

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND THE REFUGEES' CRISIS

Anca Gabriela ILIE¹

Abstract

The present scientific paper analyzes the migration crisis towards Europe and correlating this underway phenomenon with the European Union's economic diplomacy. The paper shows the current state of the European economic diplomacy, underlining that the issue of mass migration towards Europe is not demographic, but spiritual, cultural and related to civilization, in other words, it is a crisis of the fundamental values on which the European project was built. The European economic diplomacy must relate with the diplomacy of refugees², a new form of diplomacy (not receiving a structured framework) which refers to the national, European and international border control framework and also to the legislation on migration, which is most often exercised not by career diplomats but by ministers or commissioners interested in immigration, internal or external control.

This paper attempts to demonstrate that the refugees come from areas experiencing crises situations, conflicts or wars, accompanied by an increased presence of terrorist organizations. At the same time, it is important to remember that authorities have declared on numerous occasions that they are faces with a crisis of identity and nationality, many of the citizenships declared by the immigrants are not real. Thus, this paper seeks to answer the following questions: To what extent one can speak of a relaxed policy of the European diplomacy in managing the refugee crisis? What is the European Union's future after the passage of the migratory flows? How can the Lisbon Treaty and

¹ Professor, Dr. – Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Faculty of International Economic Relations

² Maley, W., (2013), Refugee Diplomacy in Cooper A., Heine J., Thakur R., The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy, Oxford Handbooks Online.

the European economic diplomacy bring credibility to the European project currently under siege?

Keywords: economic diplomacy, refugees, immigrants, the European Union, terrorism

Introduction

Since 2015, the European Union is facing the greatest crisis in its history of over 65 years of building policy, based on solidarity, safety and welfare for the countries that accepted the EU *membership*. The wave of immigrants has had a sudden entry into the EU space raising many questions on the lax policies of the European Union on border security and ensuring the well-being of the European population (be it indigenous or resulting from migration).

Moreover, the refugees' issue caused a *short-circuit* in the European space, also bringing a special interest in the contemporary diplomatic activity of the EU member states. Refugees or immigrants, as the political leaders and the media prefers to call them, represent a serious challenge for the common European values already tested by the Euro zone crisis, terrorist attacks, the rise in extremist parties or the eventual Brexit. The motivation behind this paper is, foremost, *to fill a scientific gap*. As an ongoing phenomenon with data that is constantly updating, the Romanian scientific literature suffers from a shortage of coverage of the "refugee crisis" topic.

The analysis on the migration towards Europe and its correlation with the European Union's economic diplomacy represents a brave but also risky approach as it is based on an ongoing phenomenon where information changes daily and that seems to question an entire set of philosophical and political values on which the European project was built.

The migration flow that has rocked Europe since 2015 is the sign of a deep administrative and political crisis of the European leadership unable to defend the values that the European project was founded on – united in diversity. One of the secondary hypotheses is that there is a panoply of causes that led to the wave of immigrants, causes that can be classified into the "push-draw" specter. Moreover, if the general feeling in Bucharest related to the refugee crisis is mistrust and rejection of the relocation quotas, the accounting solution contested even in the heart of Europe, in Strasbourg the dominant feeling is concern about the inability of the political leadership to manage the crises that Europe faces.

Although the European Union is at the world decisive economic forefront thanks to the size of the European economy, how they manage the refugee crisis diminishes its

credibility and forces it to undertake a long-term foreign policy strategy in the sphere of migration and asylum.

The paper is based on two pillars, which provide an overview of the conceptual and practical aspects of the two recent phenomena in the European history – the manner in which the post-Lisbon Europe ensures the welfare of the populations present on the old continent through economic diplomacy, and how the refugee crisis debuts in 2015 was managed in the perspective of the dangerous cleavage between the East and the West.

Methodology

The scientific methodology is based on a literature review (primary and secondary sources) to scientifically place the European economic diplomacy in the global context, mainly based on qualitative data, complemented by statistics from the official websites of the European institutions or bodies specialized in migration, asylum and refugees. We do not intend to present an exhaustive study, the subject of European Union's economic diplomacy correlated with the refugee crisis remains open to new perspectives, especially in the context of the continuous updating of information.

