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**MIGRATION AND SECURITY - EXPERIENCES FROM A
REFUGEE CAMP ON THE GREEK ISLAND OF LESVOS**

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Abstract:

The aim of the article is to define the relationship between migration and security in the context of the Greek island of Lesbos. The main research problem was the following question: Does the refugee crisis affect local, national and international security? The following research methods were adopted: statistical analysis, synthesis, inference, comparison and research of the literature on the subject and source documents.

Key words: security, migration, social problems.

1. Introduction

Migration processes have been associated with the European continent for centuries: from ancient times (Greek colonization, migrations related to the expansion of the Roman Empire, migrations of the Visigoths and Vandals), through the Middle Ages (Crusades), to the period of great geographical discoveries that began the era of economic expansion, cultural and demographic of Europe to other continents. In turn, the end of the 20th century is a period of demographic decline of our continent - from a place of exporting migrants, we have become an immigration area[1].

Since the emergence of nation states, the development of international migrations has progressed. The inhabitants of individual countries cross borders not only for tourist and recreational purposes, but also to raise their standard of living and increase development opportunities. Migration is the engine of progress and development for all mankind. It affects the improvement of the living of many social groups, contributes to the economic development of countries (increasing national income, development of investments, etc.), to which immigrants come, has a positive impact on globalization processes, cultural exchange, etc. Nowadays, illegal immigration is an increasingly important and problematic aspect for Europe countries.

Factors that increase migration include: the disintegration of multinational states and related ethnic and religious conflicts, natural disasters that move people to safer regions, discriminatory government policies, political instability (including civil wars and conflicts, armed forces in various parts of the world), poverty, the lack of adequate welfare programs and uncontrolled population growth. The above elements combine with the so-called pull factors in countries where illegal immigrants arrive. The most important ones include: the need for additional workforce, comprehensive medical and social care, high economic growth, a democratic system of government characterized by political and social stability, family and historical ties, a common language, etc.

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2. Migrations and internal security

It has become a popular slogan of the last dozen or so years that the borders of states and their protection are secondary problems for internal security in the face of globalization and growing economic integration. Scientists announcing globalization and supporters of the free market optimistically proved that such a concept as the territorial area of the state is almost obsolete and popularized the notion of countries without borders in the flows of services, goods and people. This was the case until September 11, 2001. In the world after September 11, the problem of territorial protection of the state acquired a new quality in political discourses, in Europe after March 11, 2004, it returned with redoubled strength, and in this context the phenomenon of international migrations began to be perceived with new power as one of the real threats to internal security.

International migrations have long been considered in political debates in the context of various threats. Over the past twenty years, the systematically growing inflow of immigrants to the European Union countries has meant that the cheap, foreign workforce has also begun to be perceived as a destabilizer of social security. The destabilizer analyzed and associated, however, mainly with the situation on the labor markets, i.e. the level of unemployment, segmentation of labor markets, access to social benefits, competitiveness on the labor markets, etc. Soon, when immigrants constituted five to ten percent of the population of most countries of the present European Union - and it happened in the late 1990s - migrants ceased to be considered a factor enriching the host country's culture, and the notion of a threat to national identity and culture was added to economic threats.

In the world after September 11, international migrations are no longer the subject of demographic and social disputes trying to balance the issues of economic growth and cultural integration with the problem of the prosperity and well-being of voters. The relationship internal security - immigrants seems to be gaining more and more importance and, as has already been mentioned, of quality. The relationship between migrations and internal security is one of those aspects of the political discourse that may in the near future influence the shape of national migration policies and the migration policy of the European Union. Recently, various measures and mechanisms for controlling borders and the movement of people have been introduced. Migration policy is an area where compliance with national and international law can work well together in combating international terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Stricter border controls, stricter entry controls, stricter visa policy, the use of modern means of identifying identity, collection and regional exchange of personal data (in the European context this is the Schengen information system - SIS, Eurodac and Europol) concerning, inter alia, infringed persons, these measures are unfortunately necessary in the modern world. However, they mainly focus on the control of personal flows and therefore may not be sufficient both in the fight against terrorism and the development of extremist forces and organized crime. The challenge for internal security is to consider the above-mentioned measures and mechanisms of border control and the movement of people in a broad socio-economic dimension, concerning the relations of the majority with minorities. In this context, the governments of some European countries, understanding that immigrant communities, which are culturally and economically integrated with the host society, do not constitute a potential source of infiltration for extremists and recruitment for criminal groups, run special programs aimed at combating xenophobia and discrimination.

