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Graziella Kiragu, *The European Union and its migration and asylum policies: the case of the Mediterranean migration crisis* (May 2020)

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**The European Union and its Migration and Asylum Policies: The Case of  
the Mediterranean Migration Crisis**

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## Introduction

The European Union has witnessed an increased influx of migrants and refugees, especially along the Mediterranean travel routes. This increase peaked in 2015, with over one million individuals arriving in Europe in search of a safe haven. This travel route is mainly used by West and North African migrants as well as Middle Eastern migrants. The persisting issues in their home countries are at the root cause of the consistent increase and use of this migration route, contradicting regular theory that stipulates migration routes are usually highly susceptible to change.<sup>1</sup> This one million refugee peak and inadequate EU response created a sense of crisis in Europe, predominantly in Southern states and contributed to a rush of populism rising over the union as citizens became increasingly afraid due to inadequate measures.<sup>2</sup> Although illegal and irregular arrivals from the Mediterranean migration routes has been on the decline since 2016, roughly 160.000 individuals from the above-mentioned regions still seek refuge in The European Union annually.<sup>3</sup> Due to the economic, political and social effects of this crisis and its continuation, albeit it be to a lesser extent today, it is of value to research this topic in depth. Therefore, this paper sets out to acquire a comprehensive understanding of past policies and political orientation towards the crisis and what their direct, indirect, external and internal effects were on the crisis itself and decreasing migrant inflow to the European Union. Direct effects are centred on internal policies, decreasing the number of migrants within the borders and the common foreign policy of the EU and their border control. Externally, the EU policies have an impact on the countries of origin of the migrants. Through this, question will arise if the EU solely helped itself or if it was able to play a meaningful role in the regions of conflict. Lastly, this paper will examine what an applicable way forward is. After analysing the past approaches, their effects and how the situation has unfolded within the last 4 years, policy recommendations will be made as to how the EU can best address this crisis going forward. The overarching goal is to find recommendations that can positively influence all regions involved, namely the European Union, The Middle East and North and West Africa, through constructive partnerships. Therefore, it will answer the question: How can the European Union foster long-term solutions to the Mediterranean migration crisis through multi-lateral cooperation?

The Mediterranean migration crisis can be conceptualised along two perspectives, the first being in agreement with the actions of the European Union. Here in there is a common consensus that applicable decisions were made, that the crisis was mainly a ‘Mediterranean’ issue and that the Union’s focus on border control and security was most applicable. As a result of referring to this migration crisis as being inherently ‘Mediterranean’, the sole focus has been placed on the movement of individuals and the possible disadvantages they bring to their final destination, rather than the crises that cause individuals to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere. Through this viewpoint, it is expected that the solutions to the crisis lie in border control and finding ways to control the asylum seekers, refugees themselves as well as the traffickers and smugglers. This is the approach that was taken and criticised by the European Union, characterised by “search and rescue (SAR) operations, migration ‘hotspots’, transport corridors

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<sup>1</sup> “Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015”, PEW Research, last modified August 2, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/>

<sup>2</sup> Oliviero Angeli, “Migration and the rise of populism: how closely related are they?”, The Magazine of France terre d’asile, last modified February 2019. <https://www.vuesdeurope.eu/en/opinion/migration-and-the-rise-of-populism-how-closely-related-are-they/>

<sup>3</sup> “The Mediterranean and migration: Postcards from a ‘crisis’”, Migration through the Mediterranean: Mapping the EU Response, European Council on Foreign Relations, Accessed May 17<sup>th</sup> 2020, [https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/mapping\\_migration](https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/mapping_migration)

