EUROPEAN COUNTRIES' RESPONSE TO THE MIGRATION CRISIS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAM

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Abstract. Migration is a historical issue that exists along with the evolution of humanity. Since 2015, Europe has witnessed a strong wave of illegal migrant arrivals from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, creating an economic, political, security, and social crisis in the region. This article is devoted to discussing how the migrant crisis has affected regional security and the reasons why the policy responses of the EU and member states are effective enough to handle this phenomenon. First, the author presents an overview of the migrant crisis in Europe since 2015 by indicating statistical information of the number of migrants coming to Europe each year, and demonstrating the motivations of their choices. Second, four negative impacts of the migrant crisis on the security of Europe are pinpointed. Third, the article seeks to deliver an in-depth analysis of European countries' policy responses to this problem, which opens up wholly new prospects, raises new questions, and presents new efforts towards the promotion of global and regional integration, cooperation, and unity. On this basis, the author personally comes up with some policy implications for Vietnam in dealing with the migration issue. To achieve these research objectives, the author mainly uses popular research methodologies in social science and international relations in particular to find out answers to the raised questions.

Keywords: migration, immigration, Europe, Vietnam, EU, crisis.

Introduction

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), International migration means the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence and across an international border to a country of which they are not nationals. Similarly to the above definition, for statistical purposes, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) defines an "international migrant" as "any person who changes his or her country of usual residence" (Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1 1998 [1]. That is to say, illegal migration is a form of international migration in which migrants do not comply with the regulations and laws on immigration and settlement of that country or region. From 2015, it has occupied much of the time of European leaders and has been high on the agenda of all their meetings. It has created deep divisions among them and shown the limits of their collective efforts. It has also imposed itself on internal politics within the bloc, with populist movements making the most of tensions fueled by the phenomenon.

The 21st century is the century of migrants, since global mobility is a highly stratified phenomenon, from global tourists to the undocumented and from human trafficking to refugees who must leave their country of origin due to climate change, poverty, or war. Thus, migration makes a contribution to changes in shifts and institutions in international political, economic and social relations [2]. Today there are two major demographic trends in the European Union (EU) [3]: continuous aging and increasing migration flows. Both are relevant to studying the relationship between demography and security, although this article only will focus on the second. The abolition of internal borders within the EU fostered the dissemination of narratives pointing to a security deficit and new challenges for public order from the opening of internal borders, which led to an increasing politicization

and securitization of migration [4]. This denationalization of state sovereignty requires cooperation, and although close cooperation on security and defense matters in the EU seems essential, there is no common "EU" position to address and overcome humanitarian crisis management in the aftermath of the crisis of refugees, which are based on divergent national strategies cultures that end up enforcing different security and defense policies in the EU [5]. An important term is 'refugee', which refers to a political and legal status in accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol under international law. Most of the most recent EU institutional documents make this distinction as many of the forced migrants are still waiting for their legal status to be determined and are therefore not yet referred to as refugees but asylum seekers due to various bureaucratic restrictions [6, p. 55–56]. As a result, the author avoids using the expression 'refugee crisis' and uses 'migrant crisis' instead, considering different types of forced migrants, including asylum-seekers and refugees.

Materials and methods

It is believed that the study of Europe's measures and experience in handling illegal immigration is of great importance for Vietnam as well as other countries in the region and all over the world to take lessons and implement their policies to address this issue. That is the reason why this article is devoted to presenting an overview of the migrant crisis in Europe, its causes, and negative impacts on regional security. Besides, the author also conducts an in-depth analysis of European countries' responses to this problem, thereby puts forward several policy implications for Vietnam in dealing with the migration issue.

Statistics on illegal migration into Europe of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) indicate that European countries have received a massive flow of immigrants, most notably in 2015 (about 1,800,000 people)1. This figure has been on a gradual decline in recent years as European governments adopted a series of effective measures to limit unauthorized immigration. According to data from the Frontex website, the total number of arrivals in Europe from 2016 to 2019 was 511,000; 204,700; 190,000, and 150,000 respectively. The figure in 2020 (collected by the end of November 2020) was 87,500². According to reports and statistics released by European countries, the flow of illegal migrants into Europe is mainly through land and sea routes. More than 91% of the migrants from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan have traveled to Europe via Greek and the shortest land route to Western Europe is via Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, and Croatia whereas migrants from the Middle East, North Africa mainly use sea routes to travel to Turkey and Libya. Those migrants then crossed the Mediterranean Sea to enter Greece, Italy, and Spain. Between 2014 and 2015, roughly 1,015,078 migrants chose sea routes to travel to Europe as they are the shortest ones [7]. Up to now, there are no statistics on migrants from the Middle East, North Africa traveling to Europe by air.

