Future of Schengen
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INTRODUCTION

“There is only one Europe – I saw it through the window of the plane”, Lech Wałęsa once said. While he likely did not have the Schengen zone in mind, these are still fitting words to describe the borderless plane of the European continent. There is no better symbol of European unity than the Schengen zone.

Migrants have been coming to European shores for decades, if not centuries, but, in the last few years, migration has risen to the top of the European Union political agenda. It is partly due to the rising number of immigrants and a partly due to changing economic and social conditions which have reduced the absorption capacity of receiving countries, at least in the eyes of their citizens. Are people safe from terrorists? Can governments control the flow of migrants? How will the new arrivals affect employment availability? European citizens are calling on their governments and institutions for answers. This urgency is why the Schengen zone increasingly appears in the media spotlight. Given public discomfort, and the political advantage of exploiting public anxiety, the Schengen’s continued existence should not be taken for granted.

The Schengen zone is not just a fundamental pillar of the European integration project. It is an ambitious bureaucratic and administrative system of supranational cooperation, a litmus test for solidarity between the Member States and the EU institutions (or lack thereof), and an institution guaranteeing the free movement of people and goods throughout the majority of the Single Market. Ordinary citizens rarely perceive Schengen as what it really is at the operational level: a complicated machinery of laws, administrative measures, and technological instruments that ensure the smooth functioning of the borderless space.

Freedom of movement within the EU is one of the main achievements of the Single Market. According to OECD statistics\(^1\), mobility within the European Union is about four times more common relative to migration from the rest of the world. Particularly in times of economic turbulence, we must safeguard free movement to ensure that the full potential of Europe is used. Mobility is one of the primary vehicles for growth and, in times of increased global competition, access to the entire EU workforce is an advantage for European enterprises. Employees and their families must therefore be able to move freely to other countries. Some countries are facing greater demand for workers as their exports grow. Others are dealing with high unemployment. For young people without work prospects at home, traveling abroad may be their best chance to find a job and eventually return with valuable skills. Free movement is a win-win situation, for both individuals and the whole EU economy.

Moreover, the EU is grappling with major demographic changes and labour market shortages. Aging populations in Europe could soon translate into slower economic growth. Recognizing this context, Europe needs to be more open to legal migration and be more willing to employ the opportunities offered by migration.

At the same time, populism threatens Europe. People often heed anti-immigrant rhetoric over the rational arguments of experts or policy makers in the EU institutions. The most dangerous phenomenon is the increasing stigmatization of immigrants from certain countries. The room for reasoned debate on migration policy is shrinking, while ethnic nationalism seems to grow every day.

In this policy paper, we set out to answer two fundamental questions: What would happen if the Schengen zone ceased to exist? What should be done so that this scenario never becomes reality?

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\(^1\) OECD, International Migration Outlook 2013
FACTS AND FIGURES

Europe is constantly on the move. Eurostat estimates that in 2015, 2.7 million people migrated to the EU-28 from non-EU countries. An additional 1.9 million people migrated from one EU Member State to another EU Member State. At least 2.8 million people are estimated to have left an EU Member State for either another EU Member State or non-EU country.2

The migration landscape in each country is different. 17 of EU Member States reported higher levels of immigration to the country than emigration away from the country in 2015. Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Latvia and Lithuania, meanwhile, recorded a higher number of emigrants than immigrants.3

There is a critical difference between the free movement of persons within the EU and immigration from third countries. EU nationals who move to or work in another EU country are “mobile EU citizens”. Their rights and statuses are different from the rights and statuses granted to third country nationals. There is a risk that concepts and terminology from the field of migration may be misused (especially by some EU leaders) in the debate on free movement of persons, in the process undermining the idea of EU citizenship.

The Schengen area is made up of 26 countries, including all EU members - with the exception of the United Kingdom, Ireland, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Croatia - and the non-EU countries Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. The Schengen system is based upon common rules and procedures concerning visas for short stays, the processing of asylum applications, and border controls. Internal border checks are eliminated. To compensate for security risks, rules for judiciary, police and customs cooperation have been created, as well as technological platforms for data and information sharing, like the Schengen Information System. While member states retain the duty to secure their borders with non-Schengen countries, they are assisted by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency – Frontex.

