

The International Asylum Applicants' Impact on European Labour Market

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Abstract. The paper deals with the impact of the asylum applicants on the EU28. It points out the dimension of the phenomenon under a global approach. The comparative analysis of the different geographical asylum flows is followed by an analysis of the possibilities of the asylum applicants to integrate in the European society and on the European labour market. The analysis covers different asylum flows from: non-EU countries, Asia, America, Australia and Oceania. A distinct analysis is focused on the ex-Russian Union countries and on Arabian countries. The dynamic analysis of the data is followed by an approach regarding cultural, social and religious aspects of the asylum applicants. The paper uses the latest official statistic data. The main conclusion of the analysis is that the costs of the asylum phenomenon are greatest than the benefits for the EU, but the humanitarian approach is impossible to be eliminate.

Keywords: Asylum applicants; international protection; asylum management; asylum policy.

1. Introduction

One of the greatest challenges for the EU28 represent migration and asylum. The migration and asylum have international dimensions and are focused on most developed economies. The military conflicts and the geographical proximities of less developed regions supported important migration and asylum flows to the EU28.

The EU28 puts into discussion the developing of a Common European Asylum System, in order to offer international protection on the EU's territory to the third countries' citizens according to the principle of non-refoulement. As a result, the asylum policy is based on Art. 18 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

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(European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, 2000) and on Art. 67, 78 and 80 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, 2012). On the other hand, the European Court of Justice has no jurisdiction on the asylum.

The Treaty of Amsterdam encouraged adopting of minimum standards connected to the refugees' status and procedures and to the reception of the asylum seekers (European Parliament, 1997).

In 1999, the European Council established the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) in two steps (phases). The first one, covered 1999-2004, and was focused on establishing on mechanisms and criteria for examining asylum applications. The second phase, covered 2004-2012 and pointed out minimum standards and common asylum procedure for all Member States.

The Common European Asylum System includes: a uniform status of asylum; a uniform status of subsidiary protection; a common system of temporary protection; common procedures for the granting and withdrawing of uniform asylum or subsidiary protection status; criteria and mechanisms for determining which Member State is responsible for considering an application; standards concerning reception conditions; partnership and cooperation with third countries (European Parliament, 2018).

The asylum management across the EU28 is realised by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

New regulations (Eurodac Regulation; the Dublin III Regulation; the Reception Conditions Directive; and the Asylum Procedures Directive) were implemented in 2013. Under the migratory pression since 2014 the European Agenda on Migration was adopted in 2015. It clarified the cooperation between the Member States, Hotspot, the EASO, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and Europol in solving asylum and migration phenomena.

The financing of the asylum challenge is covered by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). During 2014-2020, AMIF benefits of 6.6 billion euro. Other European Funds support asylum financing: the European Social Fund (ESF), the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD,) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Even the allocation to EASO has increased, from 109 to 456 billion euro during the same period (2014-2020).

The asylum and migrant challenge is faraway of being solved. This is why the leaders of the Member States reached an agreement on June 2018. The agreement is unclear as long as Italy and Greece have to receive migrants, but the migrants' repartition across the EU has to be realised only on a voluntary basis. It is not a secret that the Member States from central Europe wish to take no refugees, but the Western ones accept refugees. This is why the agreement is not operational as long as some Member States led by Germany are interested in creating processing centres for refugees in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Niger and Tunisia, but other Member States, as Hungary, called for strong borders able to stop the invasion of migrants (Rankin, J., 2018).

The present paper deals to the analysis of the impact of the asylum applicants on the European labour market and offers a scientific point of view about this process and its future developments.

2. Related Work

The asylum challenge for EU became an important research theme nowadays. The international context, the global strategical, economic and military connections made this problem a main one. This is why the research dedicated literature is large.

One of the first papers points out the incredible increase in the number of refugees worldwide. This number varied from 3 million in the early '70s to 12 million in the '00. Moreover, the direction of the refugees' flows is from the Third World to the First World. The main causes of the refugee displacements and asylum flows are connected to conflicts, political upheaval and economic incentives to migrate. The same paper realises an analysis of the evolution of policies towards asylum seekers and the effects of those policies in Europe. The main conclusion of the analysis is that better international coordination and cooperation is able to support better outcomes for refugee-receiving countries and for the refugees themselves (Hatton, T.J. & Williamson, J.G., 2004).

