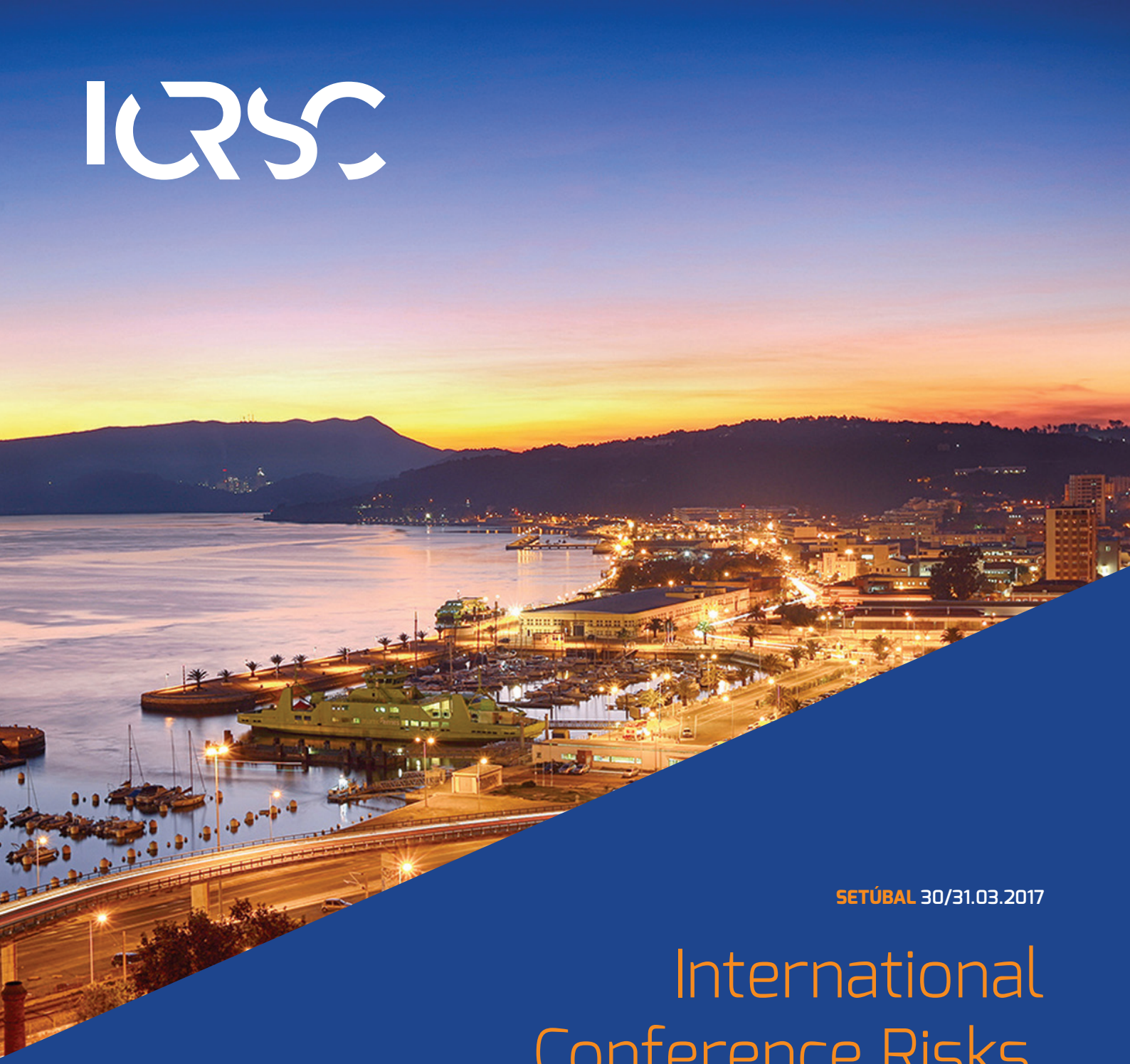

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International Conference Risks, Security and Citizenship