Recent documents and reports on illegal migration into Europe suggest that there are several major driving forces behind the massive flow of illegal migrants into Europe. First, the long-lasting economic, political, social crisis and civil wars in the Middle Eastern and North African countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria have sunk a myriad of people

¹ Sharp decline in illegal migrants entering EU in 2017: Frontex // Vietnam News. Newspaper. 21.02.2018. URL: https://vietnamnews.vn/world/423131/sharp-decline-in-illegal-migrants-entering-eu-in-2017-frontex.html (accessed on 20.09.2021).

² Situation at EU external borders – Western African route at record highs // Frontex. European Border and Coast Guard Agency [site]. URL: https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/situation-at-eu-external-borders-western-african-route-at-record-highs-yzD0DS (accessed on 01.12.2021).

in Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, Niger, and Afghanistan into chronic hunger, poverty, and humanitarian crisis, forcing them flee their homelands for better lives. Second, Europe's tolerant and inconsistent policies towards illegal migrants have facilitated illegal migration from the Middle East and North Africa, triggering a big tide of immigration to Europe. Third, the existing differences in defining the terms 'migrants', 'refugees', and 'migrants' in the world's legal systems hinder European countries' efforts to properly categorize, receive and repatriate illegal migrants. It is a fact that many illegal immigrants have taken advantage of the Dublin Regulation on granting asylum and settlement status to enter Europe for economic purposes or to avoid wars in their countries of origin. As a result, an influx of migrants has flocked to frontline countries such as Greece, Italy, or Spain, intensifying the problem of over-reception, filtering out, and providing humanitarian assistance for migrants in these countries.

Results

European countries' responses to illegal migration

In response to the threats presented by the migrant crisis, Europe has adopted many comprehensive security measures to proactively prevent and mitigate those threats and ensure regional security. Europe's immigration policy has three main pillars: securing external borders; effectively implementing an anti-migrant smuggling policy and promoting on-site assistance to refugees. Europe has adopted two major solutions as follows:

First, Europe has imposed a variety of economic, political, and social measures, including cutting migrant flow into Europe by applying the allocation of migrant quotas and migrants' financial aids; Strengthening bilateral cooperation between European and non-European countries to prevent migrants from outside entering Europe (for example, from Turkey to Greece) or between European and European frontline countries such as Greece and Italy to set up screening centers for filtering out migrants in these countries, thereby reducing the mass of migrants entering Europe; Enhancing multilateral cooperation mechanisms to address the root causes of migrant crisis via meetings with African countries and Turkey. Some European countries such as Germany, the UK, France, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Greece have advocated a common European solution while actively implementing their measures such as closing borders, strengthening border patrols, tightening immigration reviewing procedures and building bilateral or group-based cooperation mechanisms, to limit illegal migrants.

Second, at the bloc level, Europe has implemented a number of security measures focusing on information processing and exchange, ensuring cyber security, preventing terrorism, and tightening immigration controls. Some major measures are: (1) improving enforcement of laws against online terrorism, waterway terrorism, road traffic terrorism, and air terrorism such as the laws on Information and Cyber Security (issued in December 2015), and the laws on Airplane Passengers' Profile (issued in April 2016); (2) upgrading the Schengen Information System (SIS) by updating information from security and police agencies and reception centers to early detect terror suspects; (3) promoting the swift operation of new agencies such as the European Border and Coast Guard (established in June 2016), and the European Counter Terrorism Center (established in July 2016); (4) enhancing intelligence cooperation with the US, Russia, and India, joining in the fight against ISIS in the Middle East. At the national level, countries such as Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands have actively strengthened their own security measures including repatriating migrants that are not qualified for asylum grants, raising security

alert levels, investing in resources for counter-terrorism, granting counter-terrorism forces more rights, and stepping up international intelligence cooperation on counter-terrorism. In addition, Europe should strengthen its counter-terrorism forces, foster its cooperation with NATO to tighten border controls to stop immigrants, restore the Schengen open-border area, propose amendments to immigration regulations, and take the advantage of United Nations' support in addressing illegal immigration.

