

Forum: General Assembly First Committee

Issue: The Question of The Maintenance of International Security and Stability in South-Eastern Europe

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Introduction

Sustaining security and stability in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) has been a problem for long. The region has had many problems in the past but in recent years immigration and millions of asylum seekers have created a major problem for stability. Expenses of immigration are high and small countries in particular are struggling to handle them. Those problems have led to many other problems such as rising extreme forms of nationalism and to attacks with racist motives.^{1 2}

Increasing numbers of asylum seekers passing through the countries creates huge challenges for the countries in the region. Even though most asylum seekers don't stay in the countries for longer than a few weeks and use countries as merely points of entry to Western Europe, unreasonable pressure is placed on the gateway countries.³ For example, over 1000 people are estimated to pass through Serbia every day and supporting such amounts of refugees is not possible for Serbia according to UNHCR. UNHCR has stated Serbia needs to receive "immediate assistance."^{4 5}

Fear of immigration getting out of hands has led to many overreactions. Most countries in South-Eastern Europe are not part of the Schengen-area⁶ and countries that are part of Schengen, such as Hungary⁷ and Austria⁸, are building fences to stop the flow of immigrants to Schengen-area. By doing so those countries place even harder pressure on SEE-countries as the asylum seekers can't go further and have to stay in SEE-countries making the problems even worse.

The large number of immigrants has provoked many people living in the region and even police forces into radical actions. In Macedonia the police have had to use stun

¹ <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Bodo-Hombach.pdf>

² <http://www.euronews.com/2015/02/10/bulgaria-failing-to-probe-racist-attacks-claims-amnesty/>

³ <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/08/25/serbia-overrun-with-23000-immigrants-en-route-to-western-europe/>

⁴ http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2015&mm=09&dd=15&nav_id=95433

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<http://inserbia.info/today/2015/08/the-whole-syria-will-pass-through-serbia-belgrade-to-face-five-million-refugees/>

⁶ <http://www.schengenvisa.info.com/schengen-visa-countries-list/>

⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34260071>

⁸ <http://www.thelocal.at/20151028/austria-to-build-slovenia-border-fence-to-control-migrant-flow>

grenades against the immigrants⁹ and many extreme right- and anti-immigration organizations have started gaining support all around Europe.¹⁰

The problem of instability in the region has been tackled many times before. There have been several institutions aimed at strengthening peace and security in countries of South Eastern Europe such as Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).¹¹ RCC is still in operation and some of its main areas of operation are economical and social development and cooperation in South-Eastern Europe.¹²

Definition of Key Terms

Refugee

A refugee is a person who has had to leave their home for some reason. According to Refugee Convention made in 1951 refugee is someone who “*owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.*”¹³

Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe

After the Kosovo Crisis the international community agreed on a Stability Pact to improve stability and security in South-Eastern Europe (SEE). The main idea was to bring the region closer to the European integration process.¹⁴ The Pact had 9 member states and it operated from 1999 to 2008. In 2008 it was replaced with Regional Cooperative Council (RCC).¹⁵

Regional Cooperative Council

The Regional Cooperative Council was founded in 2008 to replace Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. RCC has 46 participants. The participants compose of countries, organizations and international financial institutions. The RCC has put many goals to be reached by year 2020. Unlike Stability Pact, RCC concentrates on economic growth rather than on just stability and security.¹⁶

⁹ <https://www.rt.com/news/313113-migrants-storm-macedonia-border/>

¹⁰ <http://time.com/4075396/far-right-politics-rise-europe/>

¹¹ <http://www.rcc.int/>

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/stability-pact_en.htm

¹³ <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c25.html>

¹⁴ <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023%2FA%3A1026776526543>

¹⁵ <http://www.rcc.int/pages/2/overview>

¹⁶ <http://www.rcc.int/pages/72/about-see-2020>

EU-28

EU-28 is the abbreviation for European Union and its 28 member countries. The term EU-28 is often used in statics. Most of the countries in South-Eastern Europe are not part of European Union.¹⁷

DAESH

Daesh, also known as ISIL, ISIS or Islamic State, is a terrorist organization controlling large parts of Syria and Iraq.¹⁸ Daesh has been active since 1999 and it was part of larger terrorist organization, Al Qaeda, from 2004 until to 2014 when Al Qaeda broke their links to Daesh.¹⁹ Daesh aims to create an Islamic State across Syria and Iraq and due to its aggressive acts in Syria it is one of the reasons for the present migrant crisis.²⁰

Insurgency

Insurgency is a revolt against a government. Insurgencies are less organized and warlike than revolutions.

