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The Impact of Migration Policies on the EU's Image as a Value-Driven Normative Actor

Çiğdem Üstün


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*Çiğdem Üstün***

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Introduction

Vain EU integration policies, hostilities towards refugees in host countries, the deaths of hundreds of people in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes towards Europe, the ineffectiveness of the EU in formulating humane policies to be adopted by all its Member States (MSs), opt-outs, the images of these states closing their borders with electric wired fences to prevent people in need from entering their territory... These are some of the things that come to our minds when one speaks about migration and Europe. It was said that “EU governments only seem able to agree on outsourcing responsibility and insourcing misery” in relation to migration policies just before the Summit of June 2018 (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Due to the Syrian War, there are 6.6 million internally displaced persons and over 5.5 million people have fled the country since 2011, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2018). In 2016, there were almost 750,000 asylum seekers in Germany and, in 2017, this number went down to almost 300,000 (Eurostat, 2017). Other EU countries accepted a far smaller number of applicants in the same years. Along with these, the EU has been putting a lot of effort into externalisation and securitisation as part of its external immigration policies, casting a cloud on its value-driven normative actorness.

On the domestic front, the lack of consistency in integration policies among the Member States thickened this cloud. The EU's distinct ability to be a normative actor in its neighbourhood and in global politics has been debated widely in the literature. Starting from this premise, this paper aims to answer the question of whether the EU can be defined as a normative actor when it comes to its immigration policies. The paper will assess the normative actorness of the EU in the light of migration and asylum policies in the last two decades and the effects of its reaction to the large-scale arrival of migrants and asylum seekers from 2015 on. The first part of the paper starts by asking about the meaning of being a normative actor and provides some debate on the normative actorness of the EU. In the second part, the paper dwells upon the policies that the EU adopted both at the domestic and external levels. This part discusses externalisation, securitisation, consistency and credibility, followed by answers to the question of whether the non-EU countries see the EU as an international actor with a high impact factor, promoting norms and values or not. The paper concludes by providing three concrete policy suggestions to be followed if the EU should be perceived as a normative value-driven actor.

Defining the EU as a Value-Driven Normative Actor

The normative power of the EU has been one of the most criticised characteristics of its foreign policy, on the one hand, but was also presented as a flagship, differentiating its role as a global actor, on the other. Especially after the formulation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU's role as a benign international actor – in comparison to other global powers, such as Russia and the United States (US) – was perceived as an advantage in dealing with Mediterranean and Black Sea countries. The normative content of the EU in external affairs and its ability to be a value-driven actor were topics of interest (Schimmelfennig, 2012) due to the potential of Europe in protecting human rights, first in its neighbourhood and then at a more global level. There is abundant literature on Europeanisation beyond the EU and the impact of relations with the EU on respect for human rights and the rule of law in neighbouring countries and beyond. Europe was called a “civilian power” in the 1970s by Duchene (Manners & Diez, 2007) and, in the 2000s, “normative power” became the buzzword.

As part of its foreign policy and security strategy, the EU promoted good governance in its neighbourhood and used political conditionality to push these countries to implement and respect the rule of law. The European Security Strategy of 2003 read: “Spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order” (Council of the European Union, 2003).

According to Manners, the EU is normatively different and promotes “universal norms and principles” in its relations with non-members (Manners, 2002). Manners and Diez define normative power as “a power in which influence is exerted by norms themselves rather than military arsenals or economic incentives,” and differentiate between civilian and normative power since “normative power can use military power when appropriate such as humanitarian intervention” (Manners & Diez, 2007). Bicchi argued that the EU's actions embrace a set of universal values that distinguishes “normative power Europe” from other international actors (Bicchi, 2006).

While the normative character of the EU has been presented as a valuable asset, it was not immune to criticisms. For instance, the EU lacked unity in its foreign policies; it was an unequal economic counterpart due to its protectionist stands in trade agreements, thus the word partnership in economic terms has been perceived as misleading; and it is a politically weak actor at the global level (Larsen, 2014). Hyde-Price argued that defining EU foreign and security policies as ethically transforming the world is problematic since:

“It leaves the EU open to the charge of hypocrisy when it proclaims its ethical intentions but then pursues policies that favour European interests; reduces the Union to a weak and ineffective actor in an international system disfigured by security competition; and the outcomes are tragically at variance with the original good intentions” (Hyde-Price, 2008).