European countries with the big allocation of migrant quotas have adopted their own measures in response to the security threats presented by the influx of migrants. In the wake of violent terror attacks in Europe, Italian Foreign Minister Di Maio proposed to bring in the US-based European Patriot Act which enables investigators to probe into citizens' private lives. This facilitates their access to personal data and is beneficial in intercepting and obstructing terror plots. France has implemented its own security measures by launching a number of counter-terrorism operations such as the Cazeneuve operation (2014), the Valls operation (2016), the National Plan to combat extremism (2018), and Action Plan against Terrorism (2018), which helped foil around 30 terrorist plots³. Austria enacted new immigration laws allowing the implementation of stronger measures to deal with the migrant crisis. Accordingly, Austria can declare a state of emergency if the influx of refugees threatens national security and will only accept threatened refugees from a neighboring country or those whose relatives are living in Austria (excluding adolescents and pregnant women). This country also carried out migrants' asylum reviewing procedures at the border gates in 120-hour time limit. In addition, Austria also limited the duration of asylum status as well as aids for refugees' relatives. A series of other European countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Macedonia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Denmark, and Sweden have also adopted many strict measures to protect national security against the threats brought about by migrants.

Discussion

The negative impact of illegal migration on security in Europe

First, the dire threat that illegal migration may pose to Europe's security is that members of terrorist groups such as IS or Al-Qaeda can take advantage of loopholes in security controls or mechanisms of free movement within the Schengen visa-free area to infiltrate into Europe. Those terrorists then build networks and recruit European citizens with radicalized immigration backgrounds to carry out large-scale attacks on the continent. In 2015, about ten European countries have been attacked by terrorists. Notably, in France, about 30 terrorist plots have been foiled. All major terror attacks were carried out by Islamists of North African and Middle Eastern origin. Some member countries of the US-led anti-terror coalition or those who actively support this coalition such as Germany, England, and Italy have been put in a state of alarm due to terror threats. As European governments strengthen security controls, these terrorists engaged themselves with local criminal networks to carry out chemical and biological attacks against Europe.

Second, illegal migration into Europe results in the formation of new migrant smuggling groups using counterfeit documents and the growth of women and children trafficking networks on both land and maritime routes. Also, Europol's survey of 1,500 refugees and migrants in search of better economic circumstances revealed that 90% of

³ Gauriat V. Mass attacks and victim support: how has France changed since 2015? // EuroNews. Television news network. 28.09.2021. URL: https://www.euronews.com/2021/09/24/victim-care-and-mass-attacks-how-has-france-changed-since-2015 (accessed on 20.10.2021).

them paid smugglers from \$3,000 to 6,000 on average to be transported to Europe [8]. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in 2015, 3777 people died in the Mediterranean Sea, and more than 800 people lost their lives in the Aegean Sea in their attempt to reach Greece from Turkey⁴.

Third, brain drain is another problem that irregular immigration poses to Europe's economic security, as highly educated migrants are leaving their countries for richer ones to look for better jobs and lives. According to the United Nations sources, up to 60% of intellectuals of countries such as Guyana, Haiti, and Jamaica are living abroad⁵.

Fourth, illegal migration might bring about instability in social order and safety for host countries. In the wake of consecutive terrorist attacks in Europe, many European people have likened refugees and immigrants to terrorists. There's a bitter division among European members on how to handle illegal immigrants. Germany's open-door policy was opposed by most of the European members in Eastern Europe. The ruling parties in many Nordic countries such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Denmark advocate taking in immigrants while the oppositions disagree. Mass demonstrations against the ruling parties' immigration policies have taken place in these countries. European traditional values such as freedom of movement, democracy promotion, and human rights are now overshadowed by national interests.

In addition, European countries have shouldered a heavy economic burden as they have to provide security and humanitarian assistance for migrants. Eventually, Europe had to pay \$6 billion for Turkey, nearly \$3 billion for some African countries as well as supporting its member countries to effectively implement solutions to the migrant crisis. Also, it is estimated that the cost of the European border control is up to €18 billion per year [9].

Policy implications for Vietnam

In the context of international integration, the migrant crisis is a serious problem not only in Europe but also has become a global issue. Vietnam, as a Non-Permanent Member of the Union Security Council, is increasingly participating deeply in multilateral international institutions. Vietnam is now a responsible partner in resolving global issues, including illegal immigration, to ensure regional and global security.