Conferência Internacional Riscos, Segurança e Cidadania

Proceedings Atas

ICRSC

2017

Introdução

A Estratégia de Sendai 2015-2030 engloba diretrizes objetivas para *stakeholders* (nível local, regional e nacional), comunidade científica e sociedade civil de modo a se implementar de uma forma eficaz e continuada a redução do risco de desastre e a criação de cidades resilientes para os desastres. Neste sentido, a Câmara Municipal de Setúbal, em conjunto com o Centro de Estudos e Intervenção em Proteção Civil, o Instituto de Geografia e Ordenamento do Território e o Instituto Politécnico de Setúbal organizaram a Conferência Internacional de Riscos, Segurança e Cidadania – ICRSC2017, que se pretendeu ser multi-disciplinar.

A ICRSC2017 decorreu em Setúbal, durante os dias 30 e 31 março de 2017, contou com um total de 589 inscrições. As sessões foram divididas pelas 3 linhas temáticas associadas à conferência: Riscos, Segurança e Cidadania. Estiveram presentes 31 oradores convidados (distribuídos por 4 sessões plenárias e 27 sessões paralelas) e 15 moderadores. A ICRSC2017 foi uma conferência bilingue, com tradução simultânea em português e em inglês durante os 2 dias em que as sessões se realizaram.

Contribuíram ainda para o sucesso das sessões paralelas 39 comunicações (25 orais e 14 posters), tendo sido 14 associadas ao tema dos Riscos, 15 para a Segurança e 10 pra a Cidadania. Todos os resumos e artigos publicados nas Atas da Conferência foram revistos pela Comissão Científica, mas o seu conteúdo é da responsabilidade exclusiva dos autores.

A Comissão Organizadora

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Migrant and refugee crisis in Europe: challenges, experiences and lessons learnt in the Balkans

Crise de migrantes e refugiados na Europa: desafios, experiências e lições aprendidas nos Balcãs

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ABSTRACT

The recent events in Europe, mostly related to the migrant and refugee crisis, seriously affected European security and stability. Coming from different crisis regions in Asia and Africa, migrants are commonly dedicated to a shared objective - to arrive at the desired destinations in the most developed EU countries.

The Balkan countries, representing the South Eastern port of Europe, largely faced this phenomenon accompanied with the activities of illicit groups. The Balkans, dominantly used for transit, became very vulnerable to the consequences of the refugee crisis without the ability to influence its causes. The risk assessment, approaches and actions taken by national governments still directly depend on EU migration and security policies and current political situation in Turkey.

In the first quarter of 2016, just before signing the EU-Turkey Agreement, the situation culminated when almost 1 million migrants were registered on the entry points on the Macedonian-Greek border (Pavlovski and Popovska-Aleksandrovska, 2017). Such demographic and security risks threatened and tested national, political, and institutional capacities and regional police cooperation, respectively. The so-called "(Western) Balkan Route" became the most critical for European security, stability and consistency of EU security and migration strategies.

The paper follows the categorization given by Bell, Alves, de Oliveira and Zuin (2010, p.16). As people migrate for a range of different reasons over the latter half of the 20th century, it became possible to identify three main types of international migration: labour and temporary migrations including illegal migration, forced migration (refugee movements) and international retirement migration (IRM). The forced migration results with flows of refugees and asylum seekers who cross borders due to conflicts and political uncertainties, and the displaced who have lost their settlements due to natural disasters and construction projects (Bell et al., 2010; Castles, 2003). In this sense, the paper highlights the risks and threats arising from last endeavors of the migrant and refugee crisis. It emphasizes the perspective from the South East Europe, comparing EU migration and security policies' standpoints with actions taken by national governments and regional cooperation bodies. Consequently, the goal of the paper is to present critically and analytically the lessons learnt on the Balkan Peninsula. Furthermore, it is focused on ways how to mitigate negative effects and to have control over security risks and threats, affecting border control, demographical changes and reduced institutional capacities.

Keywords: Balkan route, security, migration, crisis, security, risk, phenomenon.

