter a nation. This means that entering a country without a visa would make you an undocumented immigrant. Through the visa system, where one can be applied for at the embassy of the country of destination, that country can regulate the amount of foreign people coming in. If the system is bypassed, like with all the refugees, these people are not able to enter the country straight away but will have to go through a likewise asylum request in the country itself.

## the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The UNHCR is an office from the United Nations watching out for the situations and the rights of refugees worldwide. Apart from these activities, it also conducts many investigations



to provide data for the refugee debate around the globe. This makes it one of the leading information sources. The institution itself also fights the bad treatment of refugees all over the world. Thus, it is one of the most important international organization on the field of immigration.

### Dublin agreement

The Dublin agreement is very important in understanding the refugee crisis that occurred around 2015. It states that the first country someone applies for an asylum is responsible for processing that request. As a result, that applicant can never succeed in achieving an asylum in another country. If he or she does try to do so, that country has the right to redirect him or her back to the country where the application was first made. In effect, this meant in 2015 that there grew a tremendous pressure on the countries where the big majority of the immigrants arrived, Italy and Greece.

### Schengen agreement

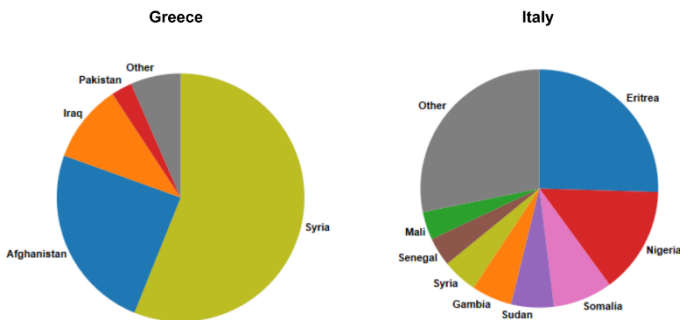
The Schengen agreement is the reason for which the discussion about the immigrants quickly polarized a lot of European countries. It states that any citizen from an European country can travel freely through the entire Union. As a result, there are no border controls between member states. It also has the result that if an immigrant is granted asylum in one country, he or she immediately has access to all the other European countries. Therefore, the countries who want to keep their borders as closed as possible put a great deal of pressure on other countries to be harsh in processing the asylum requests.

### General Overview

A lot of us – even those who do not follow the news day by day – will have heard of the refugee crisis of the past couple of years. An overflow of immigrants flushing into Europe, which could not keep up with the demand for new beds and asylum. There are also a lot of them who died travelling to Europe. These problems need to be thought upon, to be discussed and to be solved. That's why we will further broaden the subject in this general overview. Therefore, we will discuss the origin of the undocumented and therefore illegal immigrants in Europe, the history we have set as Europe and the situation and hosting in Europe nowadays.

### Origin of refugees

The immigrants that enter Europe without first acquiring a visa for that purpose often come from the southern side of neighboring countries. According to data from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) most of these were fleeing war



and prosecution in their home states. These include countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Eritrea. In the diagram on the left you can see the origin of the people who entered Greece and Italy illegally in 2015. The exact motivation behind their coming to Europe is difficult, if not impossible, to tell.

However, as previously stated, in lots of these countries are or were wars ongoing and therefore it is reasonable to assume

the migrants were fleeing that war, seeking safety. One side note: all this data might not be that significant as it was gathered under rushing circumstances and there is no factchecking whether one is telling the truth about his or her destination, motivation and point of departure.

These data indicate that the number one country of origin of the immigrants was Syria, Afghanistan the second and Eritrea the third. In Syria, people are fleeing for the ongoing civil war between (allies of) Bashar al-Assad and several opposing foreign countries or organizations. In total between 367.965 and 560.000 people have been killed, representing 2.0 up to 3.1 of the original Syrian population. In Afghanistan there is a war between the US with its NATO allies and the organizations al-Qaeda and the Taliban. In this war 72.000+ people have been killed. And in Eritrea the citizens are fleeing from an unstable nation as a result of a big war with Ethiopia in the past, mixed with a dictatorial regime. As we can see, the top refugee delivering countries all have their own problems, and life-threatening situations for most of their ordinary citizens. But how did all of this develop, and why Europe?