Regarding general perception, Vietnam's government needs to be fully aware of the legal difference between 'refugees' and 'migrants', which are often used interchangeably, so that it can have proper policies towards migration issues. A clear distinction between these two concepts is important as it is the decisive factor to determine who can legally stay or be repatriated. These terms are now conflated by some countries to avoid their responsibility or to serve their political calculation. Both the international laws and the laws on refugees of Western countries define 'refugee' as a person who owes to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion. No country has the right to return refugees where their lives could be endangered. Those who flee wars or armed conflicts to seek international protection from dangers in their home countries, while normally deemed as refugees, are not granted refugee status as they don't meet the legal criteria of refugee protections. Meanwhile, 'migrant' does not have a single definition

⁴ IOM Counts 3,771 Migrant Fatalities in Mediterranean in 2015 // International Organization for Migration [site]. 05.01.2016. URL: https://www.iom.int/news/iom-counts-3771-migrant-fatalities-mediterranean-2015 (accessed on 12.03.2021).

⁵ Nguyen K. D. International migration: The problem of the global security [Di cu quốc tế: vấn đề của an ninh thế giới hiện nay] // People's Public Security Newspaper [Công an Nhân dân]. 22.06.2006. URL: https://cand.com.vn/Su-kien-Binh-luan-antg/Di-cu-quoc-te-van-de-cua-an-ninh-the-gioi-hien-nay-i284665/ (accessed on 10.10.2021). (In Viet.)

in international laws. Generally, 'migrant' refers to a person who consciously makes a choice to leave his or her homeland for a better life in another state, and he/she is not protected from being turned away or deported by a host country. The confusion may lead to the fact that destination countries might receive or reject migrants up to their calculation. It even can be used by extremists as an excuse to instigate the oppositions to flee to another country, thereby accusing the ruling governments of suppressing people due to political, religious, and ethnic differences and interfering in the internal affairs of those countries.

Concerning the national overall scheme, as a member of the global community, Vietnam's policy and regulations on migration must be within the legal frameworks of international laws and in line with the country's interests and security policy. At the same time, Vietnam's laws on migration must ensure the practices of basic human rights, including the right to life, freedom, and happiness. Vietnam defines migration as a long-term issue that could not be resolved without the collective efforts and a strong action plan of many countries. A distinction between 'refugee' and 'migrant' should be made clear in the country's legal documents so that proper policies for refugees and migrants can be worked out. Also, an overall action framework on dealing with the migration problem should be established at the international level, based on which each region and country imposes its own measures. This prevents the confusion of the two terms 'refugee' and 'migrant' from being used for political calculation.

Vietnam consistently affirms its support of promoting legal migration, preventing illegal migration as well as protecting migrants' rights on the basis of its respect for international and national laws. Vietnam supports other countries' enforcement of policies and laws that protect migrants against discrimination. For the re-admission of migrants, Vietnam suggests that it is necessary to promote cooperation among countries on this issue based on their laws, especially the laws of the country of origin and receiving. Countries need to develop cooperative mechanisms based on bilateral agreements on migrant readmission. Moreover, they need to encourage the participation of private organizations, NGOs, and the migrants themselves in the process of returning migrants to their home countries and reintegrating migrants into their communities. Regarding the contribution of migrants to the sustainable development of the country, Vietnam recommends that migration and settlement of migrants, especially of those who are victims of human trafficking and forced labor should not be criminalized; Host countries should be encouraged to receive and help migrants to integrate into the society and the local community.

The migration issue is posing challenges to Vietnam's national security and interests. According to the European Border Agency, Vietnam is in the group of countries with the most migrants to Europe. The estimated number of Vietnamese migrant arrivals in Europe between 2015 and 2019 are 461, 399, 261, 370, 62 respectively. In fact, the number of Vietnamese illegally migrating into Europe is much higher. According to reports of the border guards forces of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania, a number of secret routes and migrant trafficking groups transporting Vietnamese people from Russia to Europe have been detected. Roughly 800 Vietnamese nationals were arrested while crossing the Russian border to neighboring European countries.

The fact that Vietnamese citizens illegally migrating and working abroad are usually facilitated by individuals and agencies specializing in sending people to work abroad illegally (not in accordance with labor cooperation agreements between the Government of Vietnam and host countries) in various ploys such as the cross-border movement; organizing workers to travel for the fake purposes of tourism, relatives visit, etc. When going abroad,

undocumented immigrants will find a way to stay or run away to work illegally. Vietnamese illegal migrant workers are often organized to travel across many different countries to work in European countries. However, they have to face many risks, including easily becoming victims of human traffickers, being arrested and detained by the authorities of the host country for violating the laws of the host country, spending a huge amount of money but could then be deported and barred from re-entering the country. Even, workers may be seriously affected by foreign criminal gangs without being protected by the host country's government due to illegal work and illegal migration.