1. Introduction

The lack of peace in the Middle East and North Africa has seriously disturbed European and global security. An unprecedented 65.3 million people around the world have been forced away from home. Among them are nearly 21.3 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2016). An estimated 11 million Syrians have fled their homes since the outbreak of the civil war in March 2011. In 2017, 13.5 million are in need of humanitarian assistance within the country. Among those escaping the conflict, the majority have sought refuge in neighbouring countries or within Syria itself. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 4.8 million have fled to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, and 6.6 million are internally displaced within Syria. Meanwhile, about one million have requested asylum in Europe. Germany, with more than 300,000 cumulated applications, and Sweden with 100,000, are EU's top receiving countries (Syrian Refugees, 2016).

Passing through different countries on their way to their final destinations, the migrants and refugees face different approaches and procedures, some of them against principles of the international community. Analyzing the migration phenomenon in correlation with liberal theory, every liberal country has an obligation to give shelter to anyone who flees from persecution, war and dictatorship. As the right of life is not given by the state, it does not depend on any state's will. Moreover, the right of life and freedom of movement are in the top on the spectrum of rights, freedoms and values of the EU and Schengen zone. In cases where refugees are not welcome in some "liberal" country, the state officials can not deny migrants their right to seek asylum.

In Europe, 2016 was a year of intense political, social and economic tensions. The continent continues to be subjected to the negative impact of crises affecting neighbouring states, as well as growing political rifts within EU member countries. The terrorist threat, strained international relations, and stagnant economic indicators have maintained the unstable environment facing Europe since 2015 (Dugulin, 2017). "One of the biggest threats to Europe's unity and its future is the rise of populism, nationalism and xenophobia. In that sense the issues of migration and security are threating the fundamental values on which the EU is built," argued the European Commissioner (EEAS, 2017).

The migrant and refugee crisis is just a continuance of European concerns regarding security challenges of the EU and its member states. The crisis produced a diversity of standpoints among European countries regarding how it affects national interests, political situations and socio-economic development. The crisis imposed the need for policy makers to create more efficient limitative and wide ranging operative measures for dealing with this global phenomenon affecting the European micro-geographical areas. It also challenged the will of European countries to receive migrants and refugees and their national absorbing capacities.

The flow of migrants flooded Europe and it became more intensive from 2014 to March 2016. The migrants mainly come from Syria (but also from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, Sudan and Eritrea) due to the Syrian intrastate war between governmental forces, ISIS, and many other military fractions and groups combined with landed and aerial operations taken by some world and regional powers. On their way to the EU, refugees and migrants entered through three primary routes: the Central Mediterranean route from North Africa to Italy, the Eastern Mediterranean route from Turkey to Greece, Bulgaria, and Cyprus, and the Western Mediterranean route from North Africa to Spain (UNHCR Bureau for Europe, 2017, p.1). The EU Border and coast guard agency (Frontex) gives a more detailed view recognizing eight main migratory

routes into the EU by the land and sea: Western African route, Western Mediterranean route, Central Mediterranean route, Apulia and Calabria route, Circular route from Albania to Greece, Western Balkan route, Eastern Mediterranean route and Eastern Borders route (Frontex, 2017). In this regard, European countries along the routes could be classified as countries of transit or final destination countries. Each country and each route has specific particularities.

2. An overview on the western balkan route

The Western Balkan route represents a continuation of the migrant flows dominantly coming from the Eastern Mediterranean route. According to the direction of movement of the refugee flows, the existing crisis in the EU Member State (Greece) was shifted to the Balkan non-EU countries (Macedonia, Serbia and Albania) and affected regional security and political dialog. The route passes through small countries on the Balkan Peninsula and neighbouring Central European countries with reduced or limited financial, infrastructural and institutional resources, less advanced asylum systems and burdened with political, social and other problems at the same time. The crisis imposed the need for reallocation of the existing human and material resources of the security, health and social services in terms of keeping the stability and internal security, as well as to provide accommodation, health, communal, transport and other services according to the needs of the refugees and migrants,. The crisis was considered a new challenge for security, social and health entities facing different cultural, mentality and health issues. If the main risks in 2015 on the Balkan route were associated with national security, public security, and public health, in 2016 the risks were largely correlated to personal migrant security, health care, and humanitarian protection.