Similarly, Bouris in relation to EU policies towards Israel stated that:

“The concept of NPE [Normative Power Europe] also faces limitations when it comes to the promotion of democracy. The first of these is that there is a huge gap between the EU's rhetoric and reality. The EU has never made a serious attempt to challenge, for example, Israel's policies and its continuous violations of human rights or to apply any sanctions to it. In this way, all these norms that the NPE promotes such as ‘democratisation’, ‘respect for human rights’, ‘good governance’ and much more turn out to be empty words and make the EU lose credibility” (Bouris, 2011).

Seeberg's criticisms over the ENP Action Plan with Lebanon also highlight the inconsistency of EU policies suggesting that it pursues a realist agenda disguised in normative policies (Seeberg, 2009). Criticisms of EU foreign policy increased as it proved ineffective in dealing with the new developments and conflicts in its neighbourhood. The EU's delayed reaction to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (Johansson-Nogués, 2007), the more security-oriented policies of the Member States towards the Western Balkans (Noutcheva, 2007), the 5-day-war in Georgia, the Arab revolts, and the Russian annexation of Crimea are some of the historical turning points when the EU lacked any ability to intervene as a normative power. Nevertheless, research carried out before the 2015 *migration crisis* shows that “perceptions of the EU as a normative power are more prominent in the countries neighbouring the EU” (Larsen, 2014) than in remote regions, such as Southeast Asia and Latin America. Diez and Pace argue that EU institutions – i.e. the Commission, the Council and the Parliament – have made an effort to self-construct and represent an image of the “EU as a force for good and that much of the normative power discourse is not about an objective analysis of EU behaviour but rather about the construction of an identity” (Diez & Pace, 2007).

When one describes normative power, concepts such as peace, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and international law stand out rather than strategic goals: “a normative goal pursues international regularisation in a manner that binds the

behaviour of all parties" (Tocci, 2008). If we take this as a litmus test for the EU to be considered as a normative power, the 2015 *migration crisis* demonstrated that the EU departed from international regulations and sought strategic goals such as migration management, protection of any sort of interests and security.

Manners determines three aspects to evaluate if an actor is behaving as a normative power: principles, actions and impact. According to his definition, normative power should be seen as legitimate in the principles promoted; and legitimacy of principles in world politics comes from previously established international conventions, treaties, agreements and so on. An actor should be able to be persuasive in actions in order to promote these principles through socialisation, partnership and ownership (Manners, 2009).

If we look at the EU's recent policies on various *crises*, it can be argued that it was not successful in defending human rights, the rule of law and democratisation, and that the impact of its policies has been questioned severely. Börzel, Dandashly and Risse argue that during the Arab revolts external actors found themselves walking a fine line between principled support for human rights and democracy, on the one hand, and security and stability, on the other. According to them, although the EU and the US seek to promote human rights and democratisation – since in the long-term peace and prosperity can be achieved in a more democratic environment in the region –, the EU's response to the Arab revolts was neither coherent nor consistent. Research has shown that the EU did not suffer from problems of actorness any more than other democratic states (Börzel, Dandashly, & Risse, 2015). However, in contrast to other democratic states, the EU had portrayed itself as a force for good whose central component was that "it exists as being different to pre-existing political forms" (Manners, 2001). Consistency has also been perceived as a central component of a policy to be considered as credible. Nicolaïdis and Nicolaïdis argue that:

"Fundamentally, normative power can only be applied credibly under a key condition: consistency between internal policies and external prescriptions and actions [...] Nevertheless, at least initially, the democratic peace argument won the day in the design of the EMP [European Mediterranean Policy] simply because this is the narrative at the core of the EU construct itself, and one increasingly applied to its relations with the rest of the world" (Nicolaïdis & Nicolaïdis, 2006).

**EU Migration Policies Outside its Borders:
Externalising and Securitising**

Externalisation has been described as “extraterritorial actions to prevent migrants from entering the legal jurisdictions of destination countries or regions or making them legally inadmissible without individually considering the merits of their protection claims” (Frelick, Kysel, & Podkul, 2016). It has also been defined as a system for off-shoring the migration process and shifting its associated burden (Katz, 2017). According to the literature, externalisation has two main components. The first is the use of classical migration control instruments such as border control; measures to combat irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking; asylum systems’ capacity-building; and migration management in transit countries. The second component is a series of provisions to facilitate the return of asylum seekers and irregular migrants to third countries (Boswell, 2003).

