

Is it boat really full?

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Executive Summary

International migration represents nowadays one of main topics in national and international political agenda. As a matter of fact, it is no longer a phenomenon concerning one single country but is becoming more and more global, as routes, borders, types of migrants, countries of origins and destinations, political and security implications are changing rapidly and deeply. Serbia is not an exception. The author, therefore, analyses how irregular migration and asylum seekers are rising over the years in this country and the implication at national and European level.

Issues

Serbia is facing a number of challenges in the regulation of migration flows, both considering the status of refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees under the readmission agreement, and in establishing system for asylum seekers. Also it is necessary to harmonize its legal, administrative and institutional framework with the EU *acquis* and requirements of the accession.

Since the adoption of Asylum seekers law in 2008. Serbia is facing the highest number of irregular migrants and applications for asylum. Serbia as a transit country for migrants from Middle East and Africa remained as EU frontier and shield which protect the EU countries from high influx of migrants. During 2014 16.490 people applied for asylum in Serbia, which is three times more than in 2013. In the first half of 2015 this number continue to rise.

Implication

The main migration route is leading from Turkey through Greece, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia. Some reports says that over two million people are waiting in Turkey for their trip to EU. Because of the high migration pressure the new reception center was opened in Preševo near the Serbian- Macedonian border. Recent data shows that every day more than 1000 people are crossing the border near Preševo, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Eritrea, Pakistan. And the pressure of irregular migrants is rising, since in FYR of Macedonia from 19th June till now applied for asylum around 8.000 people. And they are heading north to Serbia, and than via city of Subotica to Hungarian border. Very few of them decide to stay in Serbia.

year	Number of applications
2008	77
2009	275
2010	522
2011	3132
2012	2723
2013	5066
2014	16.490
30. June 2015.	14.000

Keywords

International migration, irregular migration, asylum seekers, EU frontiers

Quotable

- Since the adoption of Asylum seekers law in 2008, Serbia is facing the highest number of irregular migrants and applications for asylum.
- The main migration route is leading from Turkey through Greece, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia.
- This year more than 70.000 irregular migrants cross the Serbia-Hungarian border and that is the increase of more than 900% according to last year data.
- The Hungarian government said: “The boat is full”, we have to stop irregular immigrants to enter our territory.

Abstract

Serbia is facing an increasing international migration flow, mostly composed by irregular migrants and asylum seekers. Most of them are coming from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Eritrea and Pakistan crossing the Serbian borders in order to reach Hungarian territories and then other European Union countries, as final destination. As a matter of fact, in 2015 irregular migrants were more than 70.000, an increase of more than 900% in comparison to last year data, causing several tension at local lever. For example, Hungarian government has fence on Serbian-Hungarian border in order to stop migrants coming from the South

This year more than 70.000 irregular migrants cross the Serbia-Hungarian border and that is the increase of more than 900% according to last year data. In collective center for irregular migrants in Hungary, in Rozske, near the Serbian border, 1300 people was accommodated in May, and 1050 in June. Another issue which steep rise the number of irregular migrants in Hungarian territory refers to people from Kosovo who are trying to enter the European Union in search for a better life. In the first six weeks of 2015. 23,000 migrants reaching Hungary, compared to 6,000 in 2013. This influx is imposed by a simpler travel rules allowing people from Kosovo to reach EU and has coincided with poverty, high unemployment rates and economic backwardness on this territory.

Once migrants are inside Hungarian territory, they are able to travel freely to most other EU countries. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres has called for the EU to consider imposing a quota system to force its nations to more equitably handle the spike in asylum seekers. For the moment Hungary suspended EU asylum rule, because of the very high pressure of irregular immigrants coming from Serbian territory. The Hungarian government said: "The boat is full", we have to stop irregular immigrants to enter our territory. The Hungarian parliament on July 6 voted for the building up the fence on Serbian-Hungarian border in order to stop migrants coming from the South. This fence will be 175 km long, and 4 meters high. It will cost 70 millions euro. So, the Berlin wall was down in 1989, are we facing a new one, or is it just a pressure to EU to straightening their asylum seekers law? The position of the Serbian government is that the fence will not solve any problem with rising number of irregular immigrants.

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