## History of immigration

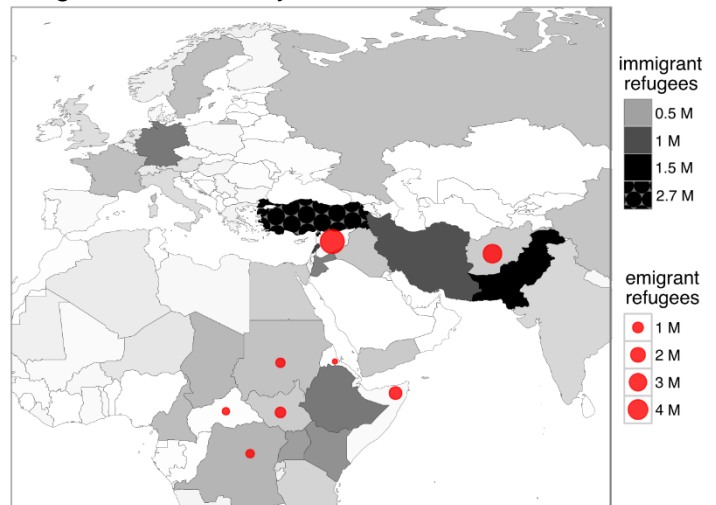
In 1985, with the Schengen agreement, European countries agreed to open their borders to one another. This means there will be one controlled border outside the entirety of the European Union, instead of every nation making and controlling its own. These regulations are highly relevant to the issue, as if a refugee is taken in in Italy, he or she automatically can go live in for example France. This means there is a lot of pressure on the countries with a piece of EU-border to regulate the intake of refugees.

The other big regulatory rule of the EU is the Dublin Agreement of 1990/1997. This states that if a refugee applies for asylum in a country, he or she cannot go to another European State and apply for asylum there. If this is done, he or she will be transferred back to the country where the original application was made. Thus, it lays the responsibility of processing these requests at the county of arrival. Critics say this puts way too much pressure on the countries that own a piece of EU-border, as they naturally receive more of these requests than countries that do not have such a part.

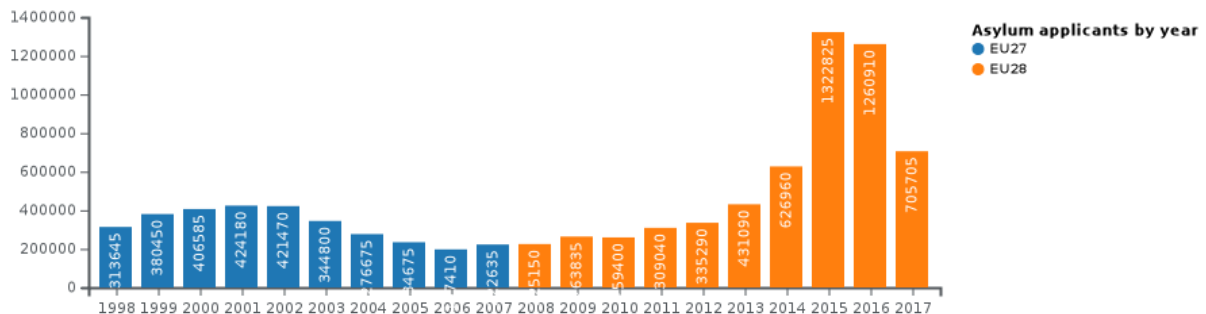


After these guidelines were set, the number of refugees coming to Europe gradually increased throughout the years until in 2015 the refugee crisis officially started. In 2014

already, the biggest number of migrants since World War II was measured on a global scale, 60 million in total. The diagram on the right shows this displacement of citizens on a map, putting these numbers into perspective. The reason so many people suddenly decided to flee is that which was described earlier, the seeking of certainty and safety. The crisis, however, was also caused by immigrants searching for a better economic environment for their family. These were often sent back to their home countries as the priority was given to refugees who could not go back to their home countries as it was too dangerous there.



In this crisis, Italy and Greece were hit the hardest as they had a rather unfortunate position (the map in the previous diagram). Everyone fleeing through Turkey arrived at the EU in Greece, and everyone coming from Africa arrived with boats in Italy. This meant these countries were crowded, and other nations were not ready to facilitate accommodating all the immigrants that arrived. In the diagram is the shifting of the number of immigrants coming to the EU visible. There was also a large number of refugees who died along the journey to the EU, varying per year.