The contradiction between the EU's official position regarding asylum and refugee seekers and the practical approach of the problem represents the theme of a research focused on the refugee policy. The author of the paper points out the lack of cooperation between the Member States in refugees' policy. Moreover, she considers that there is no European Refugee Policy at work today. The analysis in

the paper has a historical approach, starting to the Hague Programme of 2004. Moreover, the analysis points out the difficulties of having common visions in this policy and points out the importance of the European Commission in mediating Member States' different approaches. On the other hand, the paper offers practical solutions for realising a real European Refugee Policy of the future (van Selm, J., 2005).

Amnesty International has its point of view regarding refugees and asylum seekers. The analysis of this organization is focused on the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe. Moreover, the dedicated legislation is analyzed from a country to another. The analysis covers Switzerland and 11 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta and UK) over the year 2004 (Amnesty International, 2005).

The fluctuant trend of the asylum and refugee seeking put into discussion the idea of the necessity of a more restrictive dedicated policy. This means better cooperation between Member States. EU asylum cooperation led to an overall increase in protection standards for asylum-seekers and refugees. According to another analysis, the elements which supported this evolution were "the increasing 'judicialisation' of asylum in the EU and institutional changes in the EU asylum policy area that have

strengthened the role of more 'refugee-friendly' institutions" (Kaunert, C. & Léonard, S., 2011).

The refugees and asylum crisis achieved the top level in 2015. As a result, many specialists pointed out the need of defining and implementing a new dedicated policy. The analysis has to start from the origin and destination factors that influence asylum applications. It continues with the effects of asylum policies adopted in developed countries and the impact of the public opinion on asylum policies. The analysis led to three conclusions: tougher border controls to reduce unauthorized entry by prospective asylum applicants; promoting direct resettlement of refugees from countries of first asylum; expanding refugee-hosting capacity through enhanced burden-sharing among destination countries (Hatton, T., 2016).

A similarly approach on the refugees and asylum crisis suggest for severe dedicated policies. A component of these policy is asylum detention. The analysis in this paper points out that detention has to be an exception that must be justified

and it would not be punitive. On the other hand, less coercive alternatives measures would be examined before resorting to detention, according to the procedural guarantees to protect the fundamental rights of applicants. Finally, greater protection for vulnerable applicants would be in place. A distinct part of the paper deals to a comparative analysis between Member States regarding the implementation of the above principles. The author proposes ways of intervention in order to improve the asylum detention policy (Walter-Franke, M., 2017).

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) implemented the Asylum Information Database (AIDA) in order to obtain pertinent information about the refugees and asylum seekers. AIDA realizes comparative reports between Member States and not only regarding these phenomena and individual reports on each Member State. One of the latest reports was focused on Romania and pointed out problems related to substandard living conditions for people in need of protection in Regional Centres for Procedures and Accommodation of Asylum Seekers in Bucharest and Giurgiu. The Report concluded that the asylum seekers in Romania have to integrate into Romanian society and to benefit to family reunification, employment, housing, education and social welfare (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2018).

In order to a better understanding of the legal rights of migrants and refugees, the Open Society Foundations realized an analysis of the policy solutions to the human challenges involved. This analysis covers Italy, Greece, Spain, Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe. The whole analysis is built on the significant difference between migrants (persons who leaves home to seek a new life in another region or country), refugees (persons fleeing war, persecution, or natural disaster) and asylum seekers (persons who have the legal permission to stay somewhere as refugees, which brings rights and benefits). A distinct part of the paper is focused on the analysis of the European Union's asylum policy (Open Society Foundations, 2018).

3. Asylum trend across the European Union

The asylum applications achieved the peak of 2468 persons per million inhabitants in 2015 (Eurostat, 2018). During 2008-2015, the trend of this indicator was positive. 2016 and 2017 brought a decrease of the asylum applications (see Figure 1).