European economic diplomacy framework

In a very simplistic way, the economic diplomacy has as main focus the economic issues of a state. More broadly, it is a foreign policy function that reconciles foreign policy efforts with the need for economic welfare of the citizens. Economic diplomacy is a complex process that brings together the representing of the economic interests of a state or supra-state entity with the adoption of appropriate economic decisions that could contribute to the development of the economic welfare of the population in that specific state. Economic diplomacy uses a wide range of tools, from simple informal negotiation to voluntary cooperation via codes of conduct or other internal rules. (Bayne, N, Woolcock, S, 2011)

A feature of economic diplomacy is its enhanced sensitivity in economic markets, something which political diplomacy does not consider a priority. In this context, it is important to underline that there is no economic diplomacy theory to predict how states, in certain circumstances, will build and implement their economic policies designed to ensure the welfare of the population.

The European Union is a *soft power*, and the European economy is one of its most important pillars of action. The economy has become a major field of diplomatic actions

of the EU member states and an important milestone in managing the crisis that the European space faces. In this regard, the refugee crisis, although it should have been an economic opportunity for the European Union, has shown that the post – Lisbon Europe continues to be a supranational entity marked by poor health.

The turbulent political and economic context of the year 2015 -the Eurozone crisis, the terrorist attacks in Paris, the Syrian refugees' crisis, extremism and populist movements such as National Front or UKIP, the potential Grexit and Brexit, the relationship with Putin's Moscow – have underlined once more that the Union is a normative power, divided into two Europes, the West and the East, acting more diplomatically and economically than politically and military. (Maley, W., 2013) . The international sanctions imposed after Russia's annexation of Crimea, Greece's financial aid, the humanitarian aid given to the refugees are evidence that the economic diplomacy of the European Union increasingly serves as a tool for negotiating safety conditions at an European level and as a mechanism to ensure a decent standard of living for the indigenous European population or the refugees who recently entered the territory of the old continent.

Generally, economic diplomacy represents the decision-making and negotiation process in international economic relations. It is more about a process than about the state structure or power or an universe of negotiation. At an European level the European economic diplomacy includes the same decision process translated into how the Member States and the central level (Brussels) succeeded or not in having a common position in negotiations, a position that the European Union must defend in its negotiations with third parties. (Crăciunescu, A., Silasi, G., 2015)

European economic diplomacy can not be reduced to simple economic actions taken by diplomats or simple trade relations in the foreign policy plan. European economic diplomacy has great importance for the European project due to multiple reasons.

First of all, the international economic relations have been for several years in a multipolar logic, the European Union's economic diplomacy is thus important from a purely systemic point of view. Moreover, this form of diplomacy shows the Union's ability to bind solid economic relations with other countries in terms of foreign trade, investment, monetary relations or financial flows. Secondly, the European economic diplomacy places the Union in the worldwide economic decision-making sphere. Let us not forget that the European Union, although many deny this, remains an important decision-maker in the international economic area, especially considering the fact that it operates as a single market with 28 member states, which comprises approximately 20% of the international trade.³

³ Europa.eu, http://europa.eu/about-eu/facts-figures/economy/index_ro.htm, 2016.

Moreover, European economic diplomacy is of great interest, since it must align the internal European economic policy elements with the European foreign policy ones. Finally, the European Union can, through its economic diplomacy, provide co-leadership in international economic problems ensuring the stability of the international economic system.

If we ask what are the mechanisms through which the post – Lisbon European Union is exercising economic diplomacy, we can start by saying that this innovative giant construction has a population of over 500 million Europeans, the third largest after China and India, and a stretch of 4,324,782 km², performs most of world trade and generates one third of the human welfare, while being the largest provider of financial assistance and advice to developing countries (Crăciunescu, A., Silasi, G., 2015). With an international legal personality, the European Union is involved more deeply in the prevention of international conflict, European and global peacekeeping, countering terrorism, humanitarian assistance and political asylum to refugees from war zones.

The role of the European diplomacy in a global context

The European Union is a major actor in international economic negotiations in particular due to the size of the EU economy. In this context, the development of the Union's economic diplomacy has a systemic importance for the global economic hierarchy, but also a domestic importance for the 28 member states. However, European negotiators have a limited market power, the relative European economic power is in a slight decline compared to the emerging economic powers, such as China or India, countries with a genuine growth potential in the coming years.