and emergency housing”.<sup>4</sup> The search and rescue operations included maritime missions that were implemented to decrease fatality among boat journeys. However, they simultaneously acted as the first EU regulatory body for refugees. The maritime missions were responsible for bringing the ‘saved’ migrants to secured ports and harbours, where they were to undergo pre-identification. This process was enforced to assist the EU’s process of containment of economic migrants in opposition to refugees. The European Union’s approach to manage the crisis included an inherent focus on a black-on-white distinction between migrants and refugees, often disregarding the importance of context consideration. This is further conceptualised by the European Union’s decision to validate the need of international protection based on nationality, such that, if you were from a country with a 75% asylum-seeker acceptance rate, you were automatically approved for EU Member State relocation.<sup>5</sup> Through this, the EU hoped to relieve Italy of its migrant burden. However, the programme proved unsuccessful, with only 2.654 relocations, as opposed to the 39.600 goal as well as 25.000 request being made for Italy to “take asylum seekers back from other EU Member States”.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, European Union regulations and stricter enforced deferred expulsion orders caused merely 3% of migrants to receive permanent asylum. Mainly West-African natives were instructed to leave Italy within 7 days after arrival, as they are from so called non-asylum-seeking countries, limiting their opportunity to regularise positions in Italy after subsidiary periods or humanitarian protection as well as limit transit opportunities. In an attempt to deter individuals from migrating to Northern Europe, a large undocumented yet non-deportable population of West-African migrants and asylum-seekers with fewer rights was established in Italy.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the European Union has engaged in various councils and attempted to implement policies that will contain the movement of people. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, the Council of the European Union established the EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia, part of the EU CSDP, which in its three phases aims to “search, seize and disrupt the assets of smugglers”.<sup>8</sup> Although the website mentions that Operation Sophia sets out to address the root causes of the migrant crisis, it is intrinsically centred on seizing assets of smugglers and traffickers, as stipulated by the operation’s outline and actions.<sup>9</sup> This encourages short-term solutions to an ongoing global crisis.

## Introduction to the case

However, opposing this, is a more critical stance towards the actions of the EU, one which has been said to show “Europe’s worst side to the world”.<sup>10</sup> This stance is characterised by a critique of the European Union’s language and media use, their characterisation of actors in the crisis and the prioritisation of closed state borders over root cause issues. Furthermore, this Mediterranean-focused stance lacks a form of responsibility, as there is no consideration for the direct effects of European Union imposed policies and their contribution to migrant deaths. Rather, the burden of the migrant crisis is placed on traffickers who are made responsible for the boat journeys and their high mortality rates, at times even equated to modern-day slavery by European politicians. This however dismisses all agency of the refugees, who due to economic, political, legal or religious domination, are willing to embark on these dangerous and

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<sup>4</sup> Polly Pallister-Wilkins, “Interrogating the Mediterranean ‘Migration Crisis’”, *Mediterranean Politics* 21, no. 2 (2016): 312

<sup>5</sup> Simon McMahon and Nando Sigona, “Navigating the Central Mediterranean in a Time of ‘Crisis’: Disentangling Migration Governance and Migrant Journeys”, *Sociology* 52, no. 3, (2018): 504

<sup>6</sup> McMahon and Sigona, “Navigating the Central Mediterranean”, 504

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 504

<sup>8</sup> “Council establishes EU naval operation to disrupt human smugglers in the Mediterranean”, Press Releases, European Council, last modified May 18, 2015, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/05/18/council-establishes-naval-operations-disrupt-human-smugglers-mediterranean/>

<sup>9</sup> “About Us”, EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia, Accessed May 16<sup>th</sup> 2020, <https://www.operationsophia.eu/about-us/>

<sup>10</sup> Hsiao-Hung Pai, “The Refugee ‘crisis’ showed Europe’s worst side to the world,” *The Guardian*, January 1 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/01/refugee-crisis-europe-mediterranean-racism-incarceration>

possibly fatal journeys.<sup>11</sup> Deferring the issue to the traffickers aids in disregarding the true importance of the national crises that causes asylum-seekers and migrants to use the Mediterranean routes. Rather it places the focus on European external borders, which has caused an inadequate internally focused response to this crisis and fostered social and political ideas in opposition to, especially, migrants.<sup>12</sup> The European Union's approach to manage this crisis has included inadequate global consideration. Emergency measures were established that did not address the full scope of the issue. Therefore, this paper follows the perspective that de-aligns with the European Union's stance which is conceptualised through the implications of the measures and policies implemented. It will explore in greater detail the precise policies implemented and what ramifications they have had on the current migrant situation. Through a thorough understanding of past policies and their implications, suggestions can be made regarding a more appropriate approach to manage the Mediterranean migration crisis, in which all actors involved will be adequately respected and cooperated with.