Fig. 1
Movement out of Turkey and onward movement from Greece and Bulgaria (UNHCR Bureau for Europe, 2017, p.5)

Even the most commonly used route onwards from Greece has generally been via Macedonia into Serbia, the routes increasingly diversified according to political developments and border regimes achieved through technical and operative measures taken by the countries along the route. The measures such as construction of fences (in the cases of Bulgaria and Hungary) were considered as an obstruction to the

access to international protection for those seeking asylum, i.e. to the EU Member States' obligations to provide access to asylum procedures for those requesting international protection and conduct protection screening prior to returning persons to neighbouring states (UNHCR, 2014).

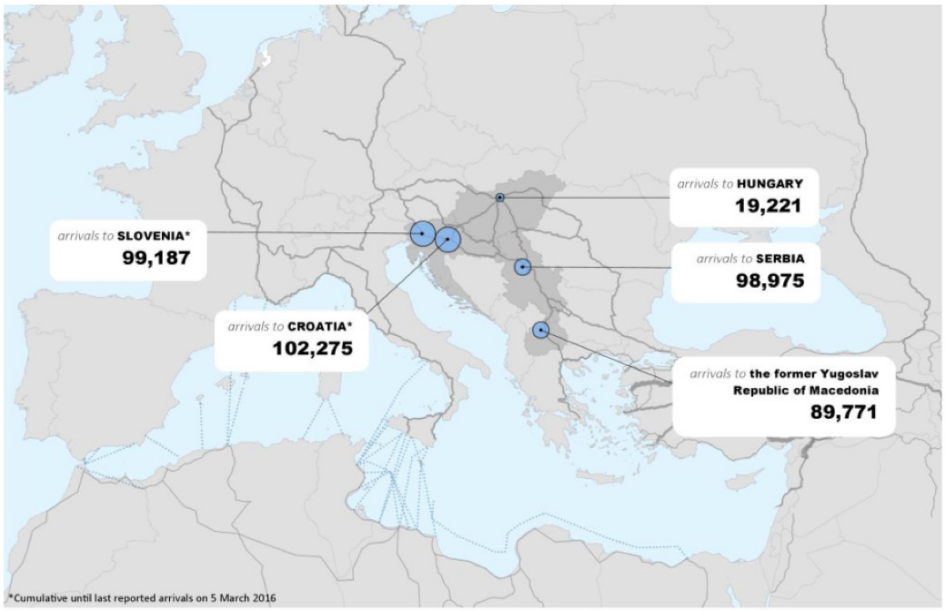

Fig. 2
Registered and reported arrivals to Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and Hungary from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 (IOM, 2016, p.10)

Comparing the migrant flow on the Balkan route and Europe, the total number of arrivals to Europe by the end of December 2016 was recorded as 387,739 and it is a stark contrast to the 1,046,599 arrivals recorded in 2015. In Greece there was a 79% decrease - 176,906 arrivals in 2016 compared to the 857,363 recorded in 2015, while Italy saw a slight (16%) rise in numbers of arrivals, from 155,842 in 2015 to 181,436 in 2016 (IOM, 2016, p.1). The numbers presented by IOM coincide with numbers recorded by concerned countries on the Balkan route. The total number of arrivals on the Macedonian-Greek border was 694,679 in 2015, with a daily flow of 5,000-10,000 migrants. In the period 1 January to 8 March 2016 89,623 migrants expressed intention for asylum, while the daily flow was limited to 3,000 migrants (for refugees from the war zones only) and Macedonian police prevented 35,177 migrants crossing into Macedonia from Greece after the formal closure of the Balkan route (Pavlovski and Popovska-Aleksandrovska, 2017). In 2016 the numbers of those entering the European Union via Turkey were far smaller than in 2015 - with a total of 176,732 refugees and migrants entering Greece by land and sea. In Bulgaria, 18,884 refugees and migrants were apprehended by authorities over the course of the year – a significant decrease from apprehensions in 2015 with almost half caught in the interior of the country in 2016. Between 5 July and 31 December 2015, Hungarian police reported preventing the irregular entry of 10,496 refugees and migrants and apprehending and returning 8,507 refugees and migrants found within 8 km of the border. As a result, the number of refugees and migrants in Serbia increased from approximately 2,000 in June to 7,000 by the end of the year (UNHCR Bureau for Europe, 2017, p.2-4).