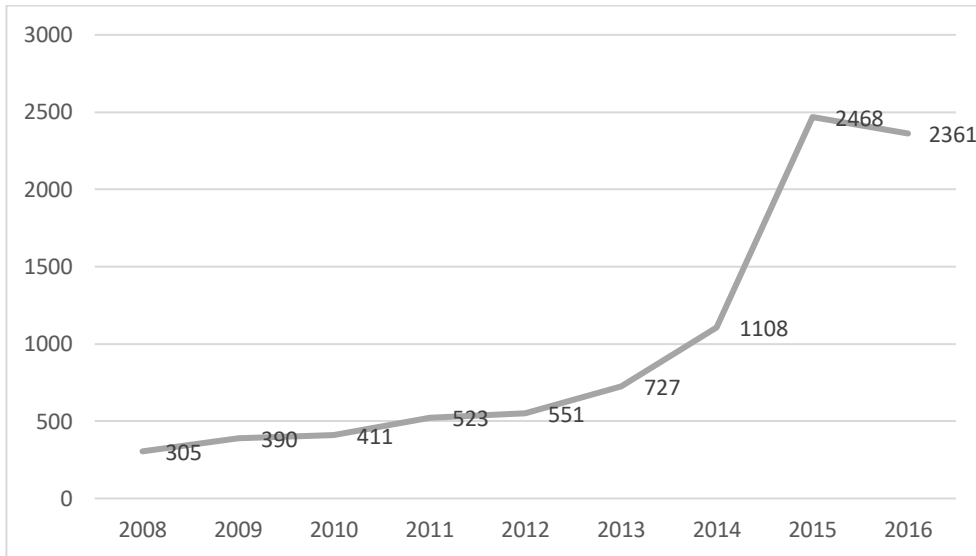


Figure 1. Asylum applications' trend (number/million inhabitants)

Germany, Greece, Austria, Malta, Luxembourg and Cyprus faced to higher asylum applications rates across the EU. Slovakia, Portugal and Romania are not important destinations for the asylum seekers (see Figure 2).

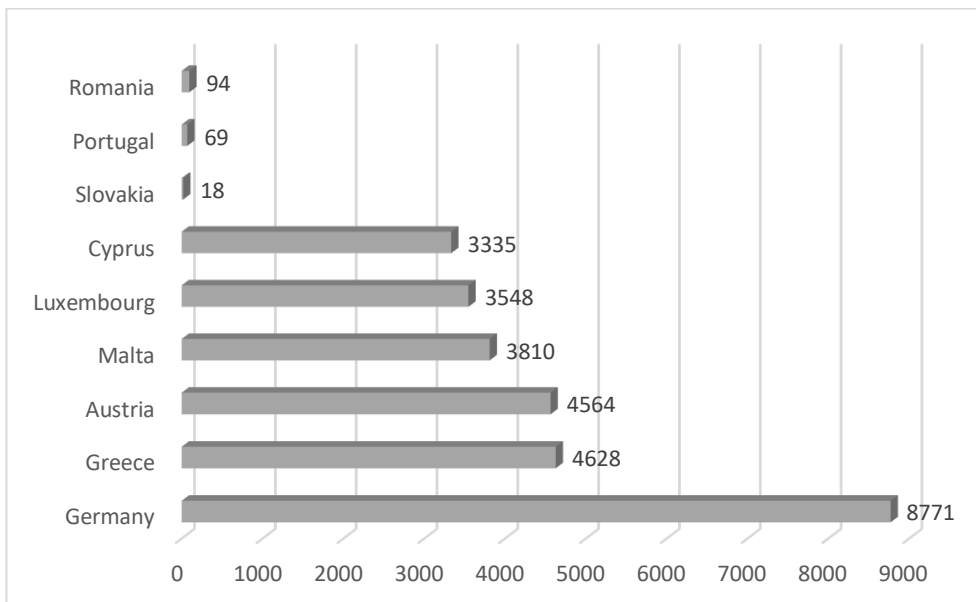


Figure 2. Asylum applications' top and bottom rates (number/million inhabitants)

At least two observations have to be done. The first is that Greece, Malta and Cyprus are more transit countries than destination countries for the asylum seekers. The second is regarding to the non-UE countries which are destinations for the asylum seekers, as: Iceland (3279 asylum applicants/million inhabitants), Liechtenstein (1989), Norway (619) and Switzerland (3084).

On the other hand, some Member States faced to an increase in the asylum applications: Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia. Other Member States, as Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Finland and Sweden decreased their asylum applications' rates compared to 2015. The greatest decreases were in Sweden (-85.9%), Hungary (-83.8%), Finland (83.7%) and Austria (-53.9%). These rates represent the changing in the initial enthusiasm of the inhabitants from these countries toward asylum challenge.

