

# Strategic support of countries along land and maritime borders of the European Union as a response to the migration crisis

*Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Skopje (18/11/2023)*

## Acknowledging that:

- The regulatory framework established by the Dublin II Regulations, though well-intentioned, exerts excessive strain on the initial entry countries.
- The lack of cohesiveness<sup>1</sup> within the EU in the asylum and migration policy, as some member states refuse to further liberalize their national asylum and migration policies<sup>23</sup>.
- The EU offers a possibility for tailor-made partnerships with neighbouring countries through the European Neighbourhood Policy which prioritizes the cooperation within economic development for stabilization, security, migration and mobility. This type of cooperation offers partner countries greater access to the EU's market and regulatory framework<sup>4</sup>.
- The creation of the European External Action Service as the diplomatic service of the EU responsible for the EU's strategic partnerships with non-EU countries<sup>5</sup>.
- The statement of cooperation between the EU and Turkey signed in March 2016 containing the following aspects<sup>6</sup>:
  - New irregular migrants entering Greece through Turkey as of March 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 were returned to Turkey;
  - A 1:1 resettlement scheme: for every Syrian returned to Turkey from the Greek island, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU taking into account the UN Vulnerability criteria
  - Turkey promised to take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes from Turkey to the EU;
  - In return the EU has promised Turkey visa liberalization, disbursement of 3 billion euros under the facility for Refugees in Turkey fund, additional funding of 3 billion euros which will be spent on specific projects aiming to help Syrian refugees in Turkey, further negotiations, and work on

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<sup>1</sup> da Conceição-Hedt, E. and M. Meunier, "Speaking with a single voice: internal cohesiveness and external effectiveness of the EU in global governance". (2014, pp. 963-967). *Journal of European Public Policy*. 21 (7): 961-979

<sup>2</sup> Traunner, F., "Asylum Policy: the EU's "crises" and the looming policy regime failure". (2016, pp. 320). *Journal of European Integration*. Routledge 38 (3)

<sup>3</sup> Zaun, N., "EU Asylum Policies: The Power of Strong Regulating States". (2017, pp. 5). Palgrave Macmillan

<sup>4</sup> European External Action Service. "European Neighbourhood Policy" (29.07.2021) available at: [european-neighbourhood-policy\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy_en) (accessed 16.10.2023)

<sup>5</sup> European External Action Service. "About the European External Action Service." (18.08.2021) available at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/about-european-external-action-service\\_en#8420](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/about-european-external-action-service_en#8420) (accessed 16.10.2023)

<sup>6</sup> European Council. "Press release: EU-Turkey statement" (18.03.2016) available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/> (accessed 16.10.2023)

the upgrading of the Customs Union, and the resumption and extension of Turkey's accession negotiations to the EU.

- A lot of criticism has been made regarding the statement of cooperation between EU and Turkey signed in March 2016.
- EU and European Commission has promoted several Institutional developments brought first by the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. Until today it has adopted the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility in 2011, European Agenda on Migration in 2015, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum in 2020. Parliament has adopted numerous own-initiative resolutions addressing on migration, including one in April 2016 focused on the Mediterranean situation and a holistic EU migration approach. In May 2021, a resolution on legal labor migration was adopted, contributing to a new legislative report on migration policy and law.<sup>7</sup>
- The creation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) which is the European Union's framework for asylum seekers. The CEAS sets out common standards and cooperation to ensure that asylum seekers are treated equally in an open and fair system wherever they apply. Also the development of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).<sup>8</sup>
- Frontex, is the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, that supports EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries in the management of the EU's external borders and the fight against cross-border crime. Its operational mandate involves coordinating and organizing European Union member states' border security operations ie Border Surveillance, Operational Support, Joint Operations, Training and Capacity Building and information sharing.<sup>9</sup>

### **Recognizing that:**

- The collaboration with EU neighbouring countries a large geopolitical significance in the context of migration trends.
- The existence of various migration motives, apart from refugees fleeing armed conflict and 1 persecution, there are also economic migrants.
- The importance of strengthening diplomatic and political collaboration with neighbouring countries in the realm of migration policy.
- Integration of larger numbers of immigrants is challenging due to significant cultural differences between the country of origin and the cultural values of the host countries.
- European Union and its member states having a humanitarian and legal responsibility to assist refugees in need that derives from the International Law and EU Treaties, established the EU Migration and Asylum policy.
- The current arrangement regarding migration policy lacks efficiency and there is a need for greater cooperation towards a long-term solution<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/152/immigration-policy>

<sup>8</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system_en)

<sup>9</sup> Frontex. "Who we are: Tasks & Missions". (2023) available at: <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/who-we-are/tasks-mission/> (accessed 22.10.2023)

<sup>10</sup> Friis, A.M. and A.E. Juncos, "The European Union's Foreign, Security, and Defence Policies" in M. Cini and N. Pérez-Solórzano Borragán (eds.). (2019, pp. 284) *European Union Politics, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- While the involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in migration activities plays a crucial role in providing humanitarian aid and support, it is imperative to acknowledge the multifaceted challenges that may emerge from their participation. These challenges encompass but are not limited to the potential for coordination inefficiencies, ethical considerations, dependencies on external assistance, uneven resource distribution, legal and regulatory barriers, security risks, public perception issues, and accountability concerns. Understanding and addressing these complexities are integral to fostering effective, ethical, and sustainable strategies in managing and supporting migrant populations.

### **YEPP calls on:**

- Frontex to steadfastly uphold its mission, supporting EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries in managing the EU borders effectively. EU to empower Frontex operations by equipping it with advanced tools and operational mechanisms in alignment with CEAS and EASO. In order to enable Frontex to act decisively against any actions contradictory to its mission, safeguarding the security particularly in detecting and deterring illegal migration attempts.
- The European Commission in collaboration with Frontex, to outline the need to review their operational mandate, which would provide clearer guidelines and responsibilities, thereby minimizing potential misunderstandings or criticisms from non-governmental entities.
- The European Union to improve the existing framework for the operations of non-governmental organizations regarding their operational involvement in the EU external borders security.
- The European Commission to investigate the operations of NGOs operating in the Mediterranean Region to ensure that their activities are consistent with the wider objectives of maritime security and the prevention of illegal migration.
- The European Parliament and Council of the European Union to provide Frontex with the necessary resources and capacities to address security challenges at the EU's external borders, e.g. through the use of advanced monitoring systems, such as drones.
- The European Union to create bilateral partnerships with given countries where the deployment of military personnel is necessary along the EU borders (land and maritime) to ensure security and prevent unauthorized crossings will be reciprocated with trade benefits, such as greater access to the common market of the EU.
- Member states to insist on collaborative efforts between the EU and the neighbouring countries to share intelligence, resources, and the best practices related to border control.
- The international community, member states, and relevant stakeholders to invest in the reconstruction of countries damaged by conflict in the proximity of the European Union, to stabilize the situation, and increase the standard of living and access to basic facilities.
- EU to allocate additional financial resources to the host communities, ensuring adequate support for essential services, infrastructure, humanitarian aid activities and protection of EU borders to address migration fatigue.

- European Commission and European External Action Services to revisit the EU - Turkey Statement and a potentially propose a new model framework for similar agreements. This should remain efficient in terms of controlling the illegal migrants arriving to the EU while assuring that the obligations which derives from the International Law, the EU Treaties and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms are respected.