Currently there are two main routes into Europe for asylum seekers and illegal migrants: the Eastern Mediterranean route to Greece primarily via Turkey (173,450 sea arrivals to Greece in 2016; slightly over 6,000 by May 2017)4 and the Central Mediterranean route to Italy primarily via Libya (181,436 sea arrivals in 2016; over 45,000 by May 2017)5. Accurate numbers are difficult to collect and verify. Many migrants come to Europe seeking out opportunity and do not necessarily flee persecution at home. Travel is often fraught with hardship and difficulties while the trafficking industry thrives. In March 2016, Turkey and the EU reached an agreement aimed at intensifying efforts to prevent human trafficking in the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece.

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5 UNHCR, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Monthly_Arrivals_to_Greece_Italy_Spain_Jan_Dec_2016.pdf
WHAT DOES NOT WORK

While evaluating Schengen, it is important to keep in mind that the Schengen system is not a mechanism for dealing with irregular immigration or fighting terrorism. Of course, some common rules such as the Dublin regulation or the Visa Information System have implications on the internal security. It is vital to establish efficient cooperation among the national security authorities and EU agencies to minimize potential abuse of the Schengen system for nefarious purposes. Yet, Schengen was not established to address these concerns.

The recent spike in attention towards the Schengen system has been primarily caused by concerns about the uncontrolled movement of the unregistered migrants that arrived with the wave of asylum seekers in 2015-2016. The EU asylum system has not functioned well enough to ensure adequate processing of applicants.

The problem lies with discrepancies in the standards and norms for asylum seekers across Member States. European law, including the Qualification Directive of 2011, the Receptions Conditions Directive and the Asylum Procedures Directive of 2013, only establishes minimum standards in respective areas. It gives the Members States considerable space in deciding how they are going to achieve these standards and how far they want to go beyond and above them. Consequently, there is no truly common asylum policy, as the countries have different approaches to immigration, allocating widely different resources and bestowing varying levels of social protection.

In practical terms, it means that, in Latvia, an asylum application will almost certainly be rejected (only 13 percent of claims are approved for refugee or subsidiary protection status) while in Bulgaria the probability of acceptance is much higher (91 percent6). Consequentially, these factors propel secondary movements within the EU – asylum seekers moving from the country to which they first arrived to seek protection or settlement elsewhere.

In 2016, the European Commission came up with a proposal to make the standards and norms more uniform. This would be achieved via series of regulations which would supersede existing directives, so that the law would be immediately applicable in all Member States. This proposal, however, has caused considerable disagreements among Member States. It will take years to implement the legal reform of the current asylum system.

Furthermore, a protection status granted by one Member State does not entitle a person to move to another Member State and enjoy the same rights guaranteed by the protection status of their previous host. Unification of identity documents in Schengen and the transferability of rights is a rather distant project. Despite this, migrants who have been granted protection can move to other countries where, theoretically, they have no right to reside (without physical border crossings it is easy to do, but the person in question is relegated to the irregular status). This phenomenon of secondary movement is one the major obstacles to Member State agreement on common recognition of status.

Currently, there is no institution at the European level which would be able to, comprehensively and efficiently, monitor and ensure implementation and potential convergence of norms and standards. The European Asylum and Support Office (with a budget of around 16 million euro and staff below 100 people) plays only a supporting role to Member States, by providing training, data analysis and information exchange.

In 2015, a massive migratory influx pushed the Dublin system to burst at its seams. The fair-weather system was not designed to cope with a mass flow of asylum seekers. It did not guard against secondary movement. Significant numbers of immigrants deliberately did not register or did not have the opportunity to register in the state of first entry and soon travelled to countries with more liberal conditions to file their applications.

As the countries of first entry are rarely the ones that the migrants aim to settle, and these countries

are expected to carry the burden of processing, their governments rightly argue that destination countries and other co-members of the Schengen should bear greater responsibility for processing claims. In 2015, 75 percent of all first time asylum applications were submitted in just four countries: Hungary, Sweden, Austria and Germany (where 35 percent of claims were made).7

The European Commission proposed the relocation scheme, described as a “corrective fairness mechanism”, to ease the burden on countries like Greece, Malta or Italy. It was part of a wider set of proposals including the establishing of “EU hotspots” aimed at assisting with initial stages of processing asylum claims (such as fingerprinting).

The relocation mechanism, as initially proposed, was to kick-in once a member state exceeds a fixed reference level of asylum claims by at least 150 percent. If any Member State were to refuse to participate in the scheme, they would have to pay a fee, called euphemistically “solidarity contribution” of 250 thousand EUR.

To alleviate the situation in the Member States experiencing high migration pressures following the 2015-2016 flows, the Council of the EU adopted by qualified majority vote, a temporary emergency relocation scheme. Under the scheme, 160,000 were to be relocated from Greece and Italy.