### **Analysis of the crisis**

The migration of refugees and other migrants is not a new occurrence, similarly, the Mediterranean migration route has been a means of migration for decades. The fluctuation of the number of annually recorded migrants is linked to components of living standards in countries of origin and transit, geopolitics and the current European Union policies. The surge of migrants increased dramatically from 60.000 in 2013, to 219.000 in 2014 and finally reached over 1.000.000 in 2015. Additionally, the Mediterranean migration route is notorious for being the deadliest migration route globally, with deaths totalling over 5.000 in 2016, the deadliest Mediterranean migration year ever recorded. This increase in deaths was directly linked to the shut-down of the Turkey-Greece route, following the EU-Turkey agreement.<sup>13</sup> It is in this period, 2014 – 2016, that migration from the Middle East and North-Africa to the European Union was declared a crisis and harsh (emergency) measures and policies were implemented to achieve a solution. The majority of migrants arrive from the Central and Eastern Mediterranean migration routes. The Central route is composed through the transit from North-African countries, such as Libya, to Southern Member States such as Italy. The Eastern route is more novel and contributed extensively to the rapid increase of migrants between 2014 and 2015. This route is the link between Middle Eastern countries, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan to name a few, and Southern Member States such as Italy and Greece. Due to their high fatality rates, the European Union has tried to discourage mainly boat journeys. This has been done through a focus on anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking measures as well as the above-mentioned imposition of maritime missions. However, the inherent inward focus adopted by the European Union, in which the target is to limit refugees entering Europe, has proven only partially successful. These measures have not impacted the core reasons for migration nor the motivation of individuals to embark on this extremely dangerous travel. The incentive to migrate is situation and context specific and often highly sensitive. Nonetheless, the European Union has tried to make distinctions, suggesting that Syrian, Somali, Afghani and Eritrean migrants are usually fleeing from repressive regimes or war and violence, whereas West-African migrants tend to pursue economic objectives, somewhat disregarding that they too can face human rights violations. It is difficult to establish a single origin of migration but in broader terms, one can say that migrants tend to use the Mediterranean routes in hopes of a brighter future. There are a wide array of refugees and migrants, each

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<sup>11</sup> Antoine Pécoud, "Death at the Border: Revisiting the Debate in Light of the Euro-Mediterranean Migration Crisis," *American Behavioral Scientist* 64, no. 4 (2019): 382 - 383

<sup>12</sup> Pécoud, "Death at the Border", 583

<sup>13</sup> "Mediterranean crossing still world's deadliest for migrants – UN report", UNHCR, last modified November 24, 2017, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/11/637162-mediterranean-crossing-still-worlds-deadliest-migrants-un-report>

with their own personal motivations and reasonings, but often encouraged to migrate due to political, economic, legal or religious repression.

Furthermore, the European Union has established close relations with Turkey to combat the Eastern Mediterranean migration route. Established in March 2016, the EU-Turkey agreement, (as it is named on the European Council's website), has assisted in heavily reducing irregular migrants arriving in Europe from Turkey. Through this agreement, the European Union has committed to financing Turkey with €6 billion to aid its ability in continuing the containment and housing of migrants. Despite these efforts, pressures at the Greek-Turkish border have grown, resulting in an additional €700 million endowment to relieve this burden. In accordance with the agreement, Turkey has complied to implement stricter policies to refrain from (new) sea and land routes being used to reach the European Union from Turkey itself and more extensively from the Middle East.<sup>14</sup> The positioning of this arrangement within international and European law and whether it truly is an international agreement remain questionable. The EU-Turkey 'statement' rather, outlines an agreement between the parties involved and describes the content of the action points through highlighting commitments of all parties involved. However, both the phrasing in the document and the decision-making process disqualify its ability to be an international agreement. The EU-Turkey 'statement' was conducted by the European Council without approval of the European Parliament. Additionally, it is not in coherence with the guidelines of article 218 TFEU, disqualifying its legally binding abilities and therefore its being of an international agreement, it rather classifies as a statement.<sup>15</sup> The European Council played a key role in the decision-making process of the statement, therefore binding the EU to agreements, rather than individual Member States, yet the 'statement' does require Member State participation to fulfil EU obligations.<sup>16</sup> The focus on the European Council, opposed to a more inclusive multi-level decision-making process did allow for rapid action. Similarly, the stipulations of the agreement are not fully coherent with international and European Law, such as the 1:1 proposition, which arguably violates human rights as it equates Syrian refugees to commodities. Therefore, creating an actual international agreement would have drastically increased the length of the negotiation process and called for numerous reforms in the charter. Due to the urgency of the situation, the European Council most likely deliberately refrained from this.