Following the *EU-Turkey Statement* in March 2016 and the closure of the Western Balkans route, the Central Mediterranean again became the best alternative entry point to Europe using Libya's ports, but also minor numbers arrived in Italy from Egypt and Turkey. Additionally during this period, after many months of lack of an appropriate reaction of state officials, countries agreed for an advanced regional approach using more efficient border restrictions imposed at several points along key routes. Those measures significantly affected the flows from the main entrance point - the Greek islands near the Turkish border. The numbers crossing the sea to Greece from Turkey dropped drastically with arrivals in October 2016 almost 99% lower

than in October 2015 when 211,663 crossed the Aegean – an average of 6,828 per day. In 2016, arrivals on the Greek islands dropped from an average of 2,175 per day in January to 96 per day in October and 54 per day in December (UNHCR Bureau for Europe, 2017, p.2). The implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement produces additional pressure on the borders; especially on the Macedonian-Greek border, where a large number of migrants and refugees remained "technically and legally" stranded. On the Macedonian-Greek border four big incidents happened after 8 March 2016, and the crime rate of migrant smuggling rose significantly after an increase in the number of attempts for illegal border crossings as well (Pavlovski and Popovska-Aleksandrovska, 2017). According to the same source, the migrants and refugees often did not have appropriate and true information about the paths of movement and other relevant information usually provided by smugglers and various activists and organizations, and in several cases this caused serious disruptions to public order and peace.

Country	No. of stranded migrants and refugees on 10 March 2016	No. of stranded migrants and refugees on 29 December 2016	% change from March to December 2016
Greece	42,688	62,784	47%
Macedonia	1,199	137	-89%
Serbia	1,706	5,633	230%
Croatia	231	620*	168%
Slovenia	408	339	-17%
Hungary	-	460**	N/A
Bulgaria	865	5,560	543%
Total	47,097	75,533	60%

*Number of asylum seekers. **Data available as of 16 November 2016.

Table 1 Stranded Migrants Trends from the EU Turkey Agreement to 29 December 2016 in the Western Balkans, Greece and Hungary (IOM, 2017, p.11)

3. Lessons learnt and measures taken in dealing with the problem

In the first stages of the crisis the situation looked spontaneous, but in the later stages when daily arrivals on the border increased, it became more serious. Even though the refugee and migrant crisis did not represent a Balkan political problem arising in the region, the coordination and measures agreed between states on the Balkan route were not immune to the daily politics and populism instead of being a common ground for increased regional cooperation. In contrast, intermediately before the crisis started, the cooperation had a continuous growth after many floods affected the region. This time the hotspots appeared on the borders where there are real bilateral disputes (Macedonia-Greece and Serbia-Croatia) and where there is an atypical implementation of European security policies and strategies (the Hungarian border).

The period until August 2015 was characterized with various flows of migrants, entering by foot, hidden in vehicles or trains, using railway tracks and cycling to the highroad, as well as many cases of smuggling migrants were registered and measures were taken by the border police uniquely. In the following period (August - November 2015) there was a huge flow of migrants, most of them came from vulnerable categories, they used organized transport and services provided within states' established reception centres. The crisis

affected the internal security of the areas near border crossing points, near refugees' camps and along the route. The crisis resulted in an increase of xenophobia and minor conflicts due to the cultural differences between domicile population and migrants.

Policy makers did not foresee such huge migrant flows as top threats for national security, and consequently the security forces and other state and local institutions did not have any strategy how to deal with the situation.

The benefits and conclusions of the lessons learnt are mainly considered as a need and future challenge for building a better holistic approach based on strong interagency (cross-sectoral) and international cooperation. It involves the European law enforcement and other relevant entities (national police, Frontex, Europol, EEAS and crisis management instruments), international organizations (UNHCR, UNICEF, Red Cross and IOM) and security oriented regional initiatives (MARRI). Therefore, lessons learnt should be analysed on several aspects, regarding the scope of work of the involved parties and purposes of the measures taken.

