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Middle Eastern Irregular Immigration Flows to Europe: Challenges, Sea-based Efforts and EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement

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Abstract

Irregular immigration, motivated by the aim of reaching safe havens, has become one of the toughest challenges in recent years and the world has witnessed a continuously growing immigration trend originating primarily from the conflict zones in the Middle East and North/Central Africa.

The paper *“Eastern Irregular Immigration Flows to Europe: Challenges, Sea-based Efforts and EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement”* provides a different aspect for the situational awareness on today’s immigration phenomenon and bring forward potential solutions in facing, countering and overcoming the challenge by especially focusing Eastern Mediterranean Routes to Europe and explores the Operational Seaborne Efforts mainly at Aegean Sea.

Moreover, the study examines the different aspects, side effects and probable outcomes of EU-Turkey Readmission Statement and ends up with conclusions and policy suggestions over these topics.

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Middle Eastern Irregular Immigration Flows to Europe: Challenges, Sea-based Efforts and EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement

1. Introduction

Irregular immigration has become one of the toughest challenges in recent years that the world is facing, along with the terrorism. Since the latter has been exploiting the first heavily, these two challenges have become so intertwined that now it is quite hard to separate them from each other. In addition, as the current rate of immigration has reached to enormous levels, countries has become incapable of handling the issue individually due to their limited capacities.

During the last 7 years, the world has witnessed a continuously growing immigration trend originating primarily from the conflict zones in the Middle East and North/Central Africa. Despite the long distances, developed regions and countries; mainly EU, US, Australia and Canada, have been the main destinations in the search of a safe haven for those escaping from conflict zones.

With this short introduction, my main aim with this paper is to provide a different aspect for the situational awareness on today's immigration phenomenon and bring forward potential solutions in facing, countering and overcoming this big challenge for Europe.

In the first part I will try to give an insight on the irregular immigration problem in general, then I will focus on the current situation, challenges of immigration from middle eastern region and the Operational Seaborne Efforts mainly at Aegean Sea but also slightly touching related issues at Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean. After shedding insights on the economical dimension of the smuggling immigrants, I will try to put forth possible course of actions to counter the related problematic issues. Moreover, I will examine the different aspects, side effects and probable outcomes of EU-Turkey Readmission Statement. Finally, I will wrap up the paper with my conclusions and policy suggestions over these topics.

2. Immigration and Challenges in General

Immigration has always been a phenomenon forced by the inequalities among nations and by the political, demographic and economic imbalances between the developed and the developing and/or the underdeveloped parts of the world. Although it has generally been seen as a concern by most of the destination societies, economic facts tend to favour this phenomenon. However, regional conflicts that the world has been witnessing in recent years, primarily in the Middle East and North/Central Africa, have reshaped both the size and the consequences of immigration.

Main motivation of immigration has sharply turned into a desperate search of a safe and secure place for those subjected to violence in conflict and war zones. Numbers have climbed up to tremendous levels especially for the neighbouring countries to crisis areas such as Syria/Iraq, Yemen, Libya, etc. Some side effects of immigration have also become more visible such as illicit human trafficking, drug trafficking, organ trafficking, etc. linked to traditional criminal activities.



Most remarkably however, terrorist infiltration into immigrant flows has become the most critical issue from the security perspective. Social, economic and political side effects in the destination countries have also been issues of concern and debate as the numbers have accumulated in the recent years. Focus areas for this immigration phenomenon have greatly been the regions/countries bridging the developed world to the crisis spots. Over the past years, due to the consistent conflicts and tensions in Central-Northern Africa and the Middle East, countries in the south of Europe have had to bear the most of the burden in managing the immigration at global level. In fact, in conjunction with the inequalities brought about by the EU immigration policy, immigration has been elevated to become a major challenge for the European security.[\[1\]](#)