The relocation scheme and the method for its adoption soon became hugely controversial for some governments, mostly in Central European. The Hungarian government even conducted a referendum concerning the immigration of asylum seekers. The subject would become ongoing fodder for populist parties in Europe to take swipes at Brussels for making autocratic decisions on delicate matters of immigration. At the same time, first-entry countries felt disappointed by the slow and inadequate response of European institutions and other Member States. By May 2017, not even 12 percent of the envisioned 160,000 asylum seekers were relocated. Only 28,713 out of 160,000 spots have been formally pledged. Some experts were quick to point out that one of the reasons behind failure of the scheme was that it lacked positive incentives for participating countries, and migrants themselves.

In the wide area of security Schengen is often identified as an opportunity for criminals and terrorists to perpetrate their acts, while being able to escape responsibility by moving freely between Member States. This concern came to the foreground again, following terrorist attacks in Europe. The fact that one of the Paris attackers was posing as a refugee to enter Europe, with an allegedly fake Syrian passport, raised alarming concerns that terrorists were exploiting lax entry procedures for refugees to penetrate Europe. Connections between terrorist cells in different EU countries, illegal movements of persons and arms spread unease about a continuing borderless zone for Europe.

The Schengen system is not to be blamed for these potential threats to security. These threats should be dealt with by security officials and better addressed through increased cooperation between and within national security services, not through the suspension of Schengen. Contrary to common opinion, the Schengen system, (understood as set of laws and administrative measures, has coped quite well with the increased influx of immigrants since 2015. The Schengen regime has turned out to be robust and sound. Remaining problems lie with incentives for Member States to shirk responsibilities and the different assessments of risk by the three different types of Member States—first entry (frontline) countries, destination countries; and transit countries and all other not directly affected ones.

Furthermore, there are mechanisms for orderly suspension of Schengen rules, to address emergencies. In 2015, Germany triggered a cascade of border controls when it introduced a check on its border, to stop an influx of asylum-seekers coming mostly from the Turkish territory. Austria, Denmark and Sweden soon followed. The EU rule is that temporary controls can be imposed for six months at a time and renewed up to three times. The countries concerned could reintroduce border checks if a separate shock occurs, such as a surge of people coming from Africa.

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7 Eurostat, News Release: Asylum in the EU Member States, 4 March 2016.
NIGHTMARE SCENARIO - BREAK-UP

It is easy to imagine a crisis leading to the demise of the Schengen system: an extended, massive influx of irregular migrants, followed by the introduction of temporary border controls that soon become permanent, with European institutions unable or unwilling to restore the Schengen regime. Naturally, the process would take several months, or even years. Politically, and happily, it is still a far-fetched scenario. It would need to arise as a consequence of national developments where anti-European, anti-immigration parties and politicians take the control of government (e.g. France, Germany, the Czech Republic).

If the Schengen zone ever ceased to exist, there would be very concrete consequences, ranging from a crisis of the Single Market to the changes of the security architecture ending with re-establishment of the necessary infrastructure.

Impact on the Single Market

The end of the Schengen would be a major blow to corporate and consumer confidence in the Single Market, possibly leading to a severe recession.

Presently, goods travel freely across borders with supply chains operating smoothly. The logistics and transport sector benefits significantly from the absence of borders. Lorries and trucks are in constant circulation through the Single Market. The reintroduction of border controls would radically disrupt the free flow of goods, such as road freight, creating additional expenses amounting to 11 billion euro per year\(^9\). Just-in-time delivery options would be severely limited in an environment where border controls make it difficult to predict wait times.

At best, queueing times at border crossings would significantly increase, possibly to the point where they discourage people from traveling in the first place. 1.7 million people live in one Schengen country and work in another\(^10\). The number of people who travel daily for shopping or other purposes is considerably greater. People would find it harder to commute to work across the border (for example Slovaks living in Hainburg, employed in Bratislava). Some would lose their jobs, as the additional time spent at the border would make their reduced productivity untenable to employers. According to the European Commission total costs would amount to 1.3 billion – 5.2 billion euro per year\(^11\).

Currently third country nationals, who have obtained visa to travel to one Schengen country, are entitled to visit all other Schengen countries. If this rule ceased, tourists hoping to visit more than one country would have to secure travel documents for each of their destinations. Tourism would suffer massively from time-consuming border-checks and travel procedures. Some would give up plans to visit more of Europe on short trips, denying significant tax revenue. The size of tourism industry would shrink by 1.2 billion euro\(^12\).