Security is commonly equated with the state of certainty, peace, possession, existence and development. One thing that changes over time are the external and internal conditions of national security. As a consequence, changes are being made to the nature and manner of implementation of activities aimed at maintaining the expected state. The system of concepts and criteria relating to



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safety is characterized by a timeless, essential and unquestionable influence on the fate of both individuals and local communities and entire nations[2].

International migrations are currently massive and global in scale. This fact is confirmed, inter alia, by the results of studies conducted by the International Organization for Migration. According to the above, in 1960–2010 the number of immigrants in the world almost tripled, from 75 million in 1960 to 214 million in 2010. In conclusion, during that period, about 3.1% of the world's population lived and worked outside the country of birth. The reason for such changes is most likely the dynamically developing phenomenon of globalization and, related to it, the increasing openness of international economies, making the mobility of people an indispensable element of the process of social and economic development. This fact is both an opportunity and a threat to local security.

When talking about security issues, it is impossible to ignore the threats that somehow condition this state / process. The most serious threats resulting from the presence of immigrants include (among others): economic disturbances of the host countries, which may, as a result, translate into negative responses from local communities; civilization and cultural deviations, and thus the disappearance of the national identity; all kinds of social pathologies, such as: the spread of poverty, crime, robbery and even rape; the phenomena of the formation of organized crime groups and terrorism.

In addition, quoting, for example, the words of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres: "now, when anti-immigrant sentiment is escalating in some parts of Europe, it is necessary to pay attention to the positive impact of refugees and immigrants in the countries that receive them, and to honor key for a Europe of values: protecting life, defending human rights and promoting tolerance and diversity"[3]. This statement suggests that despite the existing threats from immigrants, it is also worth paying attention to and focusing on positive and important things - such as life itself.

When considering the issue of the causes of migration, one could boldly resist the previously presented division according to the causal criterion. For example, economic migration is the most common type and, at the same time, the cause of departures or arrivals of certain people, towards, as the name suggests, improving one's material well-being - typically economic migration. Another type of migration is the so-called family, otherwise also known as social. Carried out in order to unite families that may have been separated at one time or, on the contrary, to create a new, often multi-cultural one. Most national and religious migrations are based on similar reasons - persecution or ethnic or religious discrimination. Religious often referred to as pilgrimages to areas of worship. Probably the most pleasant type and the reason for causing a migration movement is tourism, trips / arrivals for sightseeing and recreational purposes. Both emigration and immigration have their own specific goals and are born with the occurrence of certain favorable situations, periods of time or the so-called external and internal factors. The external ones include, for example: intolerance, failure to respect human rights, and persecution. These are factors that do not depend on the migrant. On the other hand, internal ones are defined, among others, by: the desire to improve the standard of living, the desire to develop, change the social environment, create a family or even experience an adventure. However, the economic aspect is still one of the most common reasons for leaving. There is also a different division of factors in the literature, into the so-called "pushing" - favoring emigration and "pulling" - favoring immigration to specific places. The first group includes: poverty, unemployment, low wages, high birth rate, lack of basic medical care, deficiencies in the education system, corruption, conflicts, violence, human rights violations, religious and ethnic discrimination. On the other hand, the "pulling" factors included: prospects for higher earnings, personal or professional development, prospects for improving the general standard of living, political freedom,



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sense of security, no discrimination, migration to the country of ancestors, possibility of family reunification[4].