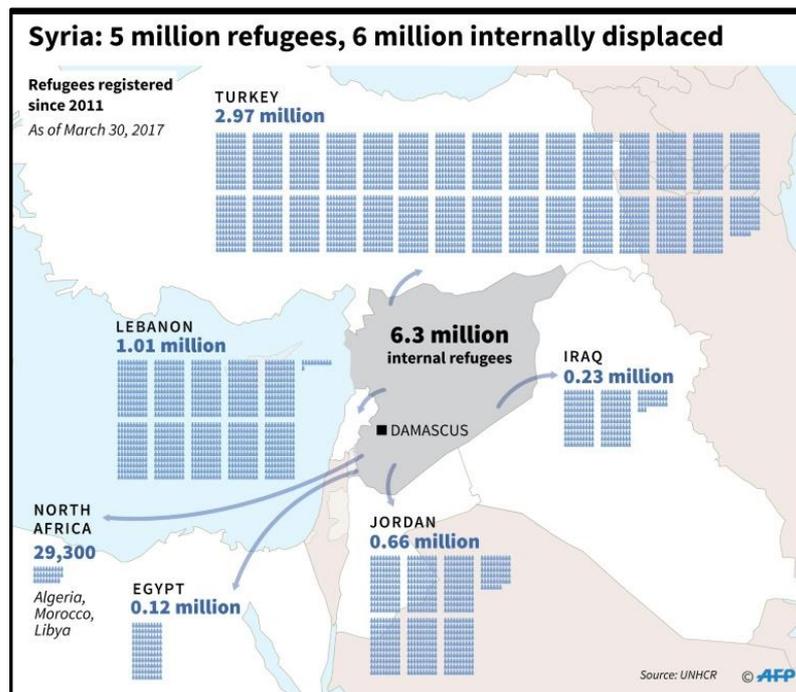


Figure-1 Syria: 5 million refugees, 6 million internally displaced (Source: UHRC/AFP) [\[2\]](#)

OECD countries have registered 1.5 million more asylum requests in 2016 as compared to 2015[\[3\]](#), around two-thirds of which have occurred in Europe. However, in the first six months of 2017, the total number of arrivals on the European shores has remained around 85,000, which is roughly one tenth of the peak in the second half of 2015.

This fall can in part be attributed to the collaboration and coordination among destination and transit countries, as OECD has been calling for long to step up integration efforts for immigrants and refugees[\[4\]](#).

One example for these efforts can be the EU-Turkey Agreement which has resulted in dramatic decreases in the number of arrivals in Greece. In reality, active NATO operation in Aegean Sea has had a considerable impact on the crossings over the sea. Coordination of efforts among countries along the immigration routes have surely discouraged potential immigrants from crossing the sea to reach Greece where there is also very limited land passage between the two countries.



Up until now, Turkey herself has been harbouring around 3 million Syrian refugees in addition to another 300 thousand coming from other countries. The level of difficulty for Turkey to absorb 3 million refugees in her own 80-million population would be lesser than the countries, with a smaller population such as Greece, which are potentially exposed to huge number of immigration flows^[5].

In this sense, Greece, which has approximately 11 million population, one million of which are already foreigners, may have dramatical changes in her demographic structure if she welcomes 3 million refugees in her soil. Besides demographic changes there would be cultural, economic, educational and political impacts in such countries as well.

The biggest challenge for the countries hosting enormous number of immigrants as safe havens is security issues related with potential terrorist activities. The sensitive situation of asylum seekers/immigrants, who are trying to use one of the fundamental human rights, has great vulnerability to be misused by terrorist organizations. Terrorist groups or organizations mostly aim to reach their main purpose by embedding their members in mainly irregular/undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, immigrants especially whose relatives live in terror exporting countries are far more vulnerable to be influenced by radical terrorist or extremist groups.

The fight against terrorism has been a top priority for EU and especially for the Europol for the last decade and, in this fight irregular immigration will be monitored continuously. It looks like that this priority will keep still its place at the top of the list for a while more.^[6]

It is really a great matter for the countries that have inappropriate infrastructure and capabilities to handle immigration issues and host asylum seekers and immigrants. These countries are also potentially in danger to confront economic and social problems related with migrants. As one of the serious global problems of the last decades, the immigration issue and the burden incurred should be shared by all countries in an equal manner. In the context of EU, it can be offered that developed countries in the union should financially support the countries those are exposed to greater mass of immigrants and the ones with inadequate infrastructure.

3. Operational Efforts and Obstacles at Aegean Sea to cope with Irregular Immigration

The efforts at Aegean Sea and Mediterranean to deter irregular immigration flows at sea by the support of patrolling warships and coast guards in the frame of maritime operations introduce new measures and create new problem areas to the overall problem.

Maritime operations especially beyond the Territorial Waters (TTW) of origin or passage countries are namely conducted within the concept of Search and Rescue (SAR) operations but, in reality they aim to monitor and control the probable immigration routes. In this manner first version of the agreements between both EU/Greece-Turkey and Libya individually emphasize on the necessity and importance of taking appropriate measures against irregular immigration flows at the land or territorial waters of Turkey and Libya. ^[7]

On the other hand, the existence of below mentioned dispute areas between Greece and Turkey affects the level of cooperation and effective execution of the NATO operations at Aegean Sea. We can shortly summarize prominent problem areas between two countries as follows:



- Demilitarized status of the Eastern Aegean Islands: Turkey denies any activity of Greek military or Greek Coast Guard units based or stationed on the East Aegean Islands such as Leros, Lesvos, Rodos etc. and manoeuvres in their TTWs due to the demilitarised status of these islands. This problem has been affecting many other NATO operations as well since 1954. [8] Turkey's stance over the status of these islands impedes also the cooperation between NATO, EBCG (FRONTEX) and Turkish Coast Guard.