Consumption and investment levels would decrease, leading to a decline in the real income of households. Prices could go up, as competition in local markets would be limited by smaller flows of people and goods. Restricted mobility would entail greater divergence in the nature of regional and local job markets. Coordination of taxation, social services or social security might also worsen\(^13\).

The health of the common currency would be affected as well. The competitiveness of the EU, vis-à-vis the rest of the world, would decrease. So would the attractiveness of Schengen countries in the eyes of foreign investors. The structure and coherence of today’s value chains could not be sustained

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\(^12\) Ibidem.

if Schengen ceased to exist. Surely the expectations and moods of the capital markets would take a severe blow, with possible impact to bond yields. Decreased demand and increased cost of capital would be the new reality for the segmented Single Market. It is probable that markets would interpret the demise of Schengen as the beginning of the end for the common currency. Jean Claude-Juncker, the president of the European Commission went as far as to say that euro does not make sense without the Schengen zone. This could mean a sustained period of fiscal crisis, followed by a painful recession.

Generally, the economic costs of elimination of Schengen system are estimated at 143 billion euro per year. Schengen economies would shrink by 0.8-2.7 percent of GDP. This amount can be considered a portion of the annual EU budget that would cease to exist. One can estimate that average Slovak would be worse off by 100-350 euro annually.

Table 1. Brief overview of cost estimates of non-Schengen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Cost estimate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bruegel</td>
<td>Commuting times: 3-4bn eur a year</td>
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<tr>
<td>France Strategie</td>
<td>Tourism – Scenario 1: 500m eur a year, Scenario 2: 1bn eur a year*</td>
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<tr>
<td>France Strategie</td>
<td>Cross-border job opportunities – Scenario 1: 150m, Scenario 2: 300m eur</td>
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<tr>
<td>France Strategie</td>
<td>Import and Export – Scenario 1: 62m eur each for imports and exports, Scenario 2: 124m eur each for imports and exports</td>
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<tr>
<td>France Strategie</td>
<td>Trade impacts – French GDP 0.5 percent lower in 2025, Schengen area as a whole 0.8 percent lower (equivalent to over 100bn eur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France Strategie</td>
<td>Commuting Time- Scenario1: 250m eur a year, Scenario 2: 500 m a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertelsmann Stiftung</td>
<td>Scenario 1: EU24 (excluding Luxembourg, Malta, Cyprus and Croatia) would see a loss in annual growth of 0.04 percentage points, which would amount to total macroeconomic losses of 471bn eur by 2025 #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertelsmann Stiftung</td>
<td>Scenario 2: EU24 would see a loss in annual growth of 0.12 percentage points, which would amount to total macroeconomic losses of 1,430 trillion by 2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Stanley</td>
<td>Bilateral trade flows could decline by 10 to 20 percent; overall loss of GDP growth: 0.2 percent; 2 percent reduction in gross operating surplus in manufacturing industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>5-18bn eur a year (0.05-0.13 percent of GDP), of which the largest impact would be a 1.3bn -5.2bn eur increase in costs for cross-border workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Parliament 2016.* Scenario 1: random controls for private cars and lorries, as before Schengen, with moderate delays. Scenario 2: more frequent but not systematic controls, leading to a doubling of average delay times. # Scenario 1: conservative – 1 percent rise in import prices. Scenario 2: pessimistic – 3 percent rise in import prices.

14 http://www.politico.eu/article/juncker-no-schengen-no-euro/
Reestablishment of border controls by individual Member States

Infrastructure would have to be built or restored; fences, airports, sea and border crossings would all have to be redesigned. Border surveillance requires territory patrols, requiring ample equipment and staff. Border check points would have to be re-staffed. Maintenance of borders and enforcement of border controls would require ongoing expenditures, along with new IT systems and training of staff. 16,400 km of borders would have to be effectively patrolled. According to the European Commission, combined costs would amount to 0.6 billion - 5.8 billion euro\(^\text{16}\). To demonstrate the size of necessary investment, the expenditures of Slovakia and Poland, just to upgrade border infrastructure to meet the Schengen standards, required 64 million and 289 million euro, respectively\(^\text{17}\).

Internal borders could address some of the challenges connected to the migration flows but it is debatable to what extent.

Impact on the international environment

The EU’s clout on the world stage would be significantly reduced, as today Schengen visa policy is an important tool for the EU’s relations with third countries. Belief in the viability of the European project would be shattered. This could provoke further question and attempts to undermine other common policies of the EU – from euro currency to trade policy or agricultural policy.

