

FROM THE ARAB SPRING TO THE ARAB EXODUS IN EUROPE

Ana-Maria BOLBORICI¹

Abstract: *The article focuses both on the current issue of migrant waves from different Middle East countries and Africa and on the implications this flood has on the European Union. As we already know, as a major power and through its operational missions, the European Union plays a significant role in the context of the Middle East Peace Process. This review concentrates on few aspects regarding the impact of the massive waves of immigrants assails on Europe. According to numerous analysts the flood of migrants and refugees is the largest movement of people Europe has seen since the World War II.*

Key words: *refugees, immigrants, migrations, crises, European Union.*

1. Introduction

The end of the Cold War highlighted new tendencies, as an effect of the radical changes the international system has undergone, changes reflected also in the need to redefine and to reinterpret the security concept on a global scale.

The obvious fear concerning the start of a nuclear conflict between the two great powers was gradually replaced by a series of tangible threats to national and / or international security, such as: the ethnic clashes, the necessity of ex-communist states to undergo a long transition process, the increasing number of immigrants and refugees, the increasing importance of cultural and religious affiliation in international relations, the environmental degradation, the integration in different regional structures etc.

Despite the upward trend recorded in the context of geopolitical repositioning a specific trend of the 90s, in certain regions of Europe, but especially in the Balkans a numerous interethnic crisis have outburst.

In order to protect populations subjected to violence in interethnic crisis, the EU had operative interventions in these conflict areas such as: Afghanistan, Congo, East Timor, Kashmir, the Korean Peninsula or Middle East.

Moreover, in recent years, the EU, through the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (the fourth permanent body of the ESDP, responsible for providing information, recommendations and reviews to the Political and Security Committee) has oriented its foreign policy and security in conflict prevention and mediation, peace building, and peacekeeping in conflict regions.

¹ Department of Social Sciences and Communication, *Transilvania* University of Braşov.

The Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), is EU's principal actor in the field of humanitarian aid service.

The main mission of the Directorate General for Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) is to help save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of those affected.

Since its establishment in 1992 ECHO has been active in over 100 countries worldwide such as: Chechnya, Kashmir, Nepal, Burma (Myanmar), the Western Sahara and Colombia and is still present in all crisis outbreaks, including Iraq, Afghanistan, the Palestinian Territories and several regions of Africa constantly providing essential equipment and emergency supplies from its annual budget.

The ECHO also funds medical teams, mine-clearance experts, transport and communications, food aid and logistical support.

European Union provides humanitarian aid through three main tools: emergency aid, food aid and help for refugees from conflict-affected areas and for people displaced within the country or region in a state of war or crises.

The European Union humanitarian aid includes tents, blankets and other essential goods, such as food, medicines, medical equipment, water purification systems and fuel.

The European Union emergency aid is given in form of cash that allows the acquisition and delivery of supplies such as medicine, food and shelters or in form of financing the reconstruction projects in areas affected by wars or natural disasters.

There are two types of food aid provided by the EU: the former one – provisions of foodstuffs in regions affected by hunger or droughts until resumption of normal production, and the latter – food grant in

areas affected by food shortages arisen suddenly as a result of unforeseen natural disasters.

The EU provides assistance not only to refugees but also to those displaced from their home countries or regions throughout the displacement period until they are able to return to their homes or to settle down in another country.

Until now EU's operations in case of emergency were carried mainly in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Moreover, of great interest were the most recent post-conflict operations scrolling down to Liberia Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Darfur (in western Sudan) and neighborhood regions of Chad.

According the "General Report on the Activities of the European Union", the Commission has responded to humanitarian crises in over 60 countries by 90 financing decisions in a total amount of EUR 671 million.[8]

By eradicating the major threats, such as: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and organized crime, cybersecurity, energy security, climate change consequences, conflicts regional states throughout numerous missions carried out by the EU and proves its contribution in the field of conflict management.

The contribution which the European Union brings in the management of different international crises by initiating of a comprehensive approach concerning the coordinating the means of action civilian and military, but also in terms of eradicating the major threats.