Secondly, the European Union has implemented a Task Force, in collaboration with the African Union and the United Nations, to effectively deal with the Central Mediterranean migration routes. This Task Force has the objectives of “reducing the number of crossings and saving lives at sea, stepping up the fight against smugglers and traffickers, protecting migrants, increasing resettlement and promoting assisted voluntary returns, managing migrant flows through the southern Libyan border, increased cooperation with Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria and stepping up funding”.<sup>17</sup> There has been a noteworthy decrease in the number of migrants from the Central Mediterranean migration route as cases declined

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<sup>14</sup> “Eastern Mediterranean route”, EU Migration Policy, European Council, Accessed May 17, 2020, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/migratory-pressures/eastern-mediterranean-route/>

<sup>15</sup> Mauro Gatti, “The EU-Turkey Statement: A Treaty That Violates Democracy (Part 1 of 2)”, *Ejil:Talk*, April 18, 2016, <https://www.ejiltalk.org/the-eu-turkey-statement-a-treaty-that-violates-democracy-part-1-of-2/>. ;Fernández Arribas, Gloria “The EU-Turkey Statement, the Treaty-Making Process and Competent Organs. Is the Statement an International Agreement?”, Last modified April 9, 2017, <http://www.europeanpapers.eu/en/europeanforum/eu-turkey-statement-treaty-making-power-and-competent-organs> ; Julie De Vrieze, “The Legal nature of the EU-Turkey Statement” (MSc diss., University of Ghent), 1 – 60.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>17</sup> “Questions and Answers: Migration on the Central Mediterranean Route”, Europe in de Wereld, Europa Nu, [https://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vkb6izodoax3/nieuws/questions\\_answers\\_migration\\_on\\_the?ctx=vh1aly4653wh&s0e=vhdubxdwqzrw](https://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vkb6izodoax3/nieuws/questions_answers_migration_on_the?ctx=vh1aly4653wh&s0e=vhdubxdwqzrw)

from 181.000 in 2016 to 23.400 in 2018. The European Union has primarily strengthened the abilities and role of the Libyan coast guard, deferring migrants from commencing their sea journey to Europe. However, it has been noted that this has a short-term focus and through its inability to address the root cause of the migrant crisis is not sustainable. Due to the concentration on blocking migrants from travelling towards Europe, mainly the Italian government has assisted in increasing the power of non-state actors by “directly involving armed militias, local authorities and the coast guard”.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the detention centres have replaced the role smugglers and traffickers, becoming the new profiteers within the crisis, as migrants “often face physical and psychological abuse as well as extortion”.<sup>19</sup> This common foreign and security policy has focused on externalising European Union border control. Which has left little room for root cause solutions or the implementation of safe and legal entry routes for migrants and asylum-seekers.<sup>20</sup>

The Task Force is part of the European Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) which follows its own decision-making process. The European Council plays an important role in this as one of its main functions is developing the EU’s common foreign and security policy. These CFSPs are established in cooperation with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. He or she is chosen by the European Council with consent of the President of the European Commission. The position is currently held by Josep Borrell but was fulfilled by Federica Mogherini during the years of the Mediterranean migration crisis. The European Council uses its distinctive consultation procedure when international agreements are adopted under common foreign and security policies, albeit it be in a non-legislative manner. In this procedure, the European Parliament has the ability to approve, reject or propose amendments to the Council’s proposals although the Council is not legally obliged to take these amendments into account. Additionally, the CFSP follows an enhanced cooperation procedure, in which intergovernmental resolution is highly prioritised. The pattern is as follows: “application to the Council by the Member States concerned; proposal forwarded to the High Representative of the Union of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who gives an opinion; information of parliament; the Council acts on the basis of unanimity”.<sup>21</sup> The European Council “defines the priorities and strategic interests of the EU; the Council takes decisions or actions. The HR and the Member States put these decisions into effect, making use of national or Union resources. The President of the European Council can convene an extraordinary meeting of the European Council if international developments so require”.<sup>22</sup> This multi-level decision-making process is of high importance as it actively involves all Member States. Through extensive negotiations sustainable agreements are reached which can foster the anticipated outcomes through collective action. Additionally, the Task Force is a joint cooperation with other international bodies, highlighting the intrinsic need to follow international law and official EU decision-making processes strictly.