As total number of persons, the asylum applicants achieved a peak of 1322825 persons in 2015. This number decreased in 2016 and 2017 (see Figure 3).

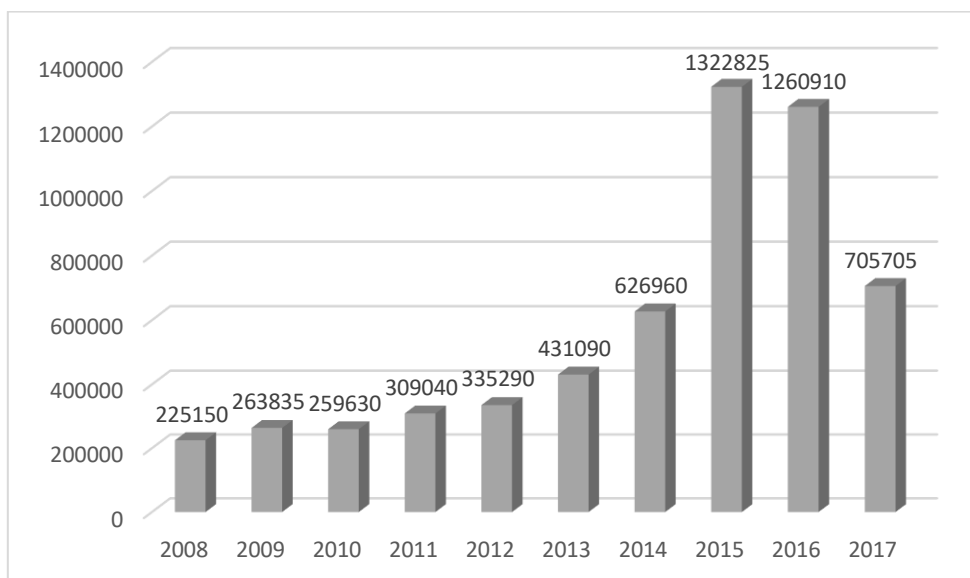


Figure 3. Asylum applications' trend (persons)

Germany, Italy, France and Greece faced to the greatest number of asylum applicants in 2017 (Eurostat, 2018b). The asylum flows are focused on the most

developed Member States, which are almost all more permissive and more interested in attracting migrants.

For the analysis of the asylum applicants' impact on the EU labour market, two age categories are very important: 18 to 34 years and 35 to 64 years. These two age categories represent potential labour supply on the EU market.

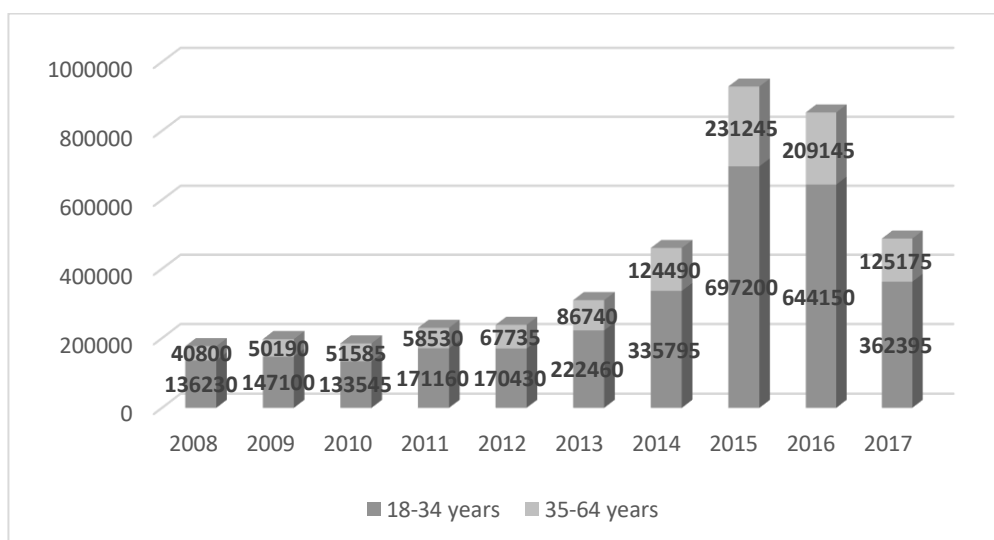


Figure 4. Potential labour supply on EU labour market (persons)

The data in Figure 4 lead to a lot of observations. For the beginning, the asylum potential labour supply has the same trend as the total asylum applicants. Second, the asylum potential labour supply represented 69.1% of total asylum applicants. This number may decrease by those asylum seekers who are not able to work from different causes (diseases, handicaps, etc.).