It is important to stress that internal border controls would not prevent terrorist attacks. They could complicate movements of terrorists around Europe, but not significantly unless concerned Member states implemented additional, complicated entry-exit monitoring.

\(^{16}\) European Commission, 2016.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Schengen system has coped relatively well with the increased influx of immigrants since 2015. It was the national governments who adopted different and sometimes incoherent responses to the influx of migrants. In an ideal world, the reform of Schengen would be aimed at achieving the optimum results for potential economic gains and an improved security environment. This would probably mean the adoption of the model used by federal countries, such as the United States, where the central government is responsible for the management of external borders and providing homeland security. Full integration would imply the transfer of competence over border protection, internal security cooperation to the European Commission and other EU bodies. This would probably require either a significant European treaty change or enhanced cooperation among countries willing to integrate their migration policies further. If existing national competences were transferred to Brussels, the consequences would be the following:

- The Schengen system would become an integral part of other EU policies and strategies concerning the Single Market or Common Foreign and Security Policy. The EU’s policy towards, say, Senegal would coordinate all the existing elements dealing with trade, development aid, anti-terrorism and migration. Pooling of financial resources would lead to the considerable build-up of the size of the European budget and help to achieve optimum results where activities of Member States do not overlap. It would also provide a more equal distribution of responsibility through the readily enforceable Dublin system.

- Harmonization of laws and procedures would imply introduction of common asylum standards and procedures (i.e. end of asylum shopping). Equal treatment (e.g. reception conditions) would be set at the European level and financial resources allotted to this purpose set aside through European budget.

All such reform would lead to the EU’s ability to react to crises quickly and efficiently. However, this scenario is not probable in the current political and social circumstances. This means that the most likely course of events will be an incremental reform of the Schengen system.

Continuation of “turf wars” between Member States and EU institutions will likely persist. A trend toward greater European expenditures on migration will continue. So will the gradual expansion of the FRONTEX agency remit. Reform of the Dublin system will continue at slow pace. Even in the scenario of incremental reform, it is possible to introduce de jure and de facto norm harmonization, regarding asylum seekers and refugees. Both asylum-shopping and ‘refugees in orbit’ can be stopped. There is a strong will to enhance cooperation on internal security. We can expect more agreements, programmes, and initiatives reaching out to destination and transit countries to “tackle the migration issue at its source”.

The real challenge to the Schengen zone is political and connected to the European project as the whole. Do Member States want to pool sovereignty and do they trust each other enough to delegate some competences to the supranational bodies like the European Commission? Is there enough good will and resources to manage crises without reverting to national frameworks? Would good will be shattered in the face of some dramatic situation like a deadly terrorist attack? Are the resources available sufficient to sustain the Schengen in the event of an economic crisis—such as a fiscal crisis connected to the expulsion of a country from the Eurozone? Will external push factors be large enough to strain European infrastructure to collapse? Will societies move towards an even harsher position on migration under the influence of extremist parties and politicians? These questions cannot be answered with full certainty. There is no ready way to prepare for these kinds of challenges yet it must surely help to have a fully functioning Schengen system.

The Schengen system cannot be blamed for the lack of a proper foreign and security policy for the EU. The EU and member countries should be more involved in the state-building of countries and territories torn by conflict or poverty, such as Libya. Reception centres cannot be created in lawless areas ruled by militias. Migration flows need to be properly monitored, which requires cooperation with UN system bodies, like the IOM, and engagement with civil society and think-tanks.
A break-up scenario would make everybody worse off, in terms of public security, prosperity and daily comfort. The full integration scenario would bring enormous benefits to the European citizens but is, for many reasons, unrealistic. The reform scenario is most the realistic option.

Genuine refugees will need to be assisted, while the smuggling industry needs to be cracked down upon. We should not forget Europe has humanitarian obligations that will not go away, regardless of what happens with the Schengen zone. In order for a massive inflow not to reoccur, the EU will have to use some initiative to cooperate with countries and leaders who are often not fully democratic or competent, like Niger and Mali.

The EU should undertake efforts to cooperate with all crucial transit countries like Turkey and Libya, which may be very difficult given that the country is a failed state. The recent initiative of the Italian government is a step in the right direction and there is already some cooperation with Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. It is not enough, however, for EU institutions and EU countries to cooperate without providing opportunities for legal employment and temporary stay in the EU.

For people who are already on the European soil, rational immigration policies and their proper implementation is crucial. Social integration is key. National authorities should be prepared to teach immigrants with refugee status language and provide job opportunities.