## **Policy recommendations**

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<sup>18</sup> “Migration through the Mediterranean”, European Council on Foreign Relations

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>21</sup> “Intergovernmental decision-making procedures”, The European Union’s legal system and decision-procedures, European Parliament, Accessed May 16, 2020 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/9/medvladni-postopki-odlocanja>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.,

Firstly, current policies could undergo small structural changes that improve conditions for parties outside the EU. Through the maritime missions, training of Libyan coast guards and transit centres, Libya has become a central component in European refugee containment. Within the Libyan transit and detention centres, refugees are exposed to horrible conditions including physical, psychological abuse and extortion. As a key driver in the increased need and occupation of these centres, the EU carries a responsibility to ensure safety for these migrants. The current policy can be amended to emphasise the European Union's role within Libyan borders. These transit centres must fall under the protection of the European Union such that criminal activity is discouraged and refugees are safely housed. This will likewise aid in decreasing incentives for migrants to continue their journey to Europe through settlement elsewhere. As this is a proposal for an amendment, I foresee little antilogy within the full CFSP decision-making process. An anticipated counterargument concerns the increased costs and difficulties in controlling these facilities among the North-African countries, namely Libya. Due to the political situation, EU control of these centres would demand the use of hard power. Therefore, centres can be placed in Tunisia and Morocco and the European Union can facilitate in relocating migrants that have already reached Libya. As for the increased cost, it will not compare to the welfare burden an influx of refugees could have on the Union. The only means to counter act these costs, is to place transit centres along the South-European borders as these would create employment opportunities for EU citizens. This proposal does urge for a second policy that facilitates in the integration or return of migrants as they will have reached European borders.

Secondly, within the Central route, I propose the European Union uses its Emergency Trust for Africa to engage with the continent in increased developmental manners. As majority of West-African migrants are classified as economic and therefore not applicable for asylum within EU borders, it is of high importance that their living conditions are improved substantially and sustainably, to demotivate them from embarking on this dangerous and fatal migration. The European Union can assist in this through providing African governments with the financial assistance needed to combat the exploitation of multinational corporations. Many developing Sub-Saharan African countries rely on foreign direct investment (FDI) as an integral part of their government budget. This is a continuing issue, rooted in the large debt acquired in the years subsequent to independence through neoliberal Western stimulation. Through this, African governments have fostered an inherent 'investment attraction' view, in which appealing to large multinational corporations governs state decisions. Often times, this creates increasing disparities between the rural and poor and the urban and wealthy of these nations.<sup>23</sup> For example, infrastructure is centred around resource extraction and urban centres to aid multinational corporations in their operations. This has created and encourages a viscous cycle, in which Africa's historical characteristics have impacted their governing capabilities, which has led to debt accumulation and present-day dependency on large Western multinational corporations. This reinforces primary commodity economies and discourages economic development for all, especially the most poverty-

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<sup>23</sup> Valentina A. Assanova and Matthew Regele, "Revisiting the Effect of Colonial Institutions on Comparative Economic Development," *Plos One* 12, no 5. (May 2016): 1-16. ;

Englebert, Pierre, "Pre-Colonial Institutions, Post-Colonial States and Economic Development in Tropical Africa," *Political Research Quarterly* 53, no. 1. (March 2000): 7-36. ;

Mahalik, K. Mantu, Muhammad Shahbaz and Muhammad Shafiullah, "The Dynamics of Financial Development, Globalisation, Economic Growth and Life Expectancy in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Australian Economic Papers* 58, no. 4 (August 2019): 444-479.

stricken.<sup>24</sup> It is therefore, that the European Union could play a transformative role in West-African economic development through assisting in corporation dependency relief. This can be achieved through assisting in economy transformation from primary- to value added economies. Through supplying West-African governments with conditional financial assistance, the EU can release the ties from corporations and enable local work, local businesses and local economy transformation. This will, according to economic theory, lead to a trickle-down effect and allow the rural and poor to be included in this development as well. This has the ability to tackle the root-cause of West-African migration and simultaneously aid in resettling migrants in their home countries. This would, however, require a long-term orientation through policy measures that can provide increased funding, with conditions specified to the African continent, countries and their systems. This can be achieved through a deeper understanding of Africa's current underdevelopment at the hand of various academic theories, such as the centre-periphery theory or the world systems theory.<sup>25</sup> Lastly it would acquire the continued oversight and encouragement of good governance. Furthermore, the European Union can engage in public private partnerships, encouraging local development and assisting African businesses in entering the European market through equalling the playing field and establishing well-functioning trade deals. Through private-public partnerships and financial aid, the European Union can assist African governments and businesses, such that in the long-run, exploitation and extraction can be minimised and development can occur. This would harbour a more efficient use of the African Trust Fund. Seen as the fund is already established and its current functions have not proven to push for change, I foresee this policy recommendation as being widely accepted. Supported through academic economic evidence the trail of a new approach harbours low risk. Additionally, it would aid in the objective of decreasing migrant flow and can create economic benefits to the EU through increased trade.

