

# Refugees' Integration Into European Society Priority Issue In Crisis Overcoming - OpEd

Leaders of some Central and Eastern European countries refused to support the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which should be signed in Moroccan Marrakesh in December.

For example, Czech President Milos Zeman noted that the adoption of the document could lead to increased illegal migration.

"I would definitely reject the UN Global Compact. Its main drawback is that it does not distinguish between illegal and legal migration," he said in an interview with the Prague TV channel Barrandov.

In turn Peter Szijjarto, Hungary's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, stated that the Global Compact for Migration is "the worst possible response to the migration crisis" the United Nations could provide, because "migration processes must be stopped, not encouraged, and its causes must be eliminated."

Slovakia, Poland, Austria and Croatia also refused to support an international agreement, one of the points of which calls mass migration "inevitable, necessary and desirable".

Meanwhile, German Chancellor Angela Merkel defended the United Nations agreement on migration, stressing that international efforts are needed to solve such problems.

"The debate about a global pact for migration, for orderly, legal migration in a world where there are 222 violent conflicts, in a world where more than 1 billion children are affected by these conflicts, in a world where there are 68.5 million refugees, 52 per cent of whom are children, this organization plays a central role. In 2015 [...] we realized that the problem of flight and migration had to be tackled at an international level, and no one country can do it alone," Angela Merkel said at the Bundestag's 2019 budget debate on November 21.

At the same time, according to observers, the situation associated with the influx

of migrants in the EU is difficult to assess unequivocally: on the one hand, it brings certain economic benefits, on the other – leads to unpredictable political consequences.

According to the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW), the influx of migrants had a positive impact on the economy in Germany, increasing GDP growth by an average of 0.2 percentage points per year. At the same time, according to the official statistics of the Federal Criminal Investigation Department of Germany, compared to 2016, the number of serious crimes committed by migrants increased in 2017 by 30%.

Commenting on the difficult situation, Roberto Castaldi, Research Director of International Centre for European and global governance, Director of the Research Centre on Multi-Level Integration and Governance Processes at eCampus University, pointed to the fact that the situation with migrants is very different in each EU member state.

“Some have set up effective integration policies, some haven’t. But what really influenced the political debate was the narrative and perception of a massive unregulated and un-governed influx. For example in many countries the perception of most citizens about the number of immigrants in their countries is up to 10 times the real numbers. There is currently no migration crisis in the EU in real terms, but there is in the public perception. This is fuelled by many extremist right-wing parties, which exploit that perception to gain votes. But they also need to sustain the narrative that keeps that perception, otherwise their electoral support would vanish,” the expert told PenzaNews.

In his opinion, situation with migrants in Germany is good.

“Unemployment in Germany is extremely low. There are many jobs that Germans would not take. Therefore there is space to integrate new migrants in the labor market,” Roberto Castaldi explained.

According to him, it is quite easy for refugees to find work in all European countries.

“Even in countries with high unemployment there are many jobs that locals would not take – for example in the seasonal agricultural sector, but also some permanent low-skilled jobs in manufacturing. And the only way to keep those

sectors of the economy going is by employing immigrants. If you visit certain Italian manufacturing districts in Italy – for example the leather production in Santa Croce – you’ll hardly find an Italian in the low-skill jobs. Without immigrants much of the Italian tomatoes produced in the south would not be picked up,” the analyst explained.

Speaking of security, he noted that overall the number of criminals within the immigrant population remains very low.

“The identification of migrants with crime is thus just a stereotype – a pars pro toto mechanism at work: you attach to the whole group the image of its worst, even if small, part. Most migrants and refugees are just poor people fleeing from civil wars, persecution, poverty, who wish a better life for themselves and their children,” he said.

At the same time, he stressed the importance of an effective integration policy.

“These people have experienced a lot of violence during their lives, so they are also more prone to use it as a means to solve controversies and tensions. Because that was the reality in which they were originally initially socialized. It requires educational work and cultural mediation to get migrants used to our way of life, including basic aspects that we usually simply take for granted,” Roberto Castaldi explained.

From his point of view, many problems in the European Union are connected with the reluctance of individual political groups to help resolve a difficult situation.