Germany was the main beneficiary of the asylum flows in 2017. But the asylum applicants potential labour supply represented only 56% from total asylum applicants in Germany (see Figure 5).

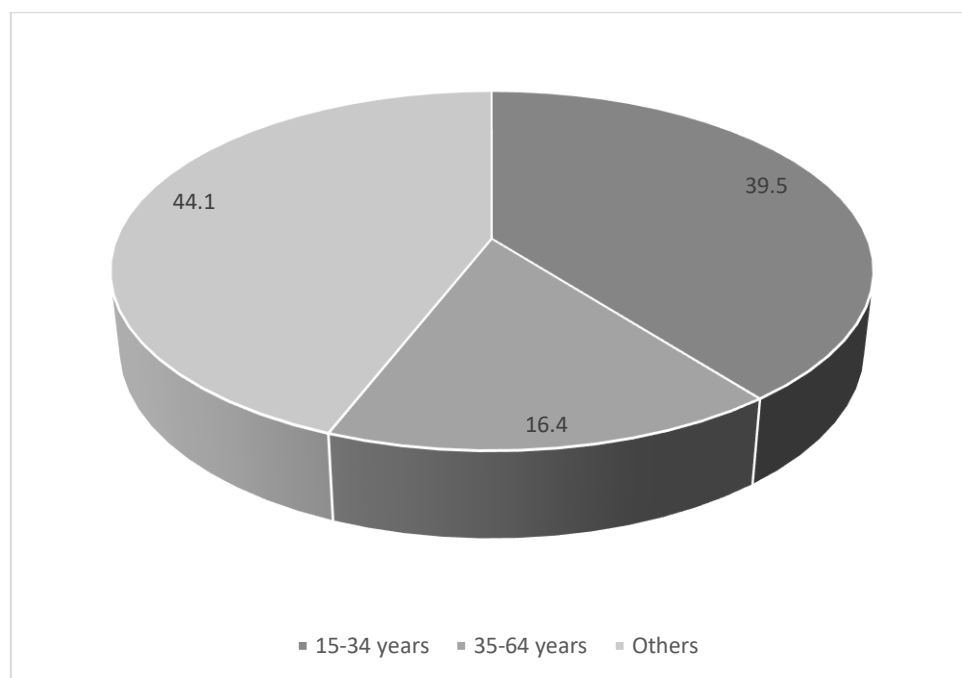


Figure 5. Asylum applicants' structure by age in Germany in 2017 (%)

4. Asylum applicants' integration to the EU society vs integration to the EU labour market

It is no doubt that the first step in assisting asylum applicants is to support their integration into European society. Even that Europe presents great diversity in culture, religion, history, the migrants' integration is not simple.

The European asylum applicants benefit by the easiest integration, because they share the same European cultural, social and political values. The problem is that their number is not important (see Figure 6).

The asylum applicants in Figure 5 come from candidate and potential candidate countries and countries which faced to recent military conflicts. The exception is Norway.

