Pietro Dalla Vedova

<u>New Security Context in Europe</u>

Since the civil wars in Libya and Syria, and more generally speaking since the Northern African outbursts in Spring 2011, an unexpectedly constant flux of immigration from these lands has hit southern Europe, and little has been done by the EU community to help either the refugees or the countries which faced this massive inflow of people. Issues regarding healthcare, identification and redistribution of these people on European soil have arisen, especially in countries such as Greece and Italy. It is difficult to identify them, since most people do not have documents; this means it is virtually impossible to distinguish refugees from normal migrants. This loophole in the laws gives space to illegal activities, such as human trafficking along the maritime border between Turkey, a non-EU state, and Greece, which is inside the EU. This paper discusses measurements to increase the quality of control and identification of this flow of immigrants and suggests harsher laws against similar commodifications of people.

In front of human tragedies, the EU must react and help those populations who beg for peace and see Europe as a paradise on Earth. This said, if the decision to grant rights to all refugees on European soil may destabilise the societal equilibrium already present in European countries, some basic security measurements should be taken to reassure the European society that any destabilising member of society can be traced and condemned in case of illegal acts. In other words, people on European soil must be identified. Deadly events like the Paris attacks in 2015 must not happen again. Let me be clear: it was not immigrants who caused the massacre, but in such situations the killers must be easily identified and captured quickly and effectively. If this cannot be done, fear and ethnic or religious hatred can increase even quicker than it has done in

the past years. If a portion of the population is invisible to the government and laws, anarchy amongst them would enhance illegal activity and widespread chaos and insecurity in governmental institutions. If instead the killers can be traced easily, the population feels protected and less threatened.

Hatred and fear have been evident in more than one episode since 2011 inside the EU. In 2015 Hungary raised a wall- along the border with Serbia and promoted anti-migrant laws; the move was strongly criticised but still today one of the most common migrant routes, the one which passed through Hungary, is blocked by barbed wire. Similarly some EU leaders have come to consider the suspension of the Schengen Treaty, because of fear of unidentified people freely roaming through their territory--.

Identification, and correct identification can be positive for migrants too. In case these people had relatives already in the EU, in case they wanted a passport, a legal job and basic humanitarian help, the process of correctly identifying refugees and other migrants could be fundamental to secure integration and respect of cultures inside the European Union.

A first step would be to reach an agreement with Turkey on greater controls of their coastline facing Greece. Since the Island of Lesbos, in Greek territory, is just a few miles from Turkey, often migrants illegally enter the EU on small boats from there. Maritime trafficking of people- is a highly profitable business, in great expansion between Turkey and Greece, and obviously illegal. NATO has recently deployed ships to stop irregular immigration- and capture smugglers along the maritime borders, hoping to stop this activity and to convince migrants that the legal route is better for everyone. But an actual EU-Turkey agreement would definitely improve the

management of this crisis. Only in 2016 so far, 75.000 migrants and refugees have reached Greece on boats, in precarious conditions, and above 400 have lost their life in this dangerous trip.

Turkey has strongly criticised the EU and its parliament for its incredibly slow answers and moves. The most recent data shows Turkey has taken 2.5 million Syrian refugees and is struggling to control their movements. This is why in the last meeting it was decided that the EU and Turkey will collaborate to stop people trafficking, and to return to Turkey illegal immigrants while redistributing into the EU legal refugees currently in Turkey-. This 1-1 exchange of people definitely is not fair on those poor migrants or refugees who have spent a fortune to reach Greece's shores, but at least there is some control and identification in process. If migrants are not in need for international protection, there is indeed no reason for the EU to accept them and treat them as refugees, giving them protection.

One final point should be made on those states which have the greatest flux of migrants. What advantages do Greece and Italy have in running after these migrants and refugees to identify them? Most of them would not want to remain on their territory anyway. So if Greece and Italy decided it was not convenient for them to identify these people, the situation for the whole EU would be devastating. The enormous costs are barely covered by EU funding and Greek and Italian government face a huge humanitarian issue mostly on their own. Just letting refugees and migrants on their territory without identifying them would instead cost nothing at all. And indeed this did happen. As Italian newspaper *La Repubblica-* reported, in 2014 out of 166.000 refugees who entered Italy, only 70.000 asked for asylum; the other 100.000 people officially do not exist, but are free to move in Europe.

In addition to cost-driven factors pushing states not to enforce control, international laws impose that in case of illegal acts the refugee would be sent back to the European country it first arrived at. Definitely neither Italy nor Greece are keen on identifying all refugees, therefore, and refugees are not keen on being identified, to have more freedom. This is an enormous problem and my recommendation is to give economic advantages to those countries who identify refugees, and revisit the aforementioned law which forces nearly all migrants back to Italy or Greece in case of illegal activity. Italy and Greece are given a big burden of a problem they are not the cause of.

To conclude, the EU has done far too little for this terrible humanitarian crisis. Illegal activities have bloomed, exploiting people's hopes for a better life. NATO ships patrolling the sea between Turkey and Greece will push for an improvement in the management of the crisis but it will take long to redistribute 2.5 million refugees form Turkey. While refugees need support, migrants can definitely follow a different route to enter the EU. Laws on identifying and separating these two categories of immigrants though are vague and need implementation. And since the countries which are most hit by this influx of refugees are not helped enough by the EU, it comes to no surprise that the procedures are bent and even partially ignored. Economic aid to countries like Italy and Greece can result in improved controls and a more fluid redistribution and integration of refugees throughout the whole territory of the European Union.