Nowadays challenge is a premiere if we are to take into consideration the massive impact of the migrants wave assault on Europe, both in institutional and human terms.

2. Discussions

Since its debut, 2015 was marked by a major tragedy caused by one attack directed against the headquarters of the French Weekly Newspaper Charlie Hebdo, in Paris, on 7(th) of January. The entire world has been shaken by the terrorist attack, whose moral and material author was claimed by the Islamic State.

Unfortunately the months that followed were not eventless with a negative impact, that unfortunate attacked marked unquestionably peoples, populations and entities from different regions at the same time.

Since the beginning of 2015, Europe has become the realm to which many Arab Muslims (and also non-Muslims) aspire to arrive, the road to the heart of Europe has proven to be very long, difficult and dangerous, a journey that generated a real crisis in the entire region.

According to numerous analysts, the crisis we are focused on, is considered to be the biggest, in the last 50 years.

According to the World Organisation for Immigration, approximately "365,000 people have risked their lives to get into Europe, and more than 2,800 have died drowned in the Mediterranean".[11]

The Arab population exodus has found a scarred Europe, a totally unprepared to manage the immigrants wave crisis Europe. It all may be the effect / the result of a lack of coherence, of a mediocre level of a very rarely consistent foreign policy concerning various problems / crisis or situations that challenged the reaction time of the EU institutions.

The crisis the European Union faces today doesn't only bring into the flashlight the massive waves of migrants but also some collateral problems such as: the possibility created to certain terrorist groups to infiltrate, to penetrate into Europe (and not just here) under the false

image of refugees; the potential exacerbation of the radical Islamism which attracts an increasingly number of young people of Arabic origin (but not only).

Other asymmetric threats, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and organized crime, cybersecurity, energy security, the consequences of climate change, regional conflicts, the states who are in a process of involution etc.

According to the international / regional crises theory the migrants wave crisis can be generated by factors that are either of a domestic nature (political, economic, social) or external nature (induced by the international context / regional).

The circumstances that may generate regional or international crises might result from the spreading of the tendencies for revision of the territories or borders of countries (see the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), the massive emigration to the powerful countries, the grow up of drug trafficking, the commodities, the organized crime, the political and ethnic extremism, the religious fundamentalism, the international terrorism etc. [8].

According to theorists we can identify three categories of crisis zones: the anachronistic (or traditional) areas, the induced crisis zones and the crisis aleatory (or mosaic) areas that we are facing today in the whole region of Europe [9].

All these areas are dangerous and generate numerous threats but the most complicated crisis areas are the so called aleatory or mosaic. Here, the chronic crises are visible for a long time and even if they can be solved in a way or another they are not; these are the controlled or supervised areas.

The induced crises depend on the chronic ones or on the collision of different interest groups and can put / lay / bring the international community in front of serious dangers. On the one hand, the aleatory

crises (or mosaic) are generated by complex causes, most often the accumulation of contradictions that aggravates the regional or national situation gives birth to these types of crisis and causes outbursts or violent reactions; On the other hand, crises can be generated by the terrorist actions, the multiplication and the disparities which causes temporarily uncontrollable asymmetric threats.

Crises at the beginning of the XXI century are complex, predominantly politico-military, with economic support amid higher multiplication disparities and asymmetric threats.

Crises affect both the developed and the poor countries that face border crises, hunger, malnutrition, serious lack of jobs, terrorism etc.

Post-Cold War have developed a series of crises, both international and regional, which have affected in a certain extent the entire international system and consequently the international security environment; the first major crisis was caused by the problem / crisis of hydrocarbons, specifically the lack of hydrocarbons instigating the Gulf War (1991), followed by generalized crisis on African continent (see the wars in Somalia, Angola, Rwanda, Congo etc.), the ethnic and secessionist crisis in the Balkans, the separatist crisis in Chechnya.

We can also mention the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in the Middle East, which began decades before the Syrian crisis and the Kurdish crisis etc.

Referring to the actual refugee crisis, if we take a look in the past, from its very moment, the Islamic society was a pluralistic society, a mixture of several civilizations and cultures, of different importance.