3.1 International community's involvement

The involvement of the international community on the Balkans mainly arose from the lack of knowledge and expertise on how to deal with "imported" and large-scale humanitarian catastrophes[1] – in form of refugee and migrant crisis. Some inputs were dedicated to infrastructural and logistic issues. Even though the Balkan route is situated entirely in Europe, the EU was not first on the scene regarding the coordination and control over the situation. Some other international key actors (i.e. international institutions in the field of crisis management and humanitarian action - UNIHCR, IOM, UNICEF, and Red Cross) contributed significantly, helping local and national stakeholders and NGOs in the implementation of international law and procedures and finding appropriate operational and regulatory solutions for different topics concerning the migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers.

With a serious lack of knowledge about **UNHCR** and its role in the global community, the officials of the concerned states in the first stages of the crisis expected UNHCR to provide them financial means for solving the crisis.

UNHCR was devoted to setting up camps, to monitor and to provide support to the national authorities about implementation of the standard operative procedures regarding the communication, reception, registration and status of the population of concern. IOM and UNHCR provided support to the security forces and other national stakeholders in the form of specialized training, training manuals and booklets for building approaches and opportunities for incorporation of standard operative procedures for dealing with refugees.

Thus, UNHCR tasks were mainly focused on creating consistent reports of push-backs and use of violence by state authorities, which appear to contravene the prohibition on collective expulsions and due process standards (UNHCR Bureau for Europe, 2017, p.5). In multiple cases in the region, UNHCR work was focused on receiving accounts of persons (including whole families and the persons from the vulnerable groups, too) who had requested international protection but were denied access to asylum procedures, as well accounts from many refugees and migrants that reported abuses by smugglers or reported being kidnapped or being subject of extortion attempts when some smugglers allegedly frequently used physical and sexual violence

[1] The latest example dates from the period of the Kosovo crisis (1999), when Macedonia opened a refugee camp between Skopje and its border with Kosovo and accommodated more than 400,000 refugees on its territory. Previously almost all Western Balkan countries were subject to reception of refugees and internally displaced persons during the wars in the former Yugoslavia (1991-1995).

and torture in order to obtain additional fees above those previously agreed upon.

Throughout the crisis, the **EU** organized political meetings and pushed the Balkan state officials to increase control over the Balkan route with their own resources on the ground, offering EU guidelines and symbolic support. The action period 2014-2016 showed that the EU, besides acting dominantly on *ad hoc* basis for issues of strategic importance, uses many bureaucratic and consensus based mechanisms for dealing with such kind of crisis. The Western Balkans directly experienced the EU problems of different national attitudes replicated through undeveloped and insufficient level of political culture among member states for harmonizing the approach, awareness of solidarity and recognition of the needs for rapid reaction.

Furthermore, the EU offered financial aid in the later stages of development and initiatives for more frequent meetings among political leaders from the region, a very symbolic deployment of Frontex, in terms of finding a solution to slow the refugee flows.[2] The Frontex deployment in non-EU countries was considered as very expensive adventure without a clear mandate.

Over and above some operative measures, EU-Turkey agreement, introducing quotas for reception of refugees and involvement of the EU's Emergency Relocation Mechanism there were some authentic initiatives and measures aimed at dealing with the crisis on the Balkan route. Thus, in late October 2015, the EU and countries on the Balkan route agreed to implement *17 operational measures plan* intended to support refugees and provide shelter and rest, managing together migration flows, border management, tackling smuggling and trafficking and monitoring (Strategic Communications, 2015). The plan provided implementation of the following activities: unique registration documents; daily information about new measures and activities; profiling and strict criteria for entry in the first country; first entry to be authorized only for persons with a travel document, visa or residence permit; daily quota for transit and acceptance – 3000 persons for transit through the route (85 persons for Austria); and better control of the green border.