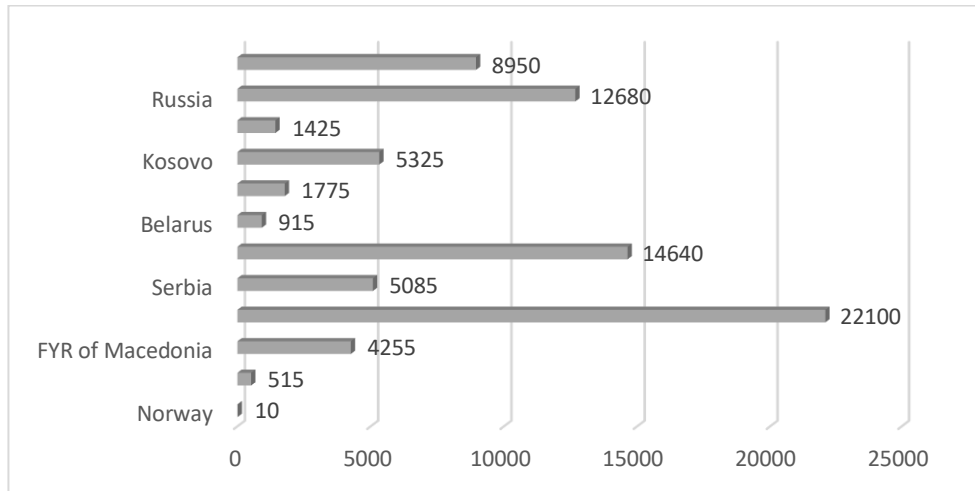


Figure 5. European asylum applicants for EU28 in 2017 (persons)

A distinct category of asylum applicants is those who come from African countries. The African countries are generally low developed, many under ethnic and military conflicts. As a result, the citizens from these countries have different approaches about the European society. Basically, all African countries sent asylum applicants to the EU28 (see Figure 6).

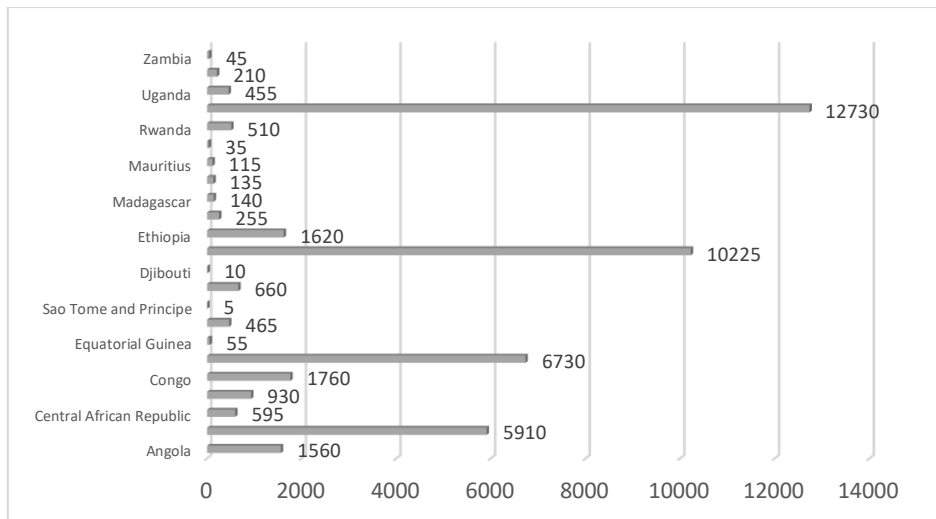


Figure 6. African asylum applicants for EU28 in 2017 (persons)

One of the less developed African economies, Somalia, sent the greatest number of asylum applicants in EU28 in 2017. The integration of these asylum applicants is difficult because they have low skills and education, different approaches on family, women, work, etc.

There are asylum applicants from North, Central and South America. The greatest numbers come from Haiti, El Salvador and Honduras (see Figure 7).