The establishment of the first Islamic state has coincided with the signing of a treaty between all the tribes in the area,

including Hebrews, which stipulates the freedom of religion and the rights and responsibilities of each religious confession.

Thus, it was consecrated the universal dimension of Islam, a religion addressed to all peoples, taking into consideration that during that time there were no exclusive highlights or radical terminology to the other beliefs [5].

According to Muslim religion (Islam) and tradition of the Koran the Arabs must oppose oppression and injustice in the name of justice and tolerance and religious by accepting the legitimacy of pluralism established by the omnipotence of Allah.

Traditionally the religion of Islam gives primary importance to the principle of universal brotherhood and to the equality of people, this original religious tolerance was subsequently ignored in favor of the radical maximalist tendencies.

An important factor (with negative connotations) in the metamorphosis of the original Muslim principle of religious tolerance, into both the radicalism and the dangerous fundamentalism has proved to be the impact with the Christian civilization, with its disregard towards Islamic tradition.

On the other hand, this principle, based on tolerance, marked by a profound rationality, crystallizes a certain Muslim civilization [6].

The fact that Islam defines itself as the history of the revelation, as gathering of all other religions, as a religion of total submission to Allah, attempts to Islamization, attempts made to enforce people to convert.

The Jihad appeared in the eighth century, through a mixture of religion and politics by combination of religion with politics to draw attention to the concepts of the universal Islam doctrine and also endeavoured to divide the world into two parts: divided the world into Dar-al-Islam

(House of Islam) and Dar-al Harb (House of War).[5]

According to the Islamic dogma Jihad must be present all over the world, both as religious dogma and as a model of political governance. Due to this perception of the Jihad and to the fact that the Islamic Empire did not have fixed physical boundaries, the arabs could continue to legitimize a permanent conflict state.

Jihad is perceived as a crusade, a battle of all Muslims to promote, the religious Islam dogma on the one hand, and the cultural, social and geopolitical implications on the other hand.

Even though the holy war of Jihad may be compared with ancient European crusades, also seen as holy wars back in time, there is one element that is different, the fundament.

The major difference between the two holy wars consists mainly in limitation in time and space imposed by the Europeans on their holy war "the coordinates that animate it were at the intersection with the Palestinian territory, more precisely with the Holy Land".[5]

Another difference between the two holy wars was the way peace was perceived; thus, Christians established peace between peoples as a result of cohabitation amongst them, while the Jihad doctrine perceived it as a dichotomic relationship, reducing it to an unequal relationship, a win-lose relationship.

Obviously the interaction between the two worlds has transformed the politically and religiously Islam irreversibly, its tolerant origins became closed and intolerant.

In modern era, in geopolitical yet less religious terms, Islam was marked by the establishment of the Hebrew state under the influence of the Zionist movement and consequently by the taking on important territories.[2]

It is undoubtedly true that a pertinent analysis of Islam can't be achieved without a comprehensive filter of all its implications such as: social, religious, cultural and geopolitical without which we would still be stuck in the multitude of more or less plausible stereotypes.

But focusing on the current crisis of the Arab population migration there are some questions that need to be answered to:

What is the cause of this mass migration?

What are the elements that led to this exodus?

What will happen to these immigrants waves?

How and who shall assimilate these people who come with their own traditions, cultures and values and last but not least with their own problems?

Probably one of the most important causes of the immigrants crisis derived from the Syrian crisis that erupted in early 2011, amid the fall of authoritarian military regimes in Tunisia and Egypt and also amid the Iraqi and Kurdish crises.

During the past years, the European Union has reoriented its foreign policy and security especially to prevent the onset of conflicts, the ESDP is the one of the tools designed in this regard.

After the 1990s the EU has changed its foreign policy due to the fact that more than 4 million people died around the world in conflicts-90% of them being civilians.