Although externalisation has been a policy of the EU for decades, it became more of a debated issue recently, since 2015 marked the worst *migration crisis* since the aftermath of the Second World War (Bendixsen, 2016). In the aftermath of the Arab revolts, the number of migrants arriving to EU borders through the Eastern and Central Mediterranean routes was on the rise. As a response to this increase, the EU leaned towards externalisation and securitisation of migration policies, resulting in “[the] EU contradicting itself in the fields of democracy promotion, rule of law, and human rights, which are based on the EU’s self-perception as a normative power” (Demelhuber, 2011). The Union had already been accused of ignoring the repressive practices of autocratic regimes and chaotic states with records of violations of human rights (Richey, 2013) in the region, even before the debates on the negative effects of externalisation and securitisation of migration policies gained traction.

As securitisation began to frame immigration policies and immigrants began to be perceived as potential security threats, the aspirations for externalisation were amplified. In 1999, with the Tampere Council Conclusions, externalisation became a clear policy: “The European Council calls for assistance to countries of origin and transit to be developed in order to promote voluntary return as well as to help the authorities of those countries to strengthen their ability to combat effectively trafficking in human beings and to cope with their readmission obligations towards the Union and the Member States.” (European Council, 1999)

In 2002, in Seville, the European Council started to adopt a security-oriented approach towards migration while continuing its externalising efforts. The strategies adopted included combating irregular immigration, joint operations at external borders, and integration of immigration policy in relations with third countries (Koff, 2017). The Hague Programme, which was operational between 2005 and 2010, developed a European

asylum system, partnerships with third countries to prevent irregular immigration, the utilisation of biometrics in border control, and integration measures for migrants legally working in the EU (European Council, 2005).

According to the 2005 Strategy on the External Dimension of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, the political priorities of the EU were: protecting human rights; strengthening institutions; migration, asylum and border management; and the fight against terrorism and organised crime. In the light of these priorities, the EU decided to adopt a tailored approach to respond to challenges, which mainly involved encouraging flexibility and coordination between the different EU institutions and pillars while increasing partnerships with third countries (European Commission, 2005). The objectives of the 2005 Global Approach to Migration are defined as: “better organising legal migration, and fostering well-managed mobility; preventing and combating irregular migration, and eradicating trafficking in human beings; maximising the development impact of migration and mobility; promoting international protection, and enhancing the external dimension of asylum” (European Commission, 2019).

It was also argued that, since 2010, EU migration policy focused on reducing irregular and unwanted migration while opening up for migrants who were viewed favourably (Palm, 2016). In 2011, the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility was published with the key objective of becoming a more strategic, more efficient framework for managing migration. Some countries and regions – i.e. Turkey, the Western Balkans, Russia, India, China, Nigeria, South Africa, the US, Canada and Australia – were highlighted as potential mobility partners with which to establish bilateral dialogues.

The adoption of a common EU agenda on migration and mobility was also recommended. From 2015 on, the European Agenda on Migration focused more on Frontex operations, targeting criminal smuggling networks, relocation and resettlement mechanisms, and maximising the development benefits for countries of origin, taking stronger action in order to make sure that third countries fulfil their obligations and readmit their nationals (European Commission, 2015). In 2016, the Migration Partnership Framework identified short-term measures in line with the European Agenda on Migration, these being specific operations, the fight against smugglers, facilitating further returns and resettlement, and more financial aid to Africa, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria (European Commission, 2016b). Another policy framework of the Union, the ENP, also became an important instrument to externalise migration through mobility partnerships and readmission agreements in the 2000s. Both in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood, the EU signed mobility partnerships with non-EU countries, i.e. Moldova in 2008, Georgia in 2009, Armenia in

2011, Belarus in 2016, Morocco in 2013, Jordan in 2014 and Tunisia in 2014. It also signed readmission agreements with its neighbouring countries and with others falling outside the scope of the ENP – such as China, Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR, Pakistan, Russia and Sri Lanka –, which proves the EU's efforts to increase the number of gatekeepers as part of its external migration policies. Although some of these agreements are not ratified, their mere existence demonstrates the intentions of the Union.

Literature on the ENP also highlights a change in policy implementation, suggesting that as the narrative turned into a more security-oriented one, the lesser norms and values have been considered in policy-making. Literature on this change suggests three different periods, in which different narratives prevailed: stability, good governance and prosperity until 2010; democratisation and inclusiveness until 2013; and instability and security in the following years (Cianciara, 2017).