European Institutions should avoid the top-down approach. Administrative measures like relocation are visibly not working. If Schengen is to survive, member states will need to invest more resources in the European budget, building up a truly European external border and internal security arm at the same time. The databases and electronic systems, like Visa Information System or Eurodac, should be improved and intelligence sharing process facilitated.

**Special case of Central Europe**

The future of Schengen is especially important to the region of Central Europe (CE). Central European societies have experienced significant support from the West in the times of communism. Many Poles, Slovaks, Czech and Hungarians were given asylum and refuge, while humanitarian help was delivered until the end of the 1980s to those who stayed behind. Having lived through Cold War era restrictions of movements, citizens of Slovakia and other CE countries perceive free movement as the key benefit of European integration. On average, citizens of the region are more likely to consider it the most positive result of the EU than citizens of other parts of Europe.18 With thousands taking up employment in Western Europe, Central Europeans would be seriously affected by any restoration of border checks and other restrictions. This puts a special responsibility on the Visegrad Four countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic) to make constructive contributions to the ongoing debate and seek lasting solutions to problems. It seems the hitherto efforts of the region’s governments were not sufficient to assure other Member States that Central Europe is taking the issue of solidarity seriously. In which ways could V4 countries contribute more and make their effort more genuine?

First, the flat opposition to relocation, as proposed by the European Commission, should be dropped. There are numerous ways Central European governments could temporarily accept tens of thousands refugees without straining their capacities. So far, civil society has not been sufficiently engaged and the issue not properly debated. On the contrary, migration is often used as a bogeyman to show how the EU disrespects the sovereignty of Member States while endangering public security.

If participation in large-scale relocation is not possible for political reasons, governments could take responsibility by coming up with a credible alternative to relocation mechanism – financial contributions, reinforcements or simply greater political investment in finding an appropriate European response. During the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU, attempts were made to promote the concept of “flexible solidarity”, which would provide for efforts, other than relocation, to count as contributions towards the solution of the migration conundrum.

While the idea of a comprehensive contribution scheme is justified, Visegrad countries should demonstrate a more credible and genuine effort toward implementing it.

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18 See, for example, Standard Eurobarometer 86, November 2016.
Central European countries are already contributing to the EU Emergency Trust for Africa\textsuperscript{19}, EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis - Madad Fund\textsuperscript{20}, and to financing the EU refugee facility for Turkey\textsuperscript{21}. They would be wise to contribute much more.

Visegrad Four countries could help Greece, Italy or Malta more by sending personnel. Visegrad countries are enthusiastic about FRONTEX and have been sending a disproportionately high number of officers. They are lagging behind, however, with contribution of officers to EASO (with the exception of the Czech Republic).

The offer of the Slovak government to grant 500 scholarships to refugee students (without granting them asylum status though) is notable and worth expanding and adopting by other national governments.

There are very pragmatic arguments why Central European governments could consider more engagement. Were the Schengen system ever to collapse, what comes after it would be the outcome of negotiations between like-minded countries. If Slovakia or Poland wanted to be part of the new arrangement, they would need to prove that they treat security and humanitarian challenges of other partner countries as their own. Even today, with Schengen up and running, the CE governments would be wise to remember that solidarity is a two way street. There are numerous priorities of the Visegrad Four where the positive attitude of other Member States is required, Southern Mediterranean countries included: the European budget, sanctions against Russia, regional policy, free movement of workers, good outcome of Brexit negotiations where Central Europe’s concerns are taken into account. It is also wise to remember that Eastern Europe could very well become a source of refugees, were the Russian-Ukrainian conflict ever to flare up into open war or if other disturbances in the post-Soviet space rise. In the event of massive inflows of asylum-seekers from Eastern Europe, Central European countries would ask for solidarity from other Member States.

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\textsuperscript{19} As of 10 May 2017, the Czech Republic pledged and contributed 740,000 EUR, Hungary 700,000 EUR, Poland 1,100,000 EUR, Slovakia pledged 500,000 and contributed 250,000 EUR https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eu_ms_and_other_donors_pledges_and_contributions_10_05_17_0.pdf ; https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eutf-pledged-contribution-eu-member-states-and-other-donors-march-2017_en

\textsuperscript{20} As of 25 January 2017, the Czech Republic contributed 5 million EUR, Hungary 3 million EUR, Poland 3 million EUR, Slovakia 3 million EUR https://ec.europa.eu/ neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/nea/files/eutf_syrria_factsheet_0.pdf

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