The European Commission, the EU High Representative and the European External Action Service must propose as soon as possible practical strategies for the European Union's foreign policy in generating conflicts and economic hardship in the extra community space that produce a massive exodus of populations towards the prosperous West, seen as a Providence State.

Moreover, the European economic diplomacy must relate with the Refugees' diplomacy (Maley, W., 2013), a new form of diplomacy (not receiving a *structured framework*) which refers to the national, European and international border control framework and also to the legislation on migration, which is most often exercised not by career diplomats but by ministers or commissioners interested in immigration, internal or external control.

The European Union must have an updated legislation in the year 2016 regarding protection, asylum and migration and must play a more active role as a global actor,

especially in the areas where nation states are too repressive or in direct conflict with the people who seek a better life in Western Europe.

What is important to remember is that in 2015 the invasion was carried out from countries with a weak education system and in which religion played a significant role in society (mostly Sunni Islam). In order to thrive, Europe needs skilled labor and well intellectually trained immigrants because, as we saw with the international mobility programs supported by the European Union, Europe will not be satisfied with a generous stream of intelligence that brings it added value.

To conclude this part of the paper, we consider a good approach that the EU members declare that they only want registered immigrants, with a good level of training, immigrants that will solve both the problem of population density in the old continent as it was found that the birth rate grows only in the countries where the contribution of immigrants from different generations through families with children, is significant (Antohei, S., 2016). The costs will be huge and, unfortunately, will add to other European government mistakes.

Challenges of the immigrants' crisis for Europe

The immigrants' crisis, a crisis unprecedented in the history of the European construction, short-circuited the European project with a series of consequences in the short, medium and long term. It is a crisis linked more to the common European values and not necessarily to the management of the massive influx of immigrants towards the Old Continent.

Deficient regulations regarding asylum

Angela Merkel declared that the massive flow of refugees that Europe is facing is a more important test than even the financial collapse of Greece. This statement has a foundation linked to the unadapted mechanisms that the EU has to handle this crisis. First, there is no standard at the EU level to regulate the issue of asylum, a common list of countries considered to be in conflict, resulting in more refugees and no collective centers to house asylum seekers and to provide them with food. Thus, the main problem was a low adaptability of the Union's judicial framework regarding asylum and migration (Erlanger, S., Male, A., 2015). In other words, the European Union is likely to create disension within itself in an attempt to effectively manage this situation.

Smuggling

One of the most important threats to the European Union's refugee crisis is the trafficking of migrants. This category of organized crime refers to facilitating border

crossing illegally in another state for the purpose of profit. Transnational organized crime groups tend to act in this segment because the profits are substantial and the risks of being detected are low. In this sense, the groups operate in a more organized manner and create professional networks that transcend state borders. For these criminal groups, the migrant is just a product, along with drugs or weapons, which guarantee them material benefits (UNODC, 2016). The desire of obtaining asylum in the European states augmented an illicit market for the transfer of migrants, in which the traffickers are migrants themselves and use their knowledge to transfer others in exchange for compensation. There are also cases in which the migrants arrived in the EU through this system, integrate further into the criminal grouping, creating a transnational network much stronger and more damaging to the EU (UNODC, 2011).

Terrorism

Philip Breedlove, commander of the NATO forces in Europe said that ISIS terrorists infiltrate Europe via refugees: "*The Islamic State is spreading like a cancer among the refugees.*"⁴ He also noted that several European countries have signaled that they have information aimed at preparing terrorist attacks on their territory. Moreover, Breedlove launches a serious allegation against Russia's Vladimir Putin, who is said to use, with the regime of Bashar al-Assad, the phenomenon created by the refugee crisis in order to overwhelm the European structures.

The danger of destabilizing the European Union

This threat was highlighted by French Prime Minister Manuel Valls, who claimed earlier this year that, mistakenly managed, the refugee crisis threatens the idea of the Union. Thus, he argues that we need a much stronger control of the Union's borders and that, at the same time, we have to change the message sent by Germany, that it will provide asylum to all who request it. The French Prime Minister like the idea that Germany should be helped in its brave attempt to manage the crisis, but supports the need to send a strong message, expressing that not all refugees will be welcomed in Europe. To the contrary, this call which supports granting all those seeking asylum refugee status creates major risks and challenges unprecedented in the European Union⁵.