- The legal status of certain geographical features (Islands, Islets, rocks) at Aegean Sea: There is a long term continuing problem over the legal status of several islands, islets etc. between these two countries and this issue has always a great potential to create an imminent crisis between the neighbours in parallel with the political developments. It is a possibility, not to be easily ignored, that a growing tension between these two countries may not be bonded between them and may end up as a crisis including The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCG; previously known FRONTEX) and EU as well. [9] Oinnouses Island tension, which occurred even following the EU-Turkey Agreement and the launching of NATO Operation at Aegean Sea, stands as a clear example on the sensitivity of the aforementioned issue. [10]

- The dispute over airspace at Aegean Sea: Greece claims 10 NM air space over 6 NM TTW and refuses the flight of Turkish Military Air Vehicles between 6 - 10NM Airspace without flight clearance. This long-standing problem also stands as an obstacle for any kind of effective cooperation in the Aegean Sea.

- Search and Rescue (SAR) Region: Greece and Turkey have different declarations over the SAR Regions which overlaps each other in the Aegean Sea. In case of any incident at sea in the overlapping areas both parties try to respond to the incident by their means and carry out SAR operations.

Based on the above-mentioned explanation over Aegean Sea, we can clearly state that the main problem is related with the determination of maritime borders between Turkey and Greece. These mentioned dispute areas generate communication barriers and weaken the coordination between two countries [11] during the struggle with irregular immigration flow in the East Aegean Sea. Therefore, third parties such as EU (Germany takes the most active role) and NATO are forced to act as a mediator between Greece and Turkey.

In this context, EU and NATO firstly brought forward the proposal to act and operate with NATO and/or EU assets against irregular immigration flow in TTWs of the counterparts as Greece and Turkey. Due to the existence of abovementioned chronic problems between Turkey and Greece, this proposal was strongly refused by both countries assuming and worrying a possible misuse or misinterpretation of NATO Operational Assets in the East Aegean shores. In the mean time, on the other side of Mediterranean Sea, Libya accepted the proposal letting Italy to operate in Libyan TTW to intercept irregular immigration before their reach to open seas. [12]

As a prescription to a similar problem, in October 1997, U.S. and Haiti signed a bilateral letter of agreement concerning cooperation to suppress illicit maritime drug traffic allowing U.S. law enforcement agencies to enter Haitian territorial waters and airspace. [13]

As a result of similar agreement with Bahamas, US air and sea assets can operate, detect and intercept immigrants [14] and other type of irregular activities in the third countries TTW to avoid long and expensive processes of returning immigrants to their origin countries.



The Maritime Operations conducted beyond the third countries' TTWs to prevent irregular immigration flows to EU can be stated as a Sisyphean labour. Countries suffering from immigration should focus on effective options to keep potential immigrants in their origin or transit lands. Experiences have already showed that sea-based efforts against the irregular immigration has mostly been successful only if operation is conducted in origin or transit countries' TTWs in close cooperation with counterparts.

Additionally, it should be expressed that sharing timely information with origin or transit countries like Libya[15]and Turkey[16]is of great importance and a main prerequisite for success of counter immigration operations. There was an expectation of increase in the number of immigrants from Turkey to Greece in 2013 due to the indications and developments in the time being.

However, after first ever assignment of a Turkish Coast Guard Representative to the Embassy of Turkey in Greece in 2014[17], the level of cooperation between two countries' Coast Guards enhanced. The fruits of this initiative and the excelled level of operation-oriented information sharing between Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) and Hellenic Coast Guards(HCG) were seen in the upcoming time period and led to the much better results particularly in the East Mediterranean Sea in the year 2015. Based on the intelligence provided from successful HCG, TCG conducted operations (OPERATION SAFE-MED[18]) at the south coast of Turkey (focus on sea areas south of Mersin City), Turkey-based irregular immigration flow has almost been eradicated from the East Mediterranean.

4. The Importance of Dealing with Irregular Immigration at Land Before Reaching Seaborne Transfer Assets

Supporting financially the transit countries such as Libya and Turkey has emerged as the most effective course of action to deal with immigration flows. In this example, both countries received financial support from EU in exchange for using their law enforcement efforts to impede irregular passage towards Europe in their own territories, setting up refugee camps for immigrants and ratifying readmission agreement.

In this context, while Greece received €1 billion, on the other side Turkey and Libya were allocated €3 billion euros and 300 million euros[19] respectively in tackling the immigration challenges. The EU has also allocated more than EUR 1.2 billion[20] to Lebanon since the start of the Syria crisis to relieve the impact of the Syrian crisis and host more than 1.5 million refugees in their land.