Based on the UNHCR data[5], the main reason for migration is the willingness to take up a relatively better job. Thus, when choosing the country of emigration, people pay attention both to the living conditions in the country of arrival, the attitude of the inhabitants of this country to the newcomers, but also to historical conditions, the distance of a given country from their home country and largely formed migration networks, it is mainly about information obtained from the experiences of relatives, neighbours or friends. In second place as for the reason for emigrating from their own country and usually without many options to choose the country of arrival are immigrants called refugees, displaced persons, etc. They usually differ from other immigrants in that the situation in their country is so dangerous that their health and even life is in danger, and their country is so unstable that it is unable to provide them with adequate protection. Most likely, this proportion of immigrants coming to Europe will continue to increase and will not change until the end of the conflicts in their home countries. Europe is now a safe haven for them.

3. Migration on the Greek island of Lesbos

The current refugee crisis is the worst since World War II. In 2016 alone, over 65 million people became refugees: that is nearly 170% of the entire population of Poland. Many of these refugees are children who were born in conflict zones and have never experienced anything but violence, war or life in a refugee camp.

There are three ways of looking at the current refugee crisis: from a humanitarian perspective, one of national security and from an economic perspective. Looking at the crisis from a humanitarian perspective, we should help refugees find shelter, provide them with food, clean water and clothing so that they can survive the difficult period until they return to their homeland or resettle in another safe country. The right to life is a fundamental human right, protected by international law. From the point of view of national security, countries receiving refugees should cooperate with the international community in order to prevent uncontrolled border crossings by those who do not leave their countries for economic reasons or because of any threat, and who themselves pose a terrorist threat to citizens of European countries. It should be stressed that they are also a threat to the refugees themselves, who are often themselves a target of their attacks.

The refugee crisis in Greece has obviously had a significant economic impact on its people and economy. The Greek government has been forced to spend over €1 billion a year on housing for refugees and migrants alone. It is worth a reminder that in 2010 Greece faced an economic crisis that led to thousands of people losing their jobs. The government had to make cuts in public services and social benefits, which led to citizens losing their jobs and financial flow. Under these conditions, the additional financial burden of the refugee crisis is almost too much to handle.

Refugees are people who have left their country to seek protection in another country. Refugees are also known as asylum seekers, displaced persons or stateless persons. Refugees leave their countries for various reasons, such as poverty, natural disasters, persecution or violence. They may be fleeing civil war and other forms of violence: persecution based on race, religion or nationality. They may be victims of terrorism or may be driven from their homes by climate change and extreme weather events. In 2015, a record number of refugees and migrants, 1.1 million, crossed the Mediterranean to reach Europe. They were from countries all over the world, but most of them came from Syria (54%), Afghanistan (19%) and Iraq (11%)[6]. These refugees are fleeing extreme poverty, war, ethnic violence or religious persecution.



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Fleeing their homes in search of a better future, refugees risk their lives to reach the island of Lesbos. The journey is usually made by sea from Turkey and can take up to four hours. Those who can afford it can pay for transport by speedboat and arrive here in just two hours. However, many refugees do not have any savings. They use rubber dinghies and inflatable rafts, which are often overloaded and prone to sinking. It is estimated that 2 000 to 3 000 people a year die by drowning trying to cross from Turkey to Greece. This is the equivalent of one person dying every 40 minutes over a six-month period.

The opinions of Lesbos residents on the refugee situation are not equivocal. Although many people actively collect donations or support refugees through charity fundraisers, some Greeks are critical of the impact of refugees on the islands' economy. The question of whether refugees feel safe in camp Moria 2.0 is complex. On the one hand, refugees are given shelter and **food**, but on the other hand they are also subject to harassment and violence from other migrants who have come to Europe not necessarily for the same reasons. Moreover, most of the refugees in Camp Moria are **children**, women or elderly people with special needs, including safety. They are definitely more susceptible to attack or exploitation, especially in the absence of a permanent security presence in the camp. Camp Moria 2.0 is overcrowded and poses a huge health risk to refugees due to the dire sanitary conditions, which can lead to diseases such as dysentery, cholera and tuberculosis. **There is a lack of medical and psychological support**, which aggravates the spiral of helplessness and passivity among the refugees. The Good Factory strives not only to provide medical or material aid, but also to establish **genuine** relationships with refugees: **we personally visit them in their tents and win the trust of entire families day after day.**

The future of refugees in Lesbos and on the other Greek islands after leaving Camp Moria 2.0 is uncertain. Many refugees who have been living there for years repeatedly ask for asylum, which sometimes seems to be granted by random chance. **Families are separated** and it also happens that single mothers with four children are not granted asylum. Asylum itself is no guarantee of safety, as many refugees are relocated to Athens without any plan for their integration and without any job opportunities. Some refugees hope to return soon to their home countries to find work, but are deterred from doing so by the fear of armed conflicts which threaten their lives.