In the 2010s, the European External Action Service (EEAS) started prioritising migration as an issue in all of its dealings with third countries and Mogherini said that “[migration] is not only a humanitarian emergency but also a security crisis since smuggling networks are linked to and finance terrorist activities” (Geddes & Hadj-Abdou, 2018). From that time on, it became very difficult to separate security policies and immigration policies. Project Seahorse, the Seahorse Network, Seahorse Cooperation Centres and the West Sahel Project were already examples of transnational police operations to stop irregular migration from West Africa (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, & Pickles, 2016).

As security-focused approaches became more visible and acceptable, three big operations against *illegal* migration and human trafficking were put into place: the EU Naval Force Med Operation Sophia, Frontex's Operation Triton and NATO's Standing Maritime Group 2 deployment in the Aegean Sea. Over the years, the budget allocated to Frontex increased from €93 million in 2010 to €320 million in 2018 (Nielsen, 2018). Besides, Germany, Greece and Turkey requested NATO's involvement in the Aegean Sea and in February 2016 NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced that the Alliance had agreed to join the international efforts to prevent illegal activities in the area (Fitzgerald & Ruhrmann, 2016). In addition to these operations, the Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABIT) were established in order to provide emergency assistance to EU Member States and Schengen area countries.

In 2018, another step to further externalise immigration control was discussed under the framework of regional disembarkation platforms. Originally, this idea was formulated in a 2003 policy paper – A New Vision for Refugees – by then British PM Tony Blair. His

idea was that the EU should establish Regional Protection Areas near refugee origin countries in order to contain them (Bendixsen, 2016) and serve as off-shore processing centres (Katz, 2017).

At the time, this idea was not accepted; however, 15 years after, the European Council, in its conclusions of 28-29 June 2018, “invited the Council and the Commission to swiftly explore the concept of regional disembarkation platforms, in close cooperation with relevant third countries, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)” (European Commission, 2018). The concept of disembarkation platforms triggered hostile reactions in North African countries. The Libyan FM Mohamed Al-Taher Siala was one of the most vocal opponents of this concept and stated that “all North African countries reject this proposal – Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Libya” (ArabNews, 2018). The Moroccan FM Nasser Bourita also asserted that he “sees disembarkation platforms as inappropriate and a counterproductive solution to the migration situation” (Melicherová, 2019).

The EU's concentric circles approach¹ and securitisation policies have been aimed at preventing the people in need from reaching the EU borders throughout the years. Instability and security narratives use strategies, grand strategies and interests in shaping the policies towards neighbouring countries and beyond. The 2016 EU Global Strategy, and the report evaluating its progress, state that security and defence are essential components for a credible EU in the world (European External Action Service [EEAS], 2017). The dealings with Turkey and Libya in the aftermath of the 2015 *migration crisis* can be seen as complimentary to the Global Strategy, providing security and serving the interests of the Union in relation to migration.

Turkey and Libya as Migration Gatekeepers

Relations with Libya and Turkey played a special role in the externalisation and securitisation of EU migration policies. In the 2000s, the Italian islands of Linosa and Lampedusa, in the Central Mediterranean, were the main gates for asylum seekers coming from Africa to Europe. In 2009, Italian and Libyan authorities agreed on further controlling irregular migration but, during the Arab revolts, the flows of migrants increased again and, in 2013, more than 360 individuals drowned while trying to reach EU soil. In the Aegean Sea, the situation was not very different: thousands of people tried to reach the Greek islands of Lesbos, Chios and Rhodes from Turkey. In order to prevent these people from reaching European borders, the EU pushed for gate-keeping policies and

1 At the end of the 1990s, the concentric circles approach towards migration foresaw linking neighbours of Schengen states to a similar system, which should be brought increasingly into line with the first circle's standards, particularly with regard to visa, border control and readmission policies. A third circle of states – comprising the Commonwealth of Independent States area, Turkey and North Africa – will then concentrate primarily on transit checks and combating facilitator networks, and a fourth circle (Middle East, China, black Africa) on eliminating push factors (Furness, 2000).

fencing measures, which actively targeted *illegal* migrants in order to arrest and then expel them (Triandafyllidou, 2014).

In March 2016, the EU-Turkey statement regarding the control of migrants' crossings from Turkey to EU soil foresaw that all irregular migrants arriving in the Greek islands will be automatically returned to Turkey and that, in exchange, EU Member States would take one Syrian refugee from Turkey for every Syrian returned from the islands. This statement – a.k.a. *deal* – included financial aid to Turkey aimed at developing projects for the migrants living in its territory. In 2017, the Maltese PM Joseph Muscat proposed that the so-called *migration deal* with Turkey should be an example for a *deal* with Libya.