Despite not being directly impacted by illegal migration, as a country of origin, Vietnam is affected by the global migrant crisis issues, which can be felt in major areas, including economic, social, and external relations. Apart from international terrorism, human trafficking, and brain drain, Vietnam also faces other threats posed by the migrant crisis. Economic and corrupt criminals also take advantage of the Western countries' policy for asylum seekers to avoid the prosecution of Vietnam. All of those threats are causing instability to Vietnam's cultural security.

In the context of globalization and international integration, all countries, including Vietnam, must actively respond to the migrant crisis. To ensure national and regional security and interests, Vietnam should take the following measures to deal with the migration issue:

First, it is essential that Vietnam strengthen international/regional and bilateral cooperation, connectivity, and information sharing between the countries of origin, receiving and transit in border control, migrants' exit, return, and reintegration process. At the same time, existing regional and global dialogue channels should be maintained to synchronize the implementation of standards in migration management. Vietnam should further strengthen the role of international organizations in exercising and monitoring migrants' human rights and establish a regional financial support mechanism to support countries affected by illegal immigration, thereby, fulfilling the criteria set out in the country's sustainable development plan to 2030.

International and regional cooperation is essential for Vietnam and other countries to: (1) share experience on tackling illegal migration and preventing terrorism and crimes; thereby, imposing solutions that effectively address these issues in Vietnam; (2) maintain peace and security in the borders and resolve border issues with a spirit of peace, stability, cooperation and sustainable development; (3) resolve the problem of illegal settlement in accordance with the bilateral agreements signed with other countries; (4) actively exchange immigration information with other countries in order to limit illegal migration and human trafficking; (5) restrain illegal migration and human trafficking through exchanging information; (6) provide urgent warnings about migrant smuggling using counterfeit documents; (7) closely review the visa issuance to ensure transparency; (8) closely supervise foreigners, especially those of African, Middle Eastern and Muslim origin who are living, studying and working in Vietnam; (9) deport people who violate Vietnam's immigration and settlement regulations.

Second, it is imperative to raise the awareness of Vietnamese people, particularly ethnic minorities about the hardship of the illegal Vietnamese workers abroad, and the immigration policy of Europe; prevent them from being provoked to flee the country for economic purposes and falling into the trap of the migrant smugglers.

Third, it is advisable to promote the completion of laws and policies on migration and the enforcement of those laws and policies to ensure the human rights practice in the country. This creates a legal and practical basis for the fight against illegal immigration.

Fourth, it is necessary to proactively detect socio-economic problems persisting in local communities, thereby internationalizing human right issue or using it to manipulate relations with Vietnam.

Conclusion

In the near future, the complex and damaging effects that illegal migration has on Europe are still putting the region in a tough position, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and Afghanistan humanitarian crisis. However, they are being ameliorated thanks to the collective efforts of European countries as well as the cooperation and support of the international community. Europe's success in dealing with the migrant crisis provides valuable lessons for other countries, including Vietnam, when dealing with the migration issue.

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ОТВЕТ ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ СТРАН НА МИГРАЦИОННЫЙ КРИЗИС И ЕГО ПОСЛЕДСТВИЯ ДЛЯ ВЬЕТНАМА

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Аннотация. Миграция — это вечная проблема, которая существовала на протяжении всей истории человечества. С 2015 г. европейские страны захлестнула крупнейшая волна нелегальных мигрантов, прибывающих из стран ближнего Востока, Африки и Азии, что привело к экономическому, политическому, социальному кризисам, а также поставило под угрозу безопасность в регионе. Настоящая статья посвящена анализу проблем европейского миграционного кризиса, в особенности его влияния на региональную безопасность и эффективности ответа стран ЕС на данный вызов. Во-первых, проведен обзор миграционной ситуации в Европе, начиная с 2015 г., на основе статистической информации о численности мигрантов и причинах миграции. Во-вторых, выделены четыре основных направления негативного воздействия миграционного кризиса на безопасность в Европе. В-третьих, особое внимание в статье уделяется анализу политики европейских стран по противодействию миграционному кризису и принимаемых ими мер по продвижению глобальной и региональной интеграции, сотрудничества и единства, что открывает перед регионом новые перспективы. На основе проведенного анализа автор предлагает некоторые рекомендации относительно возможных политических решений проблем миграции во Вьетнаме. Методологическую основу исследования составили общие методы социальных и политических наук.

Ключевые слова: миграция, иммиграция, Европа, Вьетнам, ЕС, кризис.

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