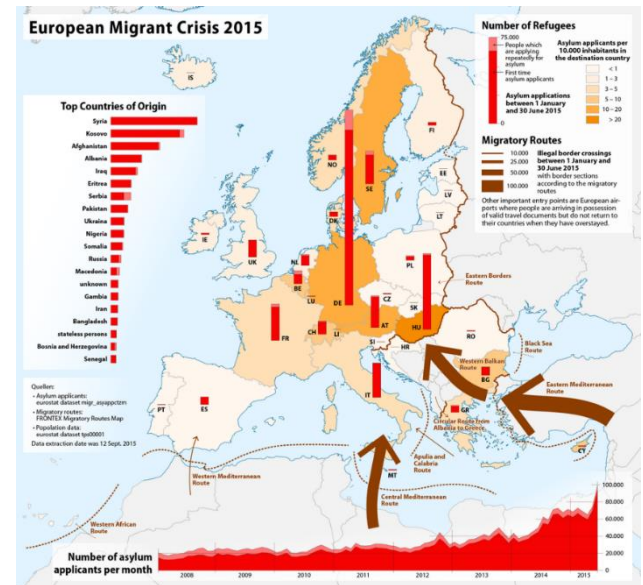
## Hosting in Europe

The hosting of the refugees in Europe did not always go as smoothly as planned, as previously stated. The European nations simply were not prepared for the asylum rush they experienced, and bounced at some difficult problems. Keeping the refugees and granting them the asylum would attract more refugees and antagonize parts of their own population, but sending them back would clash with numerous Human Rights Agreements. Every refugee applying for it has the right to be processed for an asylum. This meant they had to tackle and process the thousands of refugees coming in, which became a bureaucratic nightmare. Eventually Germany took a lot of them in, under the lead of Angela Merkel. In the



diagram on the right this dividing of immigrants can be seen under the European Nations. Eventually, the discussion about the immigrants entering Europe became severely heated in a lot of countries. Some of them became more right-wing as a result, for example Hungary with Viktor Orban as president or Theresa May with the Brexit.

The status of the refugees right now is quite hard to tell. There are not a lot of them, and they seem to be treated fairly but eventually do always wind up in a system of processing that takes quite long. However, the situation they find themselves in often is better than the situation they fled from and therefore not only do they stay, but more people flee too. Because of this, the immigrant flow never really stops. But the rush of the past years, luckily, is gradually slowing down.



## Major Parties Involved

### Germany

Germany was one of the countries that really stepped up during the immigrant crisis and took in a whole lot of refugees, led by Angela Merkel. Like this, they played a big role in the resolving – or at least regulating – the big demand for asylum. However, this has caused quite some opposition in the country itself, but also in right-wing countries.

### Italy and Greece

These two countries have had to process endless asylum requests of all the refugees who entered Europe through them. Therefore, they have voiced the need for tackling the refugee problem at the root and making sure that endless flow of undocumented immigrants coming to Europe becomes less pressing.

### Right-wing European countries

There are several member states in Europe who try to enforce a better closed border system, not wanting to take in refugees. These put a lot of pressure at the countries who took in a lot of refugees, as those refugees could enter their countries as well due to the free travelling rules inside the EU if they would be taken in by the country where they applied for asylum. These countries include Hungary, Poland and some countries from Scandinavia.



## the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The opinion of these countries is worked out in the Definition of Key Terms

### Timeline of Key Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Event</b>
<i>1985</i>	Schengen Agreement
<i>1990</i>	Dublin Agreement
<i>2007</i>	One of the first boats sunk off the coast of Malta, killing 71 refugees
<i>January 2015</i>	Start refugee crisis
<i>September 2015</i>	Angela Merkel announced they would take a lot of refugees
<i>2016</i>	Several terrorist attacks, polarizing the debate on refugees
<i>2007-now</i>	Consistently boats filled with refugees kept on sinking

### Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The biggest real attempt to solve the issue has been made around the time on which the issue was the most pressing, during the migrant crisis that has been previously discussed. That solution was to divide the big number of refugees as good as possible between the member states in Europe, with the exception of Germany that took in a huge amount of them. After the crisis, the system that was created to process the asylum request has been steadily enforced. Right now, the refugees who still try to enter Europe are processed in that way.

There have also been attempts to stop the flow of refugees coming by improving the situation in their home countries. Accordingly, Western forces have joined the fight in many of the wars in the countries where immigrants are coming from if they had not joined it already.

### Possible Solutions

There are two ways to improve the treatment of refugees: helping them in Europe or helping them at home. If we try to help them in Europe, we have to process their asylum request more humane. Making better accommodations and quicken the processing all is part of this change. The second way previously described involves making the situation in countries that





have an ongoing war such that their citizens are not forced to flee in the first place. Consequently, there are less of them who try to enter Europe and therefore this resolving of wars also could be a solution to the refugee problem.

## Bibliography

BBC news, movie about the fleeing of refugees: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-34774133/why-do-so-many-people-want-to-leave-eritrea-for-europe>

Open migrations, tries to improve the situation of refugees by stimulating the debat about them through the use of data: <https://openmigration.org/en/>

Human Rights Watch, a big player in the field of humane treatment for refugees worldwide: <https://www.hrw.org/topic/refugee-rights>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, described in the Definition of Key Terms: <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/brochures/3b779dfe2/protecting-refugees-questions-answers.html>

The Guardian, an article in which the problems of the migrant crisis are clearly and concisely described: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/27/eu-migration-crisis-what-are-the-issues>