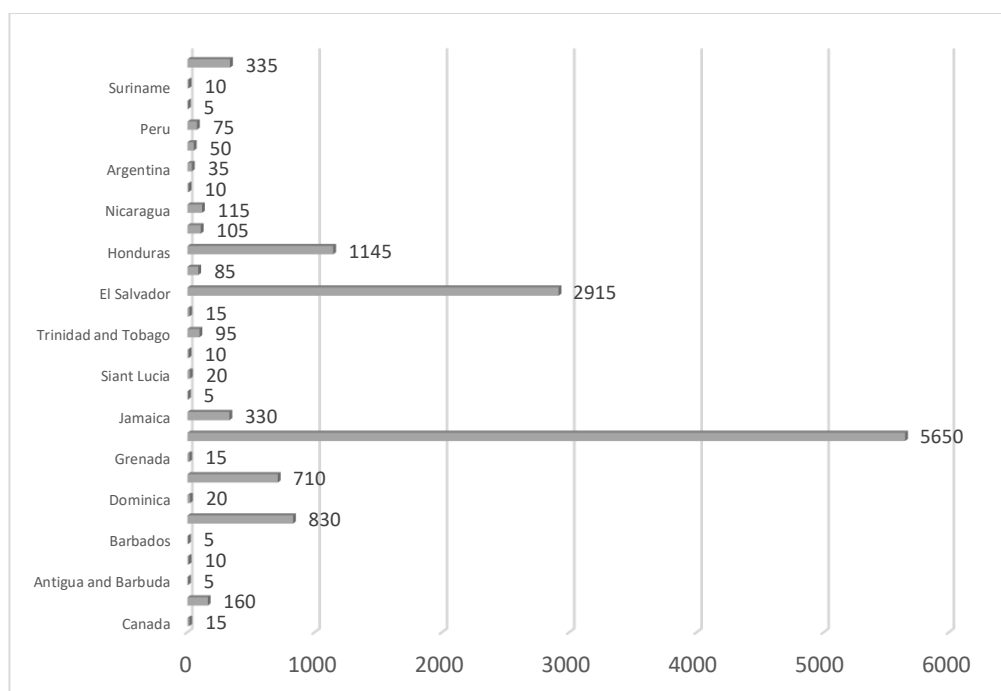


Figure 7. American asylum applicants for EU28 in 2017 (persons)

There are no problems for the asylum applicants from USA and Canada to integrate in the European society and on the European labour market. The others may face to different obstacles in their integration process.

A distinct asylum flow comes from the ex-Russian Union. Their integration on the European market can be difficult as a result of the language barrier. Moreover, the inhabitants from these countries are under an important process of cultural redefinition and re-finding national historical identity. On the other hand, the number of the asylum applicants was small in 2017 (see Figure 8).

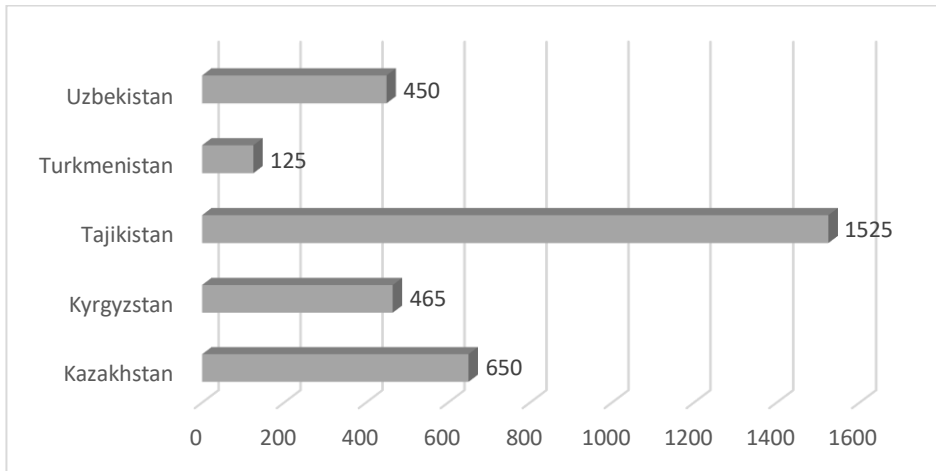


Figure 8. Ex-Russian Union asylum applicants for EU28 in 2017 (persons)

An important geographical asylum flow comes from Asia and Australia/Oceania and cover countries with great socio-economic and cultural disparities. Well developed countries (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Israel, Australia, New Zealand) are doubled by developing economies (China, Indonesia, Singapore) and low developed economies, as well (see Figure 9).