⁴ *Seful fortelor NATO in Europa: Criza refugiatilor, arma pentru teroristi si pentru Rusia. "ISIS se raspandeste ca un cancer"*, disponibil la: <http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/stirileprotv-special/seful-fortelor-nato-in-europa-criza-refugiatilor-arma-pentru-teroristi-si-pentru-rusia-isis-se-raspandeste-ca-un-cancer.html>

⁵ Agerpress, *Manuel Valls: Criza refugiatilor ameninta ideea de Uniune Europeana*, 2016, disponibil la: <http://www.agerpres.ro/externe/2016/01/22/manuel-valls-criza-refugiatilor-ameninta-ideea-de-uniune-europeana-12-11-57>.

Attacks carried out by groups of refugees against European citizens

Since the beginning of the crisis to date, many cases of harassment and attacks were presented in the international media. For example, Telegraph.co.uk presented in February this year how two retired Germans were attacked in the subway because they tried to protect a woman who did not answer advances from refugees. (Hall, M. Krol, M., 2016) The whole situation was created ever since last year, when there were the first cases of harassment in Germany, but it is not the only European country that has faced attacks from refugees. Most cases occurred in Germany (multiple sexual assaults and harassment in five cities), Switzerland (six women were attacked in Zurich in the New Year's Eve), Austria (attacks by delinquent groups of masked refugees), Sweden (a woman was attacked and robbed). In these circumstances, early this year, authorities have advised women to avoid travelling alone on the street at night, according to the publication Dailymail UK (Wyke, T. Akbar, J., 2016).

Conclusions

The European Union has reached a point where it can hardly see the future if it does not adopt a series of strategies to fight the crisis, strategies validated by all the Member States of the European project.

The Refugee crisis must be understood in a wider geopolitical context redefining the European Union's role on the world hierarchy, but with caution given by the fact that the immigrants bring with them some of the difficulties from the area they come from and prove more often that their behavior is deeply anti-Western, where jobs are self-explanatory as well as the access to women (the events of New Year's Eve from several German cities). Moreover, the open arms policy lead by Europe in the early onset of this wave of immigrants leads to a deep dissatisfaction from the Europeans, which is reflected in the growing popularity of extremist parties (France, Germany, Great Britain). And the political errors coming from the European and national leaders further broaden the electoral spectrum of the extreme right in Europe.

And although was circulated in the public opinion the idea that Germany supports immigrants / refugees / invaders due to its demographic problems, the refugee crisis is not a demographic phenomenon (even if most immigrants consists of young men), but a cultural and civilizational phenomenon that announces a cold shower for the common European values provided by the founding fathers of the European Union and reinforced by the European project throughout the history.

The wave of immigrants brings in Europe an ideological crisis of the European mechanism, a split between the tolerant and solitary West (as shown in Strasbourg) and the fearful and closed East (as the issue of refugees is seen in Bucharest). However, both the East and the West admit that the threat represented by the wave of immigrants is real and is growing rapidly. And is regards not only the assault on Europe as such, but as an applied electric shock to stability, peace and prosperity on the old continent.

Europe's big challenge is thus to find a common livelihood in the uncertain future of the European Union. A wave of replacement of the European Christian population is foreseen with population connected to Islam in a context in which the answers of the West against Islam were so far largely military (although hesitant), economic (economic sanctions) or anti-cultural (satire- Charlie Hebdo type). Still no measures have been taken for another interaction with Islam: converting young Europeans to Islam in a forced or voluntary form.

Moreover, European solidarity must be managed which has been neglected in the past year. We refer here to the fact that the border states of Europe were always singled out because they can not grow and prosper economically and the refugee crisis has proved that the rich West can not withstand the crisis that hit Europe without the periphery of the Union.

The current European wave has economic, ideological, cultural reasons but is generated largely by the political errors of the European leaders in the area of foreign policy and westernisation of other regions (especially the conflictual ones) in the world.