Immigrants naturally do not have resources and capabilities to find means for their voyages towards destination countries. For every phase of their trip they need **smugglers, facilitators**, who are well-organized and have networks in origin, transit and destination countries to accomplish their dangerous task in success. In this respect, collapsing smugglers, facilitators and such criminal organizations are one of the main objectives of EU countries. [21]

Leading EU countries have initiated and increased mutual cooperation and coordination both with their own law enforcement/ secret service agencies and with the ones of the third countries including common operations in this manner. Countries have adapted enormously increased penalties in their law against smugglers and facilitators as well. Nonetheless, there are still serious obstacles to reach to real culprits by law enforcement agencies, because of the precautions taken by facilitators such as not steering the immigrant boats by themselves but instead training and letting immigrants to sail the boats at the sea.



Land based increased preventive measures at the borders and the coastlines appear as the most effective measures against irregular immigration by hindering and discouraging possible attempts to reach sea-based assets as boats.

5. Economic Realities Behind Smuggling People at Sea and Efforts to Minimize the Irregular Transportation Capabilities

Another measure to diminish the sea based flows is to take under control the transfer of indispensable materials for navigation such as lifejackets and inflatable boats to the origin or transit countries. In this sense, EU has limited sales of inflatable boats and related materials to Libya[22] and also requested China to stop the shipments to the designated countries as of May 2017. It is still not naturally expected that the producers of such a large home-grown industry totally will give up shipping rubber boats to Turkey or Morocco.[23]



Figure-2 Lifejackets and Immigrants (Source: AFP [24])

Until EU-Turkey agreement came into effect, irregular immigration organizers (or separated criminal groups who get profits on this new business model), had even dared to pick up the abandoned boats at the nearby offshore of Greek Islands after their previous usages by migrants.

In this manner they expected to decrease marginal resource costs or getting profit by selling them on the market again. The rubber boats were available at the market with the prices between 300-500 \$[25]; and the number of new immigrant arrivals after a dangerous journey from Turkish coasts to the Greek islands by these boats had been roughly 2,000[26] before the EU-Turkey statement on 18 March 2016. In 2015, each day more than 50 immigrant boats were transferring immigrants to the Greek Islands and at the end of the year the overall number of immigrants reached to the islands was around 885,000. Boat transfers and boat market created a new profitable sector with a financial turnover of around 10 million \$.

Organizers used to buy scrap ships from the ship dismantling facilities or second-hand ships which were about to reach their end of life cycle with very low prices. By using these kinds of ships, they can transfer much higher number of immigrants at same time and earn around 10,000 euros per person, which is five times more than they can earn, 2000 to 3000 euros, by using rubber boats.



While transfer capacity of rubber boats is around 20-60 people this number goes up to 1000 at the ships. The ships can also deliver immigrants after longer voyages at sea directly to central EU countries such as Italy. And traveling by ships is an important advantage for the immigrants by preventing them from a tiring process where they have to first cross Greece and then take a longer and risky trip through non-EU member countries on foot to reach their aimed destinations.

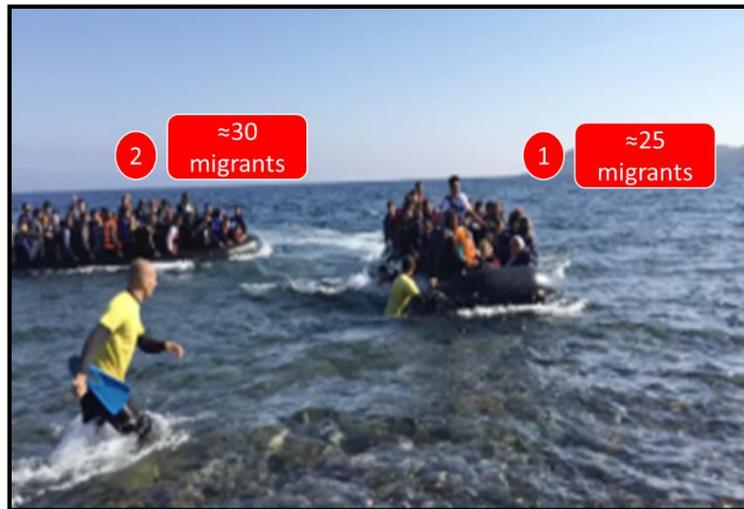


Figure-3 Rubber boats full of asylum seekers and other immigrants (Source: 2015 Human Rights Watch) [\[27\]](#)

It is an unfortunate reality that transferring people needing protection and looking for safe havens and ready to pay as much as they can have created a very profitable market. And, usage of ships provides opportunity to organizers/smugglers to earn around 7-10 million Euros for each single trip. Although nearly all ships are confiscated at the end of their voyages, it is not a big deal for organizers since they get 10 times more in return. It is a great deal for the organizers as they receive half or two-third of certain amount as an upfront payment and the rest is collected right after successive arrival. Regardless of the success of the sea passage, in any case organizers assure their earnings.