In November 2017, a Joint Statement on the Migration Situation in Libya was published and in this declaration the actors praised the Turkish *deal* for halting migration to EU countries and stated that: “We will step up our work with Libya as the main country of departure as well as with its North African and sub-Saharan neighbours” (Council of the European Union, 2017). According to this statement, Libya’s capacity-building in managing migrants and refugees, the improvement of the conditions of the migrants living in the country and the disruption of human trafficking routes were the main priorities. The EU also declared that it will be funding 15,000 additional assisted voluntary returns and speed up the support for the emergency transit mechanism with at least 1,000 resettlements by February 2018 (EEAS, 2018).

As the declaration makes references to the *deal* with Turkey, analysts criticised the EU by arguing that “a similar result is unlikely in the immediate term in the Central Mediterranean because of the continuing instability in Libya” (Asiedu, 2017). The declaration was condemned because it does not make any reference to Libya’s international legal obligations nor does it establish an independent monitoring mechanism (Nakache & Losier, 2017). It has also been argued that Turkey is a functioning state whereas in Libya the political situation is far from stable. And even then, the *deal* with Turkey has been widely criticised on the grounds of human rights, since it undermines access to fair and efficient asylum procedures (Tunaboylu & Alpes, 2017). The EU was accused of disregarding its own principles and the *deal* has indeed been a tool for the implementation of EU short-term policies, lacking any long-term perspective on strengthening ties with Turkey (Senyuva & Ustun, 2016) or promoting the rule of law and respect for human rights in the country.

Another issue raised regarding these policies was that they are in conflict with the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the EU, which clearly states that collective

expulsions are prohibited and the right to asylum shall be granted. In order to prevent scrutiny by EU institutions, such as the European Parliament and the Court of Justice of the EU, the *deal* with Turkey is not an agreement, but a statement, which was not adopted by the EU itself, but rather by the Heads of State/Government of its Member States (Slominski & Trauner, 2018).

The Director of the Migration Policy Centre criticised the EU by stating that:

“The high price tag of the EU-Turkey ‘deal’ has sent a message to other non-EU countries that their cooperation on migration is a commodity that is rapidly increasing in value, as well as a message to major refugee hosting countries – the vast majority of which are developing countries – that their responsibilities to the vulnerable and displaced are optional and can be outsourced” (Parent, 2016).

The *deal* between Turkey and the EU foresees that “all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands as of 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey” (Council of the European Union, 2016). This clause brought heated debate on the safe country principle and how the EU implements it. The EU Asylum Procedures Directive gives three options for resettlement: a normal safe third country, a European safe country or the country of first asylum. European safe countries are also called “super safe countries”, which “ratified the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, observes its provisions, including the standards relating to effective remedies and observes the provisions of the Geneva Convention without any geographical limitations” (Lehner, 2018).

Turkey applies a geographical limitation to the Geneva Convention, and only accepts the ones coming from the West as refugees.² On the one hand, human rights activists working on the issue criticised the *deal* on the grounds that Turkey cannot be accepted as a safe country due to this limitation. On the other hand, it was argued that these limitations do not constitute a problem since practices are more important than legal qualifications (Thym, 2016). Turkey gave assurances to the European Commission and adopted the Temporary Protection Regulation, which provided a framework for Syrian refugees’ basic rights and access to social services, as well as a guarantee of the non-refoulement principle (Lehner, 2018). However, these assurances did not bring the debates on the matter to an end.

On the other hand, the EU’s approach vis-à-vis Libya, which lacked any incentives in terms of political cooperation, led to the militarisation of migration policy and increased

² Turkey, while party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, maintains the geographical limitation only to people originating from Europe. Despite this limitation, it provides non-European refugees with protection and temporary asylum, pending UNHCR’s search for durable solutions elsewhere.

concerns over asylum seekers and migrants' wellbeing since they were left at the mercy of militias and corrupt officials in the Central Mediterranean (Khadkiwala, 2016).

Articles 1 and 2 of the MoU between Italy and Libya highlight some key measures, such as the completion of Libya's southern land border control system; adjustments and funding for the local reception centres; and training for the Libyan personnel working in such centres, with a special focus on their ability to deal with immigration and human trafficking. Considering these shortcomings, the European Commission disclosed €200 million for Libya and North Africa in order to increase the efforts to stop migrant boats within the country's territorial waters (European Commission, 2017).