Therefore, what is needed is a repositioning of the European economic diplomacy in the adoption of concrete strategies of foreign policy of the European Union in generating conflict and economic problems in areas that produce massive exodus of population, attracted by the Providence state in the West. Although it is difficult to predict, it may be the beginning of the end of the European Union if the diplomatic elite, along with commissioners from the area of trade, migration, external control, fail to give a new impulse to the immigration policies already set by the Lisbon Treaty.

References

- Aligică, D., (2016), In așteptarea unei strategii europene in Sorin Bocancea (coord.), *Marșul asupra Europei. Noile dimensiuni ale migrației*, Editura Adenium;
- Antoși, S., (2016), "Dystopia europaea" in Sorin Bocancea (coord.), *Marșul asupra Europei. Noile dimensiuni ale migrației*, Editura Adenium;
- Bayne, N., Woolcock, S., (2011), What is economic diplomacy in Stephen Woolcock, in Nicolas Bayne and Stephen Woolcock, *The new economic diplomacy. Decision-making*

and negotiation in international economic relations, The London School of Economics and Political Science;

Chavagneux, C., (1999), La diplomatie économique, plus seulement une affaire d'États in *Pouvoirs. Revue française d'études constitutionnelles et politiques*, nr. 88;

Cincea, M., (2016), "Va reuși Europa să iasă din capcană" in Sorin Bocancea (coord.), *Marșul asupra Europei. Noile dimensiuni ale migrației*, Editura Adenium;

Chifu, I., (2016), Dosarul imigranților. Cine sunt, de unde vin, cum gestionăm această temă in Sorin Bocancea (coord.), *Marșul asupra Europei. Noile dimensiuni ale migrației*, Editura Adenium;

Crăciunescu, A., Silasi, G., Anghel, I. M., (2015), *Diplomația Uniunii Europene și regulile acesteia*, Editura Universul Juridic, 2015, p. 580.

Erlanger, S., Male, A., Europe's Halting Response to Migrant Crisis Draws Criticism as Toll Mounts, *The New York Times*, 2015, disponibil la: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/29/world/europe/europe-migrant-refugee-crisis.html?smid=fb-share&_r=0

Hall, M., Kroll, M., German pensioners 'attacked by migrants after defending young woman', *Telegraph.co.uk*, Berlin, 2016, disponibil la: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/12135497/Migrants-attack-pensioners-who-stood-up-for-woman-they-were-harassing-on-Munich-metro.html>

Maley, W., (2013), Refugee Diplomacy in Cooper A., Heine J., Thakur R., The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy, Oxford Handbooks Online

Tompea, D., (2016), Criza europeană a imigranților. Radiografia unei drame colective in Sorin Bocancea (coord.), *Marșul asupra Europei. Noile dimensiuni ale migrației*, Editura Adenium;

Văcărelu, M., (2016), "Invazia Europei și consecințele sale în secolul XXI" in Sorin Bocancea (coord.), *Marș asupra Europei. Noile dimensiuni ale migrației*, Adenium, pp. 57-65;

Woolcock, S., (2012), *European Union Economic Diplomacy*, Ashgate Publishing;

Woolcock, S., (2011), European Union Economic Diplomacy in Nicolas Bayne and Stephen Woolcock, *The new economic diplomacy. Decision-making and negotiation in international economic relations*, The London School of Economics and Political Science.

UNODC (2011), *Fișa crimei organizate transnaționale. Traficul de migranți-Dura căutare pentru o viață mai bună*, p. 1, disponibil la http://www.unodc.org/documents/toc/factsheets/TOC12_fs_migrantsmuggling_EN_Plain.pdf,

UNODC, *Rolul crimei organizate în traficul de migranți din Africa de Vest spre Uniunea Europeană*, New York, p. 1, disponibil la http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Report_SOM_West_Africa_EU.pdf

Wyke, T., Akbar, J. (2016), „Migrant rape fears spread across Europe: Women told not to go out at night alone after assaults carried out in Sweden, Finland, Germany, Austria and Switzerland amid warnings gangs are co-ordinating attacks”, *Dailymail*, 2016, disponibil la: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3390168/Migrant-rape-fears-spread-Europe-Women-told-not-night-assaults-carried-Sweden-Finland-Germany-Austria-Switzerland-amid-warnings-gangs-ordinating-attacks.html>