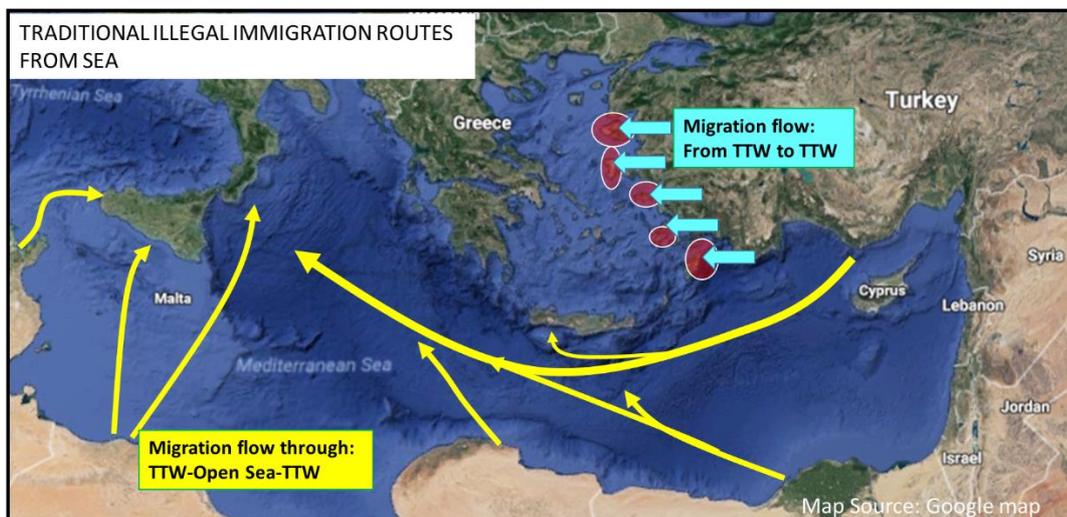


Figure-4 Traditional Irregular Immigration Routes from the Sea (Source: Google Map)

6. Main Sea Routes of middle East Based Immigration

Smugglers/organizers by changing routes and transporting systems keep earning huge amount of money in this illegal sector and, their elastic behaviors and creative approaches generate new courses of actions to keep the continuous flow of migrants through sea in response to taken measures by law enforcement agencies. Within this knowledge, a short insight is provided below on these alternative routes and ways to reach EU for Middle Eastern Immigrants with the destination to countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus or Italy.

a. Turkey-Cyprus Route: Cyprus Island, which has no land connection with other EU countries, can be assessed as an unfavorable destination or a transit country for immigrants. But on the other hand, Turkey's refusal to recognize Cyprus (Greek Cypriot Administration) as the unique representative of the people at the island and, the problematic political status between counterparts may have a potential to turn Cyprus especially Southern Part a very preferable new destination for asylum seekers in EU. We need to emphasize that Turkey-EU Admission Statement, which is based on the flows from Turkey to Greek islands or mainland, is not an applicable cure in this situation.

b. Lebanon-EU (Italy/Greece) Route: Lebanon hosting at least 1.5 million Syrian refugees as a country with the highest number of refugees per square km and per capita in the world appear as a possible preferable transit country for new immigrant routing to EU. Existence of UNIFIL (the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) land and sea-based units which operate within the mandate of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) of 11 August 2006 facilitates to control the irregular immigration flows originated from Lebanon. Patrolling UNIFIL Maritime Forces in the area can be assessed as a main reason for immigrant smugglers to accept this route as a desirable one. Equally important to diminish the possibility of irregular immigration out of this area is the financial support of EU to Lebanon that has an effective role to keep refugees in the country.