Recently, EU High Representative for Foreign Policy, Federica Mogherini has stated "it urged Member States to be united to the refugee crisis which faced the Europe", during the meeting of foreign ministers of European states on September 5, 2015, in Luxembourg; all discussions were concerning the introduction of compulsory quotas and permanent distribution to refugees.[10]

Mogherini also underlined that "it is necessary to begin to use the right words. It is partly an influx of immigrants, but is mainly an influx of refugees, that puts us in a different situation with regard to legal and moral obligations that we have".[10]

The immigrants waves that flooded the European Union have also penetrated the borders of some non-EU countries such as: the borders of some countries which do not belong to this union for the moment (it is about Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo).

This fact had risen awareness regarding the strategy EU should adopt and "the EU must understand that we assist to a form of aggression against it" and, therefore, must devise a realistic strategy, coherent and well outlined across all regions of Europe and not only just in the terms of policy concerning the security of the EU Member States; in this context, on a firm tone Germany and France have proposed a permanent and compulsory mechanism across the Union to receive the immigrants [1].

3. Conclusions

The immigrants crisis effects will only be seen in time, since there is no unanimous agreement amongst all the affairs ministers of the EU Member States so far, on the distribution of more than 120.000 immigrants who arrived (we relate to the month of September 2015). It is worth mentioning that the Council had tried to debated this situation in the EU JHA (Justice and Home Affairs), who held on September 9, 2015.

Hopefully a final decision will be made regarding the EC proposal on the distribution of refugees in the context of the JHA Council that will take place on 8 October 2015 and the European Council, scheduled to be held from October 15 to 16, 2015.[4]

In this context, the refugee crisis with its geopolitical, economic, security, social, demographic, cultural dimensions, expressed first as a disagreement with socio-political connotation it tends to become a conflict of Europe itself.

The globalization process which characterises the entire international complex has generated numerous consequences at various levels and in various fields, such as: the globalization of the crises, a true fact that needs to be addressed by a concerted global action.

However, the crisis and conflicts management is even more difficult to handle nowadays because of great economic disparities, the proliferation of crime or financial and economic fields, trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings and the existence and persistence of totalitarian regimes, who are generators of crises, which generate conflicts and not least terrorism.

Lately, many analysts have stated that until recently that the most serious politico-military crisis of the XXI century were those arisen from the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 against the United States and the American response to the outbreak of the war against terrorism, the intervention in Afghanistan, the war in Iraq and its long term consequences.

However, the realities of the moment tend to contradict their views given the fact that after more than a decade the series of crises have experienced an acute exacerbation, we may say.

In this geopolitical context, the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in the Middle East did not record any major improvements, on the contrary since December 2010 many Arab (see the situation in Syria, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Algeria etc.) states had crossed a deep socio-political crisis.

Another example is the Western Balkans crisis also managed by NATO, and more recently by the EU, these crisis still going

on, see Transnistria, this crises continuing, as the one from Transnistria, Chechnya, Central Asia and Southeast Asia [9].

At the beginning of the XXI century, as we seen, the African continent was also involved in numerous open military conflicts, terrorist attacks, making countless victims in Spain, Turkey, Russian Federation, Caucasus and Southeast Asia.

It can be appreciated that even though these crises had broke outburst in different places and different times, they are interrelated, their lies in the resources battle for resources, borders, advantageous or privileged positions in the new configuration of the global power and especially for influence.

Future will prove to what extent the European Union is able to manage the refugee crisis and other numerous issues that will inherently arise, such as: human trafficking, the problem of immigrants / refugees, their status, setting up procedures concerning their assimilation or expulsion, the status of asylum seekers / the right to asylum etc.

Despite the remarkable efforts made by the European Union in terms of humanitarian aid, tragedies are multiplying with each day passing, since the European institution and member states, required to accept refugees / immigrants seem to be overwhelmed by the situation.

We are facing an unprecedented situation since the immigrants crisis has become the crisis of all nations.

This moment must be seen in concordance with the realities and in this context taking responsibilities is no longer optional, but mandatory.

The European Union, its member states and other non-EU countries have a legal responsibility, if not moral, to grant asylum in short time to persons who need international protection.

The onset of the Arab Spring, 2011, brought up a number of new challenges which culminated in 2015 with the Arab exodus in Europe.