Financial incentives were also used in the context of the *deal* between Turkey and the EU:

“The EU, in close cooperation with Turkey, will further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated 3 billion EUR under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey and ensure funding of further projects for persons under temporary protection identified with swift input from Turkey before the end of March [...] Once these resources are about to be used to the full, and provided the above commitments are met, the EU will mobilise additional funding for the Facility of an additional 3 billion EUR up to the end of 2018” (Council of the European Union, 2016).

The UN Human Rights Commissioner Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein stated that the EU's policy of helping Libyan authorities to detain migrants is inhuman and that “the suffering of migrants detained in Libya is an outrage to the conscience of humanity” (DW, 2017). UNHCR and the UN Support Mission in Libya referred to the situation as “a human rights crisis. The breakdown in the justice system has led to a state of impunity, in which armed groups, criminal gangs, smugglers and traffickers control the flow of migrants through the country” (Lewis, 2016).

Doctors Without Borders asked the EU to take the migrants to safe places rather than Libya. The roadmap outlined in Malta and the MoU signed between Italy and Libya in 2017 (Memorandum of Understanding, 2017) have been condemned by human rights activists, who state that “the Italians are outsourcing to Libya what they are prohibited from doing themselves” (Sea Watch, 2018). In the light of these statements, the image of the EU as a normative actor, promoting respect for human rights in international affairs, became further tainted. A recent survey conducted on the elites in the Southern

Neighbourhood region demonstrates that the perception of the EU's security policies and response to the *migration crisis* is overwhelmingly negative (Dark, 2018).

Thus, the external dimension of the EU migration policies contributed to the decreasing credibility of the Union and damaged its image as an exemplary normative power for various reasons: (1) due to its externalisation efforts, the EU has become an actor financially supporting countries that do not respect the rule of law and human rights; (2) it has adopted security-oriented policies to pursue strategic and pragmatic short-term interests; (3) neither Turkey as a candidate for accession to the Union, nor Libya as a neighbour, have embraced the EU's people-oriented principles – instead, the EU has adopted policies that contribute to building a “fortress Europe”; (4) finally, the EU adopted restrictive measures when it became clear that the rights-based approach could not be sustained.

**EU Migration Policies Inside its Borders:
Rights-Based or Interests-Based?**

Some of the EU's internal policies on migrants in relation to the labour market, employment and social inclusion also had a negative impact on its normative actorness and self-constructed force-for-good image abroad, since they demonstrated the EU's preference for interests-based policies rather than rights-based ones.

The Directive on “minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status” gave states the right to detain applicants in special facilities; envisaged exceptional procedures; and put the notions of “safe countries of origin”, “first countries of asylum” and “safe third countries” in the spotlight regarding criteria for rejection (Official Journal of the European Union, 2005). This Directive was criticised due to the fact that, according to it, the right to appeal for asylum may not prevent deportation. In 2008, the Directive on “common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals” was also condemned on the basis of protection of human rights, since it allowed the return of migrants while identifying their stay as illegal (Official Journal of the European Union, 2008). A year later, in 2009, the length of the detention period before expulsion increased from two to six months, and irregular residence could incur prison sentences of up to three years. In 2017, a new regulation for an entry-exit system was adopted to effectively register entry, exit and refusal of entry information of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Schengen area (Official Journal of the European Union, 2017). This new step by the EU, considered together with the cooperation mechanisms with third countries, has been perceived as a new tool for building a fortress Europe.

In September 2015, the EU adopted an emergency resettlement programme to allocate quotas for its Member States and relocate migrants after a vote in the Council of the EU by qualified majority, with the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Latvia voting against and Denmark and Britain opting out (Traynor, 2015). The idea was to share the burden among all EU Member States; instead, it created tensions between them. Hungary and Slovakia asked the European Court of Justice (ECJ) to annul this programme arguing that quotas were not suitable to respond to the crisis. However, this was rejected by the ECJ on the basis that the agreement actually contributes to enabling Greece and Italy to deal with the crisis and that it is proportionate (BBC, 2017). Furthermore, the quota system created problems between the EU institutions, when the President of the European Council Donald Tusk wrote a letter to the EU27 leaders on migration and stated that “the issue of mandatory quotas has proven to be highly divisive and the approach has received disproportionate attention in the light of its impact on the ground; in this sense it has turned out to be ineffective” (Tusk, 2017).