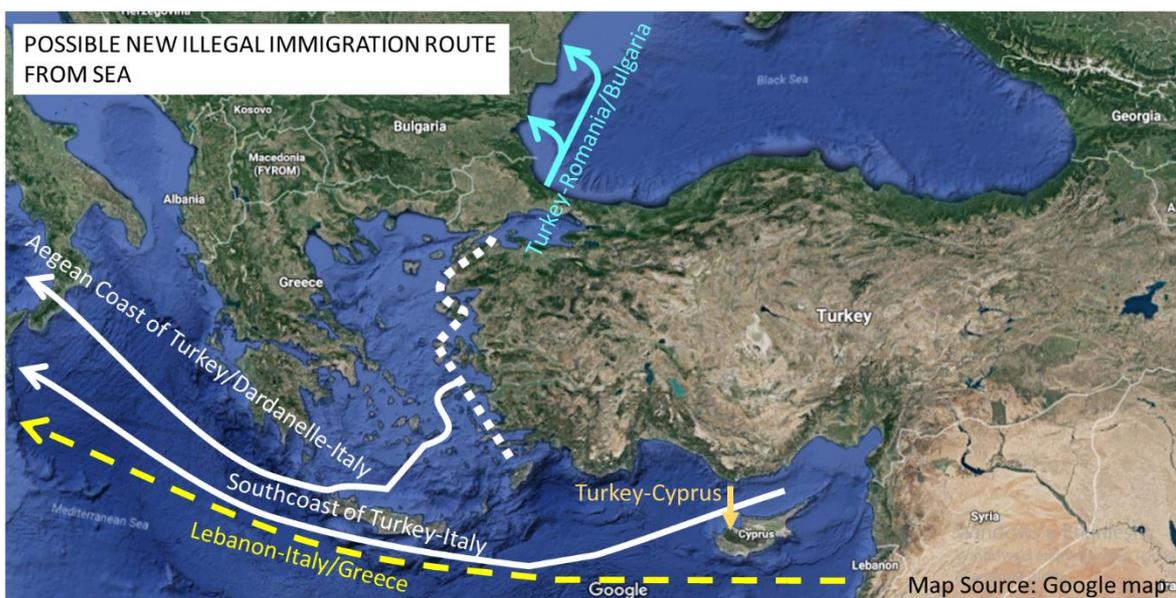


Figure-5 Possible New Irregular Immigration Routes from the Sea (Source: Google Map)



c. Southern Coasts of Turkey-Italy Route: It has been the main route for the immigrant smugglers in terms of ensuring passage around 1.000 people at each cruise directly to Italian coasts with earning massive amounts of profit. This route has been hampered after the initiation of effective information sharing between Greek and Turkish authorities and Turkey's increased follow up measures. Nevertheless, this route keeps its attractiveness and importance for immigrant smugglers as it is naturally out of EU/Greece-Turkey Migration Admission agreement scope that includes flows from Turkey to Greek islands. In practical manner the trafficking or smuggling of immigrants through this route is not only used by directly embarking people ships at the coasts but also by transferring them with relatively small boats to big ships waiting at sea.

d. Aegean Coasts of Turkey/Dardanelle (Canakkale) - Italy Route: Without crossing to Greek islands and destined to Italian coasts instead, migrants may be transported by means of small boats to relatively big ships off the Turkish Aegean Coasts. In the same manner they are boarded at the southbound vessels before entering to Canakkale Strait (Dardanelles) at Marmara Sea or after exiting the strait into Aegean Sea. This is not often applied modus operandi but still in use.

e. Turkey-Bulgaria/Romania Black Sea Route: Increase in the number of intercepted immigrant boats by Romanian Coastguard has incited the fear that smugglers are trying to activate a new dangerous transit passage to Europe. While these numbers remain irrelevant compared to the hundreds of thousands who have made the perilous crossing between Turkey and Greece, **it could still be a significant precursor.** [29] 1936 Montreux Convention provides an exclusive statute to Black Sea by restricting the deployment of Navy Units of non-coastal countries. Since Montreux Convention allows non-Black Sea Countries total tonnage up to a maximum of 45,000 tons with a duration of 21 days at Black Sea. Thus the Terms of Convention prevent EU ships to operate for long periods of time here, the only possible solution to fight against immigration flows at Black Sea relies on the coastal nations naval/coast guard capabilities and cooperative initiatives as BLACKSEAFOR.

7. Aspects over EU-TURKEY Readmission Statement as a Mean for the Problem

As stated in many papers EU-Turkey Readmission Statement signed on 18 March 2016 was not the first one to deal with immigration flows towards EU, on the contrary EU and Turkey had already ratified Readmission Agreement more than three years ago on 16 December 2013.

In practice there are some crucial requirements for effective implementation of the agreements, for example submission of concrete evidence showing to Turkish Authorities that immigrants started their journey out from Turkey as an initial step. Since most of immigrants do not have any documents as a proof of their identities and not all immigrants have been registered in Turkey, the readmission issue heavily depends on the Turkish authorities' subjective decisions. Therefore, this is a serious problem for this agreement to work as expected.

It should be accepted that financial commitment of EU is a strong incentive for Turkey to increase necessary measures against illegal passage. Despite this factor, the statistics reveals that the readmission process does not work very well to alleviate the situation. Since March 2016, out of 27.711 arrivals to Greece 1,504 irregular immigrants were accepted back to Turkey under the EU-Turkey Statement and the Greece-Turkey bilateral protocol [30].



Along with unstable political situation in Turkey and the usage of the foreign affairs issues as a tool for domestic policy by current regime in order to increase/hold steady their public support endanger the future of EU-Turkey Migration Agreement. Moreover, the repeated rhetoric of high level political figures such as Turkish President, Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs (*Directorate General of Migration is sub organization of Internal Affairs Ministry*)[31], who are in charge of execution of the agreement properly, is very accurate indicator for the future of ill-fated EU-Turkey Agreement.

The EU have supported Syrian refugees in Turkey with €3 billion for 2016 and 2017 through its facilities for refugees in Turkey and an additional €3 billion also in the agenda for 2018. The allotted money will be used for the needs of refugees and to host communities with a focus on humanitarian assistance, education, health, municipal infrastructure and socio-economic support. In the initial year of the agreement, €2.2 billion was allocated from the resources of the facility for refugees in Turkey and 39 projects worth €1.5 billion have been signed.