We appreciate that there is a need of a dialogue between the two different civilizations: the Western culture and Islam. Our opinion is that by seeking to impose and extend Western democratic patterns in the Middle East and Africa without taking into consideration historical and traditional specificities of the Arab world, without taking into account the mentality of these peoples will only lead to new conflicts.

It remains to be seen to what extent it will be highlighted a revival of the pan-european Arab spring.

References

1. Badea, C., Degeratu, C.: *Criza imigranților o operațiune de război. Rusia răspunde la sancțiunile UE*, 1 septembrie 2015 (*Immigrants' crisis – a war operation. Russia responds to EU sanctions*). Available on: <http://www.ziare.com/invazie-imigranti/romania/gen-constantin-degeratu-criza-imigrantilor-o-operatiune-de-razboi-rusia-raspunde-la-sanctiunile-ue-interviu-1380280>. Accessed: 21.09.2015.
2. Cuceu, C.: *Încercări explicative asupra dialogului interreligios Iudaism – Islam (Explanatory tests on interreligious dialogue Judaism - Islam)*. In: *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*. JSRI, No. 1, 2002, p. 80.
3. DEX (*Explanatory Dictionary*)- ediție revizuită și adăugită (revised edition), Academia Română, Institutul de Lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan-Al. Rosetti”, Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold, București, 2009.
4. Gavril, I., Bădulescu, M: *Criza*

- refugiaţilor pe agenda Consiliului JAI : poziţia UE şi a statelor membre. (Refugees' crisis on the agenda of the JHA Council: EU and Member States position)* 14 septembrie 2014, Agerpress.Ro, Available on: <http://www.agerpres.ro/flux-documentare/2015/09/14/documentar-criza-refugiatilor-pe-agenda-consiliului-jai-pozitia-ue-si-a-stator-membre-10-56-56>. Accessed: 21 septembrie 2015.
5. Dragoş, I.: *O istorie zbuciumată a poporului evreu (An eventful history of the Hebrew people)*. Bucureşti. Editura Niculescu, 1999, p. 110.
 6. Imara, M.: *Islamul şi celălalt. Cine pe cine recunoaşte şi cine pe cine contestă (Islam and the other. Who recognizes whom and who disputes whom)*. Bucureşti. Fundaţia Taiba România, 2006, p. 29-30.
 7. *Raport general privind activitatea Uniunii Europene (General Report on the Activities of the European Union)*. Europa. Portalul Uniunii Europene, Comisia Europeană, Bruxelles, Luxemburg, 2006, p. 182, <http://europa.eu/generalreport/ro/rg2006ro.pdf>. Accesat: 26 ianuarie 2010.
 8. Rogojanu, D.-C.: *Teoria complexului regional de securitate: complexul de securitate european (Security Regional complex theory: European security complex)*. Iaşi. Editura Lumen, 2007, p. 115-116.
 9. Văduva, Ghe., Dinu, M.-S.: *Crizele politico-militare ale începutului de mileniu (Politico-military crises of the new millennium)*. Universitatea Naţională de Apărare, Centrul de Studii Strategice de Apărare şi Securitate. Bucureşti. Editura Universităţii Naţionale de Apărare, 2005, p. 25.
 10. Vidu, V.: *Mogherini îndeamnă statele membre UE la unitate în faţa crizei imigranţilor. (Mogherini urges EU Member States to the unit face to immigrants crisis)* 6 septembrie 2015, Mediafax.ro. Available at: <http://www.mediafax.ro/externe/mogherini-indeamna-statele-membre-ue-la-unitate-in-fata-crizei-imigrantilor-14701886>. Accessed: 21.09. 2015.
 11. Vidu, V.: *Cronologie: principalele evenimente ale crizei refugiaţilor şi imigranţilor din Europa. (Timeline: Key events of crisis' refugees and immigrants from Europe)*. Mediafax.ro. Available at: 5 septembrie 2015, <http://www.mediafax.ro/externe/cronologie-principalele-momente-ale-crizei-refugiatilor-si-imigrantilor-din-europa-foto-video-14701274>. Accessed: 21.09. 2015.