In response to Tusk's letter, the European Commissioner for Migration Dimitris Avramopoulos said that Tusk's proposals were unacceptable and anti-European (Valero, 2017). As an alternative, Fernández-Huertas and Rapoport (2015) proposed an EU-wide market for tradable refugee quotas arguing that it would "allow for revealing information on the true costs of accommodating refugees in the participating countries, and it would allow and force countries to exploit their comparative advantages in either 'hosting' or 'funding'" (Fernández-Huertas & Rapoport, 2015). Their proposal underlines the need for attracting labour force to the EU. Member States' needs and labour policies differ from each other and immigrants' access to the labour market varies from country to country. These differences have an impact on the level of skills that migrants have in host countries: "Some countries like the UK and Ireland are characterized by a high skilled foreign born population while France, Germany and the Netherlands have low skilled foreign born population" (Paola & Brunello, 2016). For example, in the UK foreign workers can only apply for jobs included on the Shortage Occupation List; in Sweden, proof of identity and work permits are required; in Cyprus, asylum seekers can only work in low-skilled jobs; in Austria, employment is limited to seasonal work; and in Germany, the waiting period to access the labour market is around three months (Constant & Zimmerman, 2016).

However, the need to attract highly educated migrants is a common concern for all EU Member States. Thus, the EU Blue Card Scheme was upgraded in 2016 and it was estimated at the time that it would bring a positive annual economic impact of between €1.4 billion and €6.2 billion from additional highly skilled workers coming to the EU to take up jobs (European Commission, 2016a). This has been seen as a vital step to improve the EU's ability to attract and retain highly skilled workers in order to enhance the competitiveness of the EU's economy and cope with demographic challenges. This fact underpinned the perception that the Union's economic interests superseded normative principles, such as the protection of human rights, in the formulation of its immigration policies.

Member States differ regarding integration and social policies and there is indeed no EU competence on these matters. Countries like Sweden and Norway developed state-sponsored integration programmes, while in others, such as the UK, immigrants are excluded in urban areas where they experience high levels of unemployment (Robila, 2018). The differences among the policies of the Member States and their treatment of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have been heavily criticised by international organisations, human rights associations and related non-governmental organisations. Isolation of immigrants once they are already within EU borders; conditions in the camps

where refugees and asylum seekers live; and policies preventing their integration within host societies have all been subjects of criticism. The Calais Jungle in France, which was one of the informal camps where refugees and asylum seekers lived in horrific conditions – without sanitation, proper shelter or food –, shut down in 2016, and has been at the centre of the debate on immigration policies ever since. Poor regulations and the way officials treated migrants in the camp resulted in an “experience of systematic abandonment, discrimination and coerced mobility while inside the EU that had led them on an uncertain path to northern France” (Davies, Isakjee, & Dhesi, 2017).

Policies concerning migrants' integration are multidimensional and divergent among Member States. Some of them prefer central government coordination, while others opt for more local involvement in the policy-making structures. Alexander argues that “differences in local situations have triggered different policy responses with some cities adopting a more culturalist and others a more socioeconomic approach” (Alexander, 2007). In federal systems, policy implementations may differ internally as well. For example, the Ludin case, about the permissibility of wearing headscarves by civil servants in office, including teachers in public schools, showed that, in Germany, half of the states (eight out of sixteen) indeed regulated against headscarves for public servants in the workplace (Banai & Kreide, 2017).

According to the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), if one country does well in one policy area of integration, it does well in the others, and migrant integration processes are then affected by other related factors such as the host society approach towards migrants and its socioeconomic characteristics and conditions (Bartolomeo, Kalantaryan, & Bonfanti, 2015). Phillimore focuses on three key themes in defining integration: “The development of a sense of belonging to the host community, the development of social relationships and social networks and the development of the means and confidence to exercise rights to resources such as education, work and housing” (Phillimore, 2012).

Approaches to the labour market, citizenship and social inclusion differ from one host country to another, also depending on its political spectrum, government parties' attitudes, and historical links with emigration countries. Left-wing political parties argue that naturalisation provides immigrants with the necessary incentives and resources to integrate in the host society, while the right-wing parties argue that naturalisation has no independent effect on integration. Some studies demonstrate that naturalisation improves the long-term social integration of immigrants, while its effects vary between different immigrant groups, i.e. the higher the marginalisation, the more positive effects are observed (Hainmueller, Hangartner & Pietrantuono, 2017). As the immigrants become

citizens of the host state, they acquire the same rights, responsibilities and voice as the native citizens (Baubock et al., 2010) and the interaction between them also increases. Right-wing political parties generally argue that, once migrants are naturalised, they enjoy the same rights as natives and are no longer incentivised to further integrate by the prospect of earning access to these rights (Banulescu-Bogdan, 2012). Thus, the EU Member States' integration policies may vary significantly due to changing governments as a result of national elections.

