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# Immigrants situation in EU

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Preliminary Research Report

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Migration and free flow of the people is one of the core issue of the EU values. Free flow of labor force and free flow of goods, services and capital are a main basis of European Single Market, an integral part of European Union, and one of the most noticeable political achievement in the Europe's history. To provide this and make it work properly and safe for member states some legal frameworks and regulations were adopted. One of the most important regulation is Schengen Convention (no border control between member states; 22 of 28 member states, excluding Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the United Kingdom are in Schengen Area). But those rights refers only to EU-member states citizens (EU citizens). Of course borders of EU member states are not closed for the people outside united Europe, People who are crossing EU external border are recognized as an immigrants. European Commission defines immigration as the action by which a person from a non-EU country establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of an EU country for a period that is, or is expected to be, at least twelve months.

In EU official terminology there are two types of immigration:

- Legal: when person, which is crossing the EU external border with legal permission like f.e visa or Residence permit (an authorisation issued by the competent authorities of an EU country allowing a non-EU citizen to stay legally on its territory).
- Irregular (illegal): crossing borders without complying with the necessary requirements for legal entry into the member state country, also frequently avoiding any border control.

The most problematic issue is considered with the second type of the migration. In last few years Europe has to faced up with so called " European migrant crisis". The unprecedented numbers of migrants – mostly from Muslim-majority countries forced to cross the Greek and Bulgarian borders and also came through Mediterranean Sea to Italy, Greece and Spain. The Mediterranean route is very dangerous, thousands of migrants has drowned, trying to reach Italian or Greek coast. In those crossing-borders processes also many criminal groups are involved, smuggling migrants and taking part in human Trafficking.

The flow of irregular migrants entering the EU reached peak level in 2015 (over 1.26 million applying for asylum in the EU ) and remained high in 2016. Frontex, the EU border surveillance agency, collects data on illegal crossings of the EU's external borders registered by national authorities noticed, that in 2015 and 2016, more than 2.3 million illegal crossings were detected.

The reasons of the migration crisis are not fully clear, but undoubtedly the military conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan were one of crucial ignition point. Most people from those countries are refugees and asylum seekers, whose lives are in danger in their own countries and they try to find safe place to live. EU has the common policies and regulations referred to this type of migration, for example: The Dublin Regulation (Regulation No. 604/2013; Dublin III Regulation; is a European Union law that determines the EU Member State responsible to examine an application for asylum seekers seeking international protection, according to UNHCR Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. But in the big-scale crisis the regulations were not sufficient enough.



EU authorities and agencies need to find out who are genuine refugees and who came to Europe from mostly economic reasons, like many people from another group of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, Pakistan and other countries.

In 2015 and 2016 alone, more than 2.5 million people applied for asylum in the EU. Authorities in the member states issued 593,000 first instance asylum decisions in 2015 - over half of them positive.

Most people who applied for protection at the height of the refugee crisis in 2015 had to wait until 2016 to receive their ruling. That year 1.1 million asylum decisions were made. 61% of those were positive with one third of applicants granted refugee status, the highest level of international protection.

On another side of the EU more than one million people from Ukraine and Belarus crossed the Polish border (mostly in legal way) to find new place to live due to economic reason (but some of them were also refugees from eastern Ukraine, where military conflict is taking place). Often, the people from this group, who crossed the border legally, become an '**overstayer**' - a person who remains in an EU country beyond the period for which entry was granted.

Full numbers and data about amount of migrants in EU are available on Eurostat website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics)

The challenge for UE is to adapt to the situation, find sufficient solutions and mechanism to integrate refugees and migrants (who are approved to stay) with member states societies. In this case, integration must be a two way process: migrants should feel like a part of society, and the society has to accept the newcomers and their presence.

Nearly half (48,6% in 2016) of non-EU member states migrants are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The host countries need to cope the migrants basic needs as accommodation, food and education. The last aspect is most important for proper integration. Many migrants (especially refugees) are not even knowing the host country language, what is a communication barrier, which can be overcome with language education programs. Communication is important to recognize the specific needs. Every migrant could have different background. Different refugees require different levels of support – for example those with degrees have very different training requirements than those lacking basic qualifications. The other education programs should focus on skills and training, which will help migrants to find a work, which will help them to become independent and being integrated.

Eurostat is collecting data and statistics about immigrants situation, and their educational level and integration process. To get more information about, you can visit:

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migrant\\_integration\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migrant_integration_statistics)

To provide help and support for immigrant's integration, EU has adopted **The EU Integration Action Plan of Third-Country Nationals**, introduced on 7 June 2016. The Plan provides a comprehensive framework to support Member States' efforts in developing and strengthening their migrant



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integration policies, and describes the concrete policy, operational and financial measures the Commission will implement. While it targets all third country nationals in the EU, it contains actions to address the specific challenges faced by refugees.

The Plan is according to 5 fields of activities:

**Pre-departure and pre-arrival measures** - Actions to prepare migrants and the local communities for the integration process

**Education** - Actions to promote language training, participation of migrant children to Early Childhood Education and Care, teacher training and civic education. For example online language lessons or promoting school's communities inclusive education.

**Employment and vocational training** - Actions to promote early integration into the labour market and migrants entrepreneurship

**Access to basic services such as housing and healthcare**

**Active participation and social inclusion** - Actions to support exchanges with the receiving society, migrants' participation to cultural life and fighting discrimination

More about EU Integration Action Plan You can find on: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/europe-integration-action-plan-of-third-country-nationals-launched>