Turkey goes to general election which is crucial for the President Erdogan to keep his powerful existence on 03 November 2019 while there is still a possibility that the date of election may be brought earlier under the below mentioned environment;

- Turkey's current economic indicators are not pleasant.
- Unstable political environment; because of prolonged State of Emergency after 15 July 2016 Failed/so-called Coup Attempt, Parliament has already been bypassed, instead Government itself introduces new laws itself by using power of Decree Law. Taking into account the reason of new extension decision in January 2018 until April 2018, it looks like State of Emergency will be kept longer in favour of President Erdogan.
- Turkey have serious problems with not only all neighbours but also EU, NATO allied countries and gulf countries as well.
- Insecure environment leads Turkey more unstable future.
- Turkish public is much more divided than ever due to populist domestic policies and Turkey is turning fast into a land of fear for opponents while losing the peace and serenity in the country.
- Nowadays the political and military rapprochement of Turkey with Russia and Iran is another controversial issue for NATO, EU and western countries.
- Last but not least, Turkey is rising in the listings of countries due to the Violation of fundamental human rights.

8. Conclusions and Proposals:

a. Regarding Sea Based Operational Efforts and Challenges to cope with Irregular Immigration

(1) The coordinated mutual operations of Turkish CG and EBCG or any other EU members' law enforcement agents along the Turkish West coast line will certainly contribute to the efforts to prevent immigrants set to sail out from Turkish coasts. Greece and Turkey signed/agreed on a bilateral protocol to establish a joint disaster response force. Since immigration is a very dramatic disaster for humanity while thousands of immigrants lose their lives during their travels at the sea, it is a prerequisite for EU to step forward and in this sense EU should seek for the opportunity to set up a similar joint immigration response force with Turkey.



(2) Apart from effective ISR contribution role and deterrence over organizers and smugglers, NATO assets should carry out more active duties to facilitate, monitor and control the operational efforts of both sides, Turkey and Greece, at Aegean Sea to dissuade them of violating human rights and international agreement, which may cost immigrants lives such as execution of push-back policy of Greece or negligence of necessary measures at the sea by Turkey.

(3) Although Turkey currently has a national contact point in EBCG HQ, a mutual exchange of personnel between Turkey and EBCG can boost the overall efficiency. The deployment of EBCD personnel in the Turkish Coast Guard Operation Center or Search and Rescue Coordination Center will enhance the level of cooperation and success of operations at the Aegean Sea.

(4) EU is better to seek for alternative solutions or determine courses of actions to undermine possible migration flows from Turkey via Black Sea routes by considering restrictions on force deployment in the area emerging from 1936 Montreux Convention.

(5) Due to the fact that Turkey does not recognise Cyprus (GCA) officially, it seems to be not possible in the short term to apply Turkey-Greece/EU Agreement between these counterparts. This current situation may create a new favourable immigrant smuggling route in spite of the fact that Cyprus is not a top selection for immigrants as a transit route to central EU countries. This potential is to be monitored and taken into account seriously by EU officials and work on to strengthen the measures against possible new Turkey-Cyprus route.

(6) Setting up not only information sharing but maritime picture sharing systems particular to immigration movements on land/air/sea can create a common situational awareness for EU and Turkey, which finally would allow both parties to show reaction in due time.

(7) EU needs far more close cooperation/ common operation with origin, transit and EU members' law enforcement agents to eliminate transnational organized crime groups that pose the greatest threat to the national and economic security of the EU.

(8) The immigration is not only problem of origin/transit/destination countries but whole world in terms human rights. UNSC is to take the initiative to prevent thousands of deaths of immigrants at sea (Years-Death Numbers: 2014-3,162; 2015-3,461; 2016-4,039 and 2017-2,775 (till 15 Oct)). UNSC can initiate UNIFIL-type operations in the TTW or/and out the TTW's of Libya where most tragic casualties have taken place. By this way, all countries can share burden of immigration problem as well.

(9) Collapsing immigrant smugglers and facilitators is a top priority task for EU countries. Leading EU countries should initiate/ increase cooperation and coordination both among their own law enforcement/ secret serves agencies and with third countries including common operations in this manner. Countries should enact enormously increased penalties against smugglers and facilitators as well.

b. Regarding EU-TURKEY Readmission Statement

(1) EU needs to take necessary measures in a proactive manner to prevent immigrant flows and ensure all parties act in accordance with the readmission agreement and generate contingency plans taking into close consideration of the possible worst-case scenarios such as "Turkey's breaking long existing ties with EU, USA, NATO and repositioning near to Eastern Countries as RF and Iran".



(2) Assignment of Turkish officials to hot migration spots on Greek Islands may provide them to witness the first registration process of immigrants and as an evidence based on their declaration on the start points of their journeys. This methodology will help to solve the main challenge, proving that Turkey was the point of departure, in the practice of readmission agreement so far. Likewise, it would be beneficial for EU to deploy his officials to monitor execution of registration process in Turkey as well.