All these differences among the EU Member States, and the lack of consistency in their integration policies, have a negative impact on the credibility of the EU as a normative actor. As mentioned earlier, consistency in internal and external policies regarding the principles that the EU champions is vital for the rest of the world to consider it as a credible normative actor. The discrepancies and interest-based pragmatic policy orientations of the EU Member States and the EU itself also damage the link between principles, actions and impact, which is crucial in creating a persuasive normative actor. Correspondingly, a retraction from rights-based policies to interest-based (economic, political or security) ones hinders the EU's ability to behave as an exemplary actor.

Conclusion

Throughout the paper, it has been argued that the EU's externalisation and securitisation of immigration policies, together with the lack of consistency between Member States' integration policies on the domestic front, have jeopardised the perception of the EU as a normative actor. In 2017, the Eurobarometer survey looked at the EU from a global perspective for the first time and conducted a survey titled "Future of Europe: Views from outside the EU" (European Commission, 2017). In this survey, respondents from non-EU countries – i.e. Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey and the US – were asked about their views on the EU, its assets and values and how much political influence they think it has.

When asked about the main assets of the EU, economic, industrial and trading power came first in Canada (34%). In Turkey, the EU's respect for democracy, human rights and rule of law was seen as an asset by 38%. When it comes to the EU's ability to promote peace and democracy outside its borders, the results were not very heart-warming since the highest rates were obtained in Brazil (22%) and India (20%). The participants in this public opinion poll who are geographically closer to the EU perceive migration, security and terrorism-related issues as the main challenges for the Union. 51% of the respondents in Russia think security and terrorism related issues should be the main priorities for the EU, and 44% of Norwegian respondents believe migration is its main challenge.

So, one may wonder if there is anything to be done to restore the image of the EU as a force for good. The ongoing debate on the future of the EU, dominated by a populist rhetoric, is the ultimate enemy of the image of the EU as a value-driven, normative actor. The EU needs to go back to its original motto, "unity in diversity", while implementing a holistic approach to fight against the dominant populist discourse in some European countries. Traditional media outlets, as well as social media channels, have an important role to play in this regard. There is an urgent need to transmit accurate information instead of fake news in order to prevent opportunistic, populist politicians from spreading misinformation and hostility towards certain minorities or social groups through a racist rhetoric. Thus, immigrants' economic contribution to host societies and statistical information on their integration in individual countries and in the EU as a whole – e.g. sectors they work in, their level of training, the number of foreign students per capita – should be regularly spread through all media outlets.

Finally, the EU Global Strategy rightly points out the need for increasing resilience in neighbouring regions against the rise of authoritarian regimes. In addition to armed conflicts, rising inequality and poverty are the other two main reasons behind immigration

towards European countries. Hence, supporting and increasing resilience in transit and origin countries in order to prevent further impoverishment can be one of the key assets of the EU when trying to touch people's lives. However, it is of utmost importance to reach the people directly in order to avoid interferences from domestic political interests. One can see that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are considered to be central in the Global Strategy. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) should also be considered as important actors in preventing poverty and increasing resilience just like CSOs. SME programmes in third countries should add to their entrepreneurial and competitive character in order to turn them into resilient actors. We have seen before that when the EU is accessible to the people its positive image increases.

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EuroMeSCo

Founded in 1996 and comprising 104 institutes from 29 European and South Mediterranean countries, EuroMeSCo (the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission) is the main network of research centres on politics and security in the Mediterranean, striving at building a community of research institutes and think tanks committed to strengthening Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The objectives of the network are to foster influential quality analysis and reflection on Euro-Mediterranean politics and policies; to serve as a platform for dialogue between the members of the network and key stakeholders to discuss the key trends and challenges on the region's agenda; to increase the impact of think tanks and research institutes and to actively contribute to policy-making through dissemination of research outputs of the network to experts and national, European and international institutions linked to Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The EuroMeSCo work plan includes a research programme with five publication lines (Joint Policy Studies, Papers, Briefs, Spot-Ons and reports), as well as numerous activities, including annual conferences, seminars, workshops, presentations, formal and informal meetings with policy makers on the key political and security dynamics. It also includes communication and dissemination related activities (website, newsletter and targeted institutional dissemination) to raise awareness and promote the work of the network and to stimulate debate on Euro-Mediterranean affairs.