Austria, as an EU affected member state along the Balkan route, initiated the meeting of police chiefs from Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria. On 18 February 2016 they argued to introduce joint registration of refugees crossing from Greece into Macedonia and organise their transport from the border straight to Austria. The process was aimed to identify and take biometric data from the migrants and determine whether they come from countries deemed dangerous, such as Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan. It was not intended to grant them status as asylum seekers, a step that will take place in Austria or whatever other country they might travel to (Ilic, Sekularac and King, 2016). This approach and limitations came from basic UN definitions for refuges[3] and migrants (Edwards, 2015) and selection criteria for three largely concerned nationalities as refugees from the wars worldwide, agreed between national police representatives on highest level.

3.2 Regional and national views

General perspective. The actions and measures taken by local and national authorities in the Balkans showed that problem cannot be transferred to neighbours or to other national or local stakeholders within

[2] Even in circumstance when there is a serious lack of police and intergovernmental cooperation between Macedonia and Greece, EU officials scheduled several meetings between authorities of both countries on low, medium and very rarely a high level. At the operative level, 148 police officers from Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Poland (and Serbia) participated in 7,444 joint patrols. Foreign police forces participated in submitting of criminal charges for 38 criminal acts against 35 smuggling migrants (Pavlovski and Popovska-Aleksandrovska, 2017).

[3] Refugees include individuals recognised under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; its 1967 Protocol; the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa; those recognised in accordance with the UNHCR Statute; individuals granted complementary forms of protection; or those enjoying temporary protection. Since 2007, the refugee population also includes people in a refugee-like situation. (UNHCR Population Statistic Database, 2017).

system of crisis management and humanitarian assistance. Moreover, security forces and other state and local stakeholders, even though untimely, but in the later stages of the crisis learnt a lot from relevant international stakeholders. If a crisis should be considered as a cross-cultural issue, the happenings in all its stages will reflect on police and military subculture, mentality and other aspects coming from the interaction between national stakeholders and migrants.

Referring to the institutional response, the political level, national and local stakeholders involved in the crisis would never admit that their institutions were not capable and did not clearly understand the threats of the migrant crisis and their role and competences in the phases of dealing with it. In the case of the Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs entered too late in the story, again due to the lack of knowledge of international systems regarding the migrant crisis. At the beginning they felt unable and incompetent to provide numbers and data on movement of the migrants relevant to the Balkan route. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy was not aware about their role regarding the migrant camps, so the camps were managed by the police representatives. The members of the crisis headquarters at the local and national level were nominated too late and without clearly defined competences (as well as without open access of mid-level officers to the Operative plans) and without autonomy in the decision making processes.[4]

Security forces sub-perspective. The lessons learnt by the security forces (the police primarily) give an added value of the practitioners perspective of the migrant and refugee crisis. This perspective is quite specific regarding other views on the problem, mainly due to police powers and their position in the society as a visible governmental institution that creates a public image of how the state deals with migrants and refugees. The last one became very sensitive, as most of the actions taken by the security forces deployed on the border hot spots were captured and widely transmitted by the media. The riots erupted intermediately before and one month after EU-Turkey agreement (Alderman and Bounias, 2016; Domonoske, 2016). Due to the large influx of refugees and limited on-field security capacities, in some cases the situation lost control and came to violent riots of a greater extent.

Some practitioners and academics share the attitude that although it seemed that migration started spontaneously, it in fact looked like planned and organized transport via the Western Balkan route. Some findings confirm it - telephone guidance (leading) during border crossing; multiple appearances of the same persons in charge of the migrants in the trains transporting the migrants from the southern to the northern point along E75 and vice versa; marking of crossing paths (plastic bottles and textile); the existence of locations in Greece where the migrants pay for false IDs and locations for sale of fake travel documents; offering bribery to the members of Macedonian security forces for faster and easier transit through the country; and there is an unconfirmed information that the transport is funded and the funds are obtained at several locations in Turkey and Serbia (Racaj, 2016). Apart from military findings, the police registered the following modus operandi of the migrants: the travel starts from Greece using the road Gevgelija - Valandovo – Demir Kapija - Negotino - Veles - Skopje – Kumanovo as a main route; migrants are coordinated from people from Afghanistan and Pakistan, which stay in Greece on purpose; the service costs 300–1500 euro per person; transportation happens with cars or vans usually; they use "lookout" on the road; organizers provide accommodation in the north of the country, near the border; and when they are detected by the police, the drivers are always ready to run and to leave the vehicle and migrants (Pavlovski and Popovska-Aleksandrovska, 2017).