“Actually the Commission has proposed a comprehensive and compulsory system of refugees reallocation, and a reform of the Dublin regulations and the Parliament already approved them. It is the Member states who can’t find an agreement. In the end most of them prefer not to create a real European competence and capacity to decide and act on the matter, in order to keep this a national policy. For example in Italy extreme right-wing parties such as Lega now in government on the one hand attack the EU for not helping Italy enough and not showing solidarity. But on the other hand they vote against the reform of the Dublin regulation that would make the EU able to help Italy more,” the analyst said.

In turn, Anton Friesen, Member of the foreign affairs committee and the

committee on humanitarian assistance and human rights of the German Parliament, AfD MP, called the migrant influx into the EU a fundamental challenge.

“Chancellor Merkel’s no border policy has deeply divided the EU. A rather migrant-critically block in the East and a pro-immigrant block in the West. But even the pro-immigrant countries like Sweden have already acknowledged that there are some limitations concerning the capacities of integration,” he said.

According to him, Germany is the only country that still keeps its no border policy.

“That means no migrant can be rejected on the German-Austrian border when he claims asylum. Even there is obviously no danger for him in Austria. Furthermore the migrant crisis splits the European societies. A rational debate about migration is not possible anymore. This is dangerous for all of us,” Anton Friesen added.

Commenting on the survey data, showing the positive impact of migrants on the economy of Germany, the deputy drew attention to the narrowness of the analyzed information.

“There is no doubt that some migrants found work in Germany, because our economy is booming. But you have to see this allegedly success in a bigger picture. Germany has a sophisticated welfare state. That means if you have a poorly paid job, the state gives you additional social benefits for example for your rent or your children. Furthermore the migrants get free access to our health system. If you compare the benefits from migrants from Islamic countries for our country to their costs, the result is clearly negative. Of course, there are some migrant groups from Eastern Europe, for example, Poles, where the benefits are bigger than the costs,” Bundestag deputy said.

Meanwhile, in his opinion, German media usually don’t report on negative aspects of migration and security issues are not taken seriously.

“You have to read Austrian or Swiss media to get information about the critical situation in Croatia. It’s still a taboo in Germany to talk about the fact that the most of the so called refugees who come to our country are Muslim young men. There are hundreds of murders or rape cases, in which these so called refugees are the perpetrators – in Chemnitz, Freiburg, Kandel and so on. Political

correctness is the biggest treat for our society. If you can't name a problem, you can't solve it," Anton Friesen said.

Meanwhile, Kenneth Kristensen Berth, Member of Folketing for the Danish People's Party, Vice-Chairman of the European Affairs Committee in the national Parliament, stressed that the problem of integration is very difficult.

"It is impossible to integrate a group of people who do not want to be integrated. To my knowledge not a single western European country has managed to integrate people from the MENA countries in any successful way," the politician said.

Moreover, in his opinion, the situation in Germany should not be compared with the situation in many other European countries.

"It is not what we have experienced in Denmark where about 25 percent are now employed which means that three quarters of the people arriving are still dead weight for the society. By the way, getting a job does not necessarily mean that you are integrated," Kenneth Kristensen Berth said.

"The vast majority of Turkish guest workers who were employed in Denmark during the sixties and seventies were never integrated into Danish society but stock to their own traditions and isolated themselves from the rest of society," Member of Folketing added.

According to him, the security situation associated with the influx of migrants also leaves much to be desired.

"There are no doubt that the majority of these people are single men and that they produce a security risk not only in regard to terrorism but also for young women who risk falling prey to those who are not used to respecting women," Kenneth Kristensen Berth explained.

Kamal Sido, Head of Middle East Department of the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP), noted that right-wing forces in Germany oppose the arrival of migrants primarily from Muslim countries.

"However, I think that the integration system is developed quite well - the children of migrants get education, learn German. [...] Refugees want to quickly find a job, because they have nothing. Thus, they help the economy of the country

to which they arrive. This statement is equally true, for example, for Syrian refugees in Turkey, people from Central Asia in Russia, as well as migrants in Western countries,” the expert said.

Nevertheless, he shared the view that countries need to pay particular attention to the integration process.

“In most cases, people who leave their homeland want to live in peace, because they are very tired of wars, want their children to go to school, and then find a job. For example, refugees from Afghanistan and Syria are very exhausted by the difficult situation in their home countries. However, among the migrants there are some radical people. Therefore, it is very important that the integration process and support measures help migrants to quickly adapt to life in European society,” Kamal Sido concluded.

Source: <https://penzanews.ru/en/analysis/65803-2018>

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