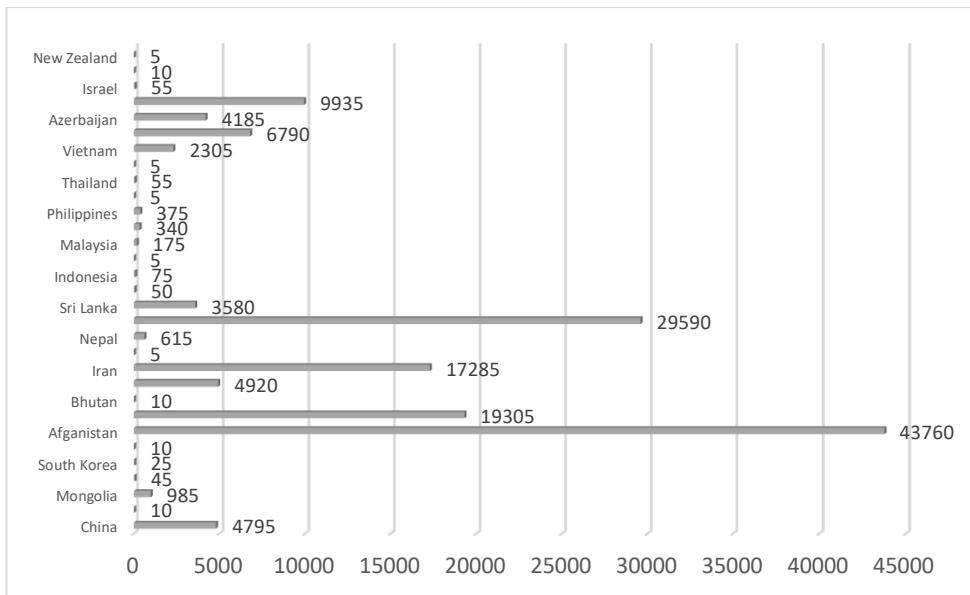
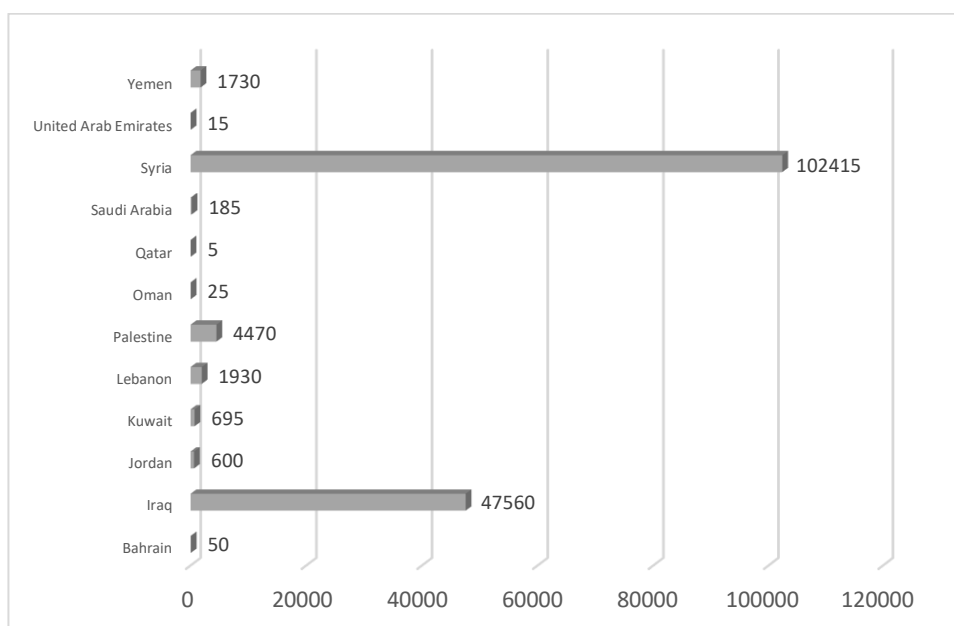


Figure 9. Asia and Australia/Oceania asylum applicants for EU28 in 2017 (persons)

The Arabian asylum applicants create the greatest controversies regarding their access to the EU28 in the context of the actual political and military situation. The most part of these asylum applicants come from Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, countries which faced to recent wars (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10. Arabian asylum applicants for EU28 in 2017 (persons)**

The hardest way for integration on the European labour market and in European society belongs to these asylum applicants. The religion and the life style are complete different from the European ones.

According to the European Commission's official documents, there were 5780 asylum applicants who didn't want to precise their countries in 2017, as well.

5. Conclusions

The above analysis on the asylum phenomenon on EU28 leads to some interesting conclusions. First is that asylum has a global dimension and EU28 represent an important factor in solving it.

The asylum flows come from all continents and all countries, even from the most

developed ones. The geographical position of the EU supports the increase in asylum flows. On the other hand, the asylum applicants are more interested in going to the most developed Member States. The greatest number of asylum applicants in 2017 ask for Germany and the Northern Member States. Greece and Italy face to a great number of asylum applicants because both countries are considered the best entrances to the EU.

More than 50% of the asylum applicants are not able to work and to integrate on the European labour market. This is why their impact in increasing labour supply is low.

From the economic point of view, the asylum flows in the EU28 created more costs than benefits for the EU society and labour market. These costs can be correct evaluated only at least 10 years.

Till then, the humanitarian approach is necessary.

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