[4] Interview (personal communication, 9 March 2017) with Police Advisor from the Department of Border and Migration Affairs of Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia.

The security and intelligence services were faced with a serious societal challenge - to provide evidence against public opinion that "all refugees are terrorists", especially after an increased level of xenophobia (islamophobia) in Europe following the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13th 2015, and in Brussels on March 22nd, 2016, and in other European cities in the following period, and connections of the some of the executers or collaborators with the Balkan route. After those attacks, the intelligence policy makers became more aware about implications of the crisis on national security and about the need for appropriate standard procedures and templates for profiling of refugees and migrants. In circumstances when interagency cooperation is not on an appropriate level (knowledge/data sharing too) and even standardized templates and procedures introduced too late (after large migrants flows), it largely helped inr making the prophylaxis and to verify and compare the numbers and other relevant data received by other national and international authorities. The reasons for this delayed reaction lie in the lack of interest and will of the national and local stakeholders and due to the unclear guidelines given by UN and EU security agencies. Intelligence services were more concerned with the potential of establishing interactions between infiltrated ISIS fighters among migrants and refugees flows and domicile citizens that participated in the war in Syria or have some other relationship with extreme militant groups in the crisis regions in Syria and its surrounding areas. Police evidence confirms that some communities within states (as Sandzak in Serbia, Western Macedonia, Bosnia and Kosovo) had citizens who fought or died in the war in Syria and Iraq (Selimi and Stojkovski, 2016, p.10), most of them deeply convinced in ISIS and al-Nusra ideology and mobilized from recruiters in their native communities.

Legal issues. In the case of the Republic of Macedonia, on 18 June 2015 the Macedonian Parliament members passed the amendments to the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection in an express Parliament procedure. The changes included new measures that allow immigrants to seek asylum in 72 hours or to leave the country. With the new changes they were allowed to use public transportation, trains and buses to reach their destination ("Macedonia: Immigrants Gain Safe Passage," 2015). Similar measures were taken in Serbia, with Article 22(2) of the Asylum Act (Zakon o azilu, 2007), regarding the intention for asylum seeking. This provision provided "the foreigner shall be 'recorded', following which he or she is obliged to report to authorised officials of the Asylum Office or one of the asylum centres within the following 72 hours".

4. Conclusion

The way in which the countries on the Balkan route reacted to the migrant and refugee crisis, as well as how the EU and its institutions designed its role in dealing with the crisis on the European ground - regarding the Balkan route, looks more like an instinctive/survival (Darwin) reaction established on an ad hoc basis, rather than as well thought out and comprehensive security strategy.

At the national level – the level corresponding with scope of each Balkan country, the lack of interagency cooperation confirmed once again that there are serious failures in the national systems of crisis management. Their security policy makers will have to redefine the content of security policies and strategies and to be more able to overcome their nationally limited perspectives in a globalized world, according to the new global security developments and new concepts of national security doctrines.

Interstate cooperation will still depend on the political will and extent of intuitional autonomy of all concerned parties at all levels. Bilateral disputes among Balkan states, even subtle, showed high potential for creating border hotspots, as it was shown on the Macedonia-Greece and Serbia-Croatia borders, affecting the internal security and control over migrant and refugee flows. Also, there is no guarantee that lessons

learnt will be implemented accordingly if new refugee and migrant flows affect the region.

In the EU approach and reaction, the initiatives for dealing with the crisis and fostering regional cooperation in the Balkans usually came from the countries most affected by the Balkan route. It showed that there is a serious absence of solidarity and lack of consensus for issues threatening European security and stability. Moreover, new endeavors between the EU and some EU countries and Turkey do not accomplish the goals and sustainability of the EU-Turkey Statement.

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