4. Conclusions

The most frequently mentioned threats related to migration in the context of the Greek island of Lesbos include:

- cases of violence against the inhabitants of the island,
- cultural differences,
- refugee crisis causes tourism collapse,
- conflicts between inhabitants of island (those who support refugees, and those who do not),
- no perspectives for refugees: unfamiliarity with the language, lack of education, psychological problems,
- possible terrorism threat,
- pathologies in the camp: religious radicalization, drugs, prostitution, violence etc.,
- conflicts between nationalities in the camp.

There is a lot of false information - myths about refugees. One is that Arab/Muslim/neighborhood countries are not helping refugees. So why should Europe do this? The truth is quite different. In fact, many Muslim countries accept far more refugees than most European



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countries. In 2015, over a million refugees from various parts of the world came to 27 countries of the European Union. At that time, an equal number of Syrian refugees were registered in Lebanon alone. In practice, this means that every fifth person residing in this country is a Syrian refugee. Turkey has accepted 2.5 million Syrian refugees, and Jordanian authorities estimate that almost 1.5 million Syrians live with them, of which every second is registered as a refugee.

Analyzing the statistics of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)[7], we can see that many rich Gulf countries did not accept a single refugee in 2015. However, it should not be concluded on this basis that the Arab countries are passive in the current migration crisis. Why? The Gulf countries have not yet signed international refugee agreements, so Syrians crossing their borders do not formally receive this status. However, they often get residence and work permits in return. It is estimated that over half a million Syrians currently live in Saudi Arabia, about a quarter of a million in the United Arab Emirates, and another tens of thousands in Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.

It is worth knowing that, according to the UNHCR report, at the end of 2020[8], the following countries were inhabiting the most refugees: Turkey - 3.6 million, Colombia - 1.8 million, Pakistan - 1.4 million, Uganda - 1.4 million, Germany - 1, 1 million. They are followed by Sudan, Iran, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Jordan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It must be corrected that these are official statistics, so the actual number of people fleeing to these countries may be much higher.

Another piece of information that is popular among European society is the opinion that refugees increase the threat of terrorism. However, refugees are not terrorists. They are people fleeing danger and persecution. They face terrorism only as victims - it is often because of it that they leave their homes and go to Europe. On the other hand, there are undoubtedly terrorist groups in the world planning to organize attacks in the European Union. They usually recruit collaborators on the spot in the country where they want to carry out the attack. If this is impossible, the bomber candidates must enter the EU from outside, thus crossing the borders of the Schengen area. There are at least three ways to do this. They can enter legally upon receipt of tourist, business or education visas. They can also cross the border secretly, illegally. In recent years, along with the growing migration crisis, the method of impersonating refugees has also become one of the potential channels to enter Europe.

From the point of view of terrorists, however, this method is one of the most difficult, risky and time-consuming. Persons applying for the refugee status are subject to much more thorough control of secret services than those who cross the border with a legal visa. They are checked both in terms of their life so far and the safety of the destination country. Moreover, they are checked four times: first when crossing the European Union border, then when qualifying for the relocation program at the EU level, then when confirming refugee status in Poland or another European country. Immediately before obtaining their status in Poland, they are once again checked by the local special services. Consequently, the relevant intelligence agencies know much more about them than if they had chosen any other way of getting into Europe. Even if they manage to escape one of the checks, they immediately find themselves on the lists of potentially dangerous people and on the basis of biometric and dactyloscopic data are searched in the territory of the European Union.

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