(3) Addition to Syrian immigrants, another hot issue is that Turkish citizens become immigrants due to suppress, harsh politics and ruling towards the opponents by the regime with the high approval of President Erdogan. The main principle “separation of powers” in democracies is subject to a great danger due to never-ending State of Emergency state and ruling by Decrees in Turkey, which may bring more pressure, more stress and more drama to the country and more potential refugees to the Western Democracies. **EU officials should not underestimate the current route of the regime in Turkey and prepare contingency plans to additional massive immigration flows originated from Turkey.**

(4) **Immigration issue seems to be a painstaking issue for a while, where the regime in Turkey will exploit it as a leveraging domestic tool for keeping support of their voters until 2019 General Elections and besides this issue will be manipulated to cover the lack of sources in the worsening Turkish economy.**

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[5] Wikipedia, 2017, “Demographics_of_Greece”, accessed Sep. 16, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Greece ; “As of 2011, the number of foreigners in an enumerated total of 10,815,197 people was 911,299.”

[6] TESAT, 2017, , “European Eunion Terrorism Situation And Trend Repord 2017”. Accessed Sep. 17, 2017, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/tesat/2017/>.

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DELPHINE NAKACHE AND JESSICA LOSIER, 2017, “**The European Union Immigration Agreement with Libya: Out of Sight, Out of Mind?**”, accessed Sep 20, 2017 <http://www.e-ir.info/2017/07/25/the-european-union-immigration-agreement-with-libya-out-of-sight-out-of-mind/>

- “The February 2017 EU summit in Malta led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Italian government and the new UN-backed Libyan government that aims precisely at



“combat[ing] illegal immigration, human trafficking and contraband and [...] **reinforcing the border security** between the Libya State and the Italian Republic” (EU-Libya Memorandum of Understanding, 2017; see also ASGI, 2017)”

- “Italy also promises to boost its financial and technical support to **allow the Libyan Navy and Coast Guards to intercept more migrant boats in Libyan territorial waters and to improve health conditions in Libyan detention facilities** where migrants will be sent once intercepted (Memorandum of Understanding, February 2017)

[8] NATO, 1957, “,”Demilitarization of the Dodecanese Islands”, accessed Sep 22, 2017: http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/2/128823/SGM-0217-57_ENG_PDP.pdf ,”Demilitarization of the Dodecanese Islands: The North Atlantic Council has studied the **NATO Common Infrastructure projects on the Island of Leros**, with a view to meeting NATO military requirements insofar as possible while at the same time **avoiding any conflict with provisions of the Italian Peace Treaty**. The Council has decided that the NATO installations currently authorised may be completed and used only under the conditions set out below: a. **No naval, air or military units may be based or stationed on the Island in peacetime, nor may the base be used for maneuvers**. b. The installations must be maintained by civilian personnel exclusively. c. None of the construction on Leros must be patently military..

[9] Wikipedia, 2017, “Alleged_Turkish_airspace_violations”, accessed Sep 21, 2017: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Border_and_Coast_Guard_Agency#Alleged_Turkish_airspace_violations.

[10] Ekathimerini, 2016, “Greece responds to surge in Turkey’s Aegean overflights”, accessed Sep 23, 2017: <http://www.ekathimerini.com/207965/article/ekathimerini/news/greece-responds-to-surge-in-turkeys-aegean-overflights>.

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[12]-Steve Scherer, 2017, “Libya invites Italy into its waters to fight human trafficking”, accessed Sep 25, 2017: <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-libya-security-italy/libya-invites-italy-into-its-waters-to-fight-human-trafficking-idUKKBN1AB1AH>

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[14] Tribune242, 2017, “151 Migrants Caught By Rbdf “, accessed Sep 26, 2017: <http://www.tribune242.com/news/2017/aug/14/151-migrants-caught-rbdf/>

[15] Andrew Rettman, 2016, “EU navies to help Libya coastguard stop migrants”, accessed Sep 27, 2017: <https://euobserver.com/migration/133523>

[16] European Commission, 2016, “ Turkey’s progress on the visa liberalisation roadmap”, accessed Sep 29, 2017: <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we->



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[17] Following year in 2015 Turkey also assigned Coast Guard representative in Turkish Embassy in Italy as well.

[18] Turkish Coast Guard Command, 2015, “ Current Operations”, accessed Sep 30, 2017 : http://www.sahilguvenlik.gov.tr/baskanliklar/genel_sekreterlik/ingilizce/current_operation.asp “ On August 2014, Turkish Coast Guard Command has initiated an operation called “OPERATION SAFE-MED” to fight against irregular migration in the East Mediterranean with its own surface and air assets.

(**Writer Note:** Even Though TCG has started operation on AUG 2014, its current name “OPERATION SAFE-MED” was given on FEB 2015 right after successful operations against relatively big ships)

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