Thirdly, and in accordance with the Eastern migration route, I urge for the European Union to redefine its migrant and asylum-seeker policy measures. The migrants have already reached a safe haven from their violent home countries, namely Turkey. It is here forth, that the EU should enable safe and legal settlement within its borders. The European Union can do so, by revising its current policies and creating one coherent external migrant approach. Application for residency or asylum within the EU should become one coherent, fast and legal process for migrants housed in Turkey. Additionally, the 1:1 measure should be eradicated as it forms an infringement on human rights and equates Syrian refugees to commodities. Alliance with Turkey in this matter can be of high value and I propose the continuation of combined efforts to combat the issue. Through this, the EU can set up a more comprehensive application method and likewise continue to assist Turkey in discouraging migration over the Eastern Mediterranean route. Moreover, the use of quotas is discouraging as individual Member States should be granted authority over their acceptance rate of migrants. A quota basis places external pressures on Member States and accordingly discourages the integration and acceptance process of migrants and refugees. It simultaneously poses a threat to sovereignty as Member States are no longer in full control of their borders. Therefore, it's highly important that Member States can, on the basis of their own cultures, economies and political systems, determine how many migrants they will accept. If the European Council believes certain Member States to be under accepting in their rate of migrants, it can urge for change through new negotiations, a feature present in the CSFP decision-making process. Overall, a new migration policy should be set up which takes the following matters into account: a fast, safe and legal procedure; eradication of the 1:1 policy; a single coherent system for the entire European

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>25</sup> Peter J. Taylor, "Understanding Global Inequalities: A World-Systems Approach", *Geography* 77, no. 1 (January 1992): 10

Union; continued collaboration with Turkey to combat the core issue and demotivate migrants from using the Eastern Mediterranean migration route; individual Member States should implement integration procedures to facilitate acceptance of migrants and refugees; Member States should be encouraged to house as many migrants as believe they can; oversight from the European Council to ensure the measures are implemented correctly. I foresee this recommendation as widely accepted, as it is in more accordance with international and European law than the current agreement. Furthermore, it establishes a system through which the migration issue can legally and safely be addressed. It continues efforts to minimise migration through maintained collaboration with Turkey. It can additionally increase the positive outcomes of housing refugees through integration and acceptance encouragement. Lastly, it does not urge for drastic change in behaviour from individual Member States or increases in finance as much as it urges for a change in perspective and approach.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Mediterranean migration crisis has proven to be one of high complexity. Commencing in 2015 with the increase in usage of the migration route by roughly 800.000 individuals, put unprecedented pressures on the EU. This resulted in the prioritisation of EU Member States and the external borders of the Union. Accordingly, this fostered a containment and border security approach. This facilitated a short-term outlook that was unable to address the root-causes of the migration crisis. The EU took up measures against smugglers and traffickers and placed them at the centre of the crisis, overlooking the situations that force people to leave their home countries. Furthermore, this approach included the imposition of maritime missions and transit and detention centres along the North-African coast, ultimately resulting in human right infringements of the migrants. Likewise, through the EU-Turkey agreement, international and European law was omitted, transactioning 1:1 Syrian refugee. The policies implemented by the EU have proven inadequate to tackle the core issues of the migration crisis but have proven successful in containing migrants outside EU borders. This internal focus is what motivated the research question, namely 'how can the European Union foster long-term solutions to the Mediterranean migration crisis through multi-lateral cooperation?' The answer to this, lies within the policy recommendations urged for in this paper. The EU will have to adopt a more external focus, in which cooperation with external governments is integral to success. The parties involved include the Turkish government and North and West African governments. Through multi-lateral cooperation, the EU can amend the procedures along the North African coastline and guarantee safety for migrants that have reached the transit and detention centres. Furthermore, by adopting a long-term cooperation-based outlook, the EU can play a crucial role in aiding West African development. Through investment, private-public partnerships and trade deals, the EU can foster economic development in West Africa that is able to reach the rural and poor individuals of these countries. This will discourage economic migrants while simultaneously encouraging the resettlement of West-African migrants in the EU. Lastly, the EU can adopt a migration policy applicable to the entire Union, in which refugees in Turkey are able to safely, fastly and legally apply for asylum. Through focusing on integration and acceptance the EU can facilitate in enhancing the benefits for all parties, including its own Member States. Overall, the EU can actively and multilaterally involve all parties through focusing on the external and indirect effects its policies have. Through better implementation and oversight of their own policies, economic cooperation and well-functioning asylum procedures, the EU can fulfil its responsibility in the Mediterranean migration crisis.

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