Explanation of the Question

South-Eastern Europe has faced several problems affecting its security and stability. SSE has been to war many times in its past and relations between some of the countries are still bitter.²¹ Economic growth is still almost completely frozen in some of the countries and many people have lost their hopes to the future. Given the extent of the fragile situation, the challenges migrant crises create divide people and lead to conflicts even within the countries.²²

According to some analysis, SEE suffered the most from the global recession of 2008-09²³. Unemployment rates in Serbia, one of the largest country in SEE, are still at almost 18% which is double compared to the rates in EU-28.^{24 25} However, Serbia isn't the only country with economic problems. Macedonia has had to borrow over 700 million euros to support its budget for this and next year, ignoring the European Commission's advice not to do so.²⁶

Most of the countries in SEE were part of former Yugoslavia during most of the 20th century. In the early 1990s dramatic political and social changes took place in eastern

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/eu-eea>

¹⁸ <http://www.ibtimes.com/isil-isis-islamic-state-daesh-whats-difference-2187131>

¹⁹

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/02/03/us-syria-crisis-qaeda-idUSBREA120NS20140203#Qiucp6Sh3WegMhMt.97>

²⁰ <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/08/world/isis-fast-facts/>

²¹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/balkans/timeline.htm>

²² <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>

²³ <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2012/06/balkan-economies>

²⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

²⁵ <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/serbia/unemployment-rate>

²⁶ <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-hikes-debt-despite-concern-11-13-2015>

Europe and in 1992, a series of economic and political crises led to the violent breakup of Yugoslavia. The breakup led to several mass atrocities and violations of human rights in several countries, including SEE countries. With the help of UN most of the problems were solved but several insurgencies took place until the early years of 2000s.^{27 28}

The present migrant crisis is still one of the most severe problems SEE has yet met. According to Angela Merkel the countries are facing “huge challenges” handling tens of thousands of migrants trying to get to Europe and Hashim Tachi, leader of Kosovo Liberation Army, is calling for global scale solution to the problem.²⁹ The rising threat of terrorist attacks made by DAESH is also creating tension as several media outlets and Albania’s interior minister have received attack threats.³⁰

The migrant crisis has opened up older wounds between the countries as many have started building fences to stop the refugees from entering their countries. For example, rather than having cooperation Slovenia has started building fence on Croatia border which is going to make Croatia’s situation even worse. Almost 400 000 refugees have entered Croatia since the beginning of the crisis which is unbearable for a country of 4 million inhabitants. In addition, Germany has warned that it would start returning some of its tens of thousands of refugees to Slovenia and Croatia. Actions taken by Slovenia and the warnings of Germany have lead to Croatia demanding action on EU Refugee Plan.³¹

According to UNHCR the number of refugees has been escalating since the first half of 2014 as a result of wars in Syria and Iraq and conflicts in Afghanistan, Eritrea and elsewhere. Many people have had to flee their homes and most of them are trying to get to Europe to start new life.^{32 33}

Countries in SEE have demanded the EU and the international community to take action in solving the refugee crisis as the resources of the countries are running out. Unfortunately neither the EU nor the international community has taken sufficient action. Even the UN has urged leaders to come up with system to register newcomers

²⁷ <http://www.icty.org/en>

²⁸ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/yugoslavia_01.shtml

²⁹

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/kosovo/11828776/Migrant-crisis-Balkans-part-of-the-solution-not-the-problem.html>

³⁰

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albania-to-act-on-terrorism-threats-expert-warns-11-16-2015>

³¹

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatia-demands-eu-meeting-on-refugee-crisis-11-12-2015>

³² <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02d9346.html>

³³

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/slovenia-setting-a-fence-on-border-with-croatia-11-11-2015>

when entering EU in order to help struggling countries. The meetings held by country leaders haven't led to any notable results.³⁴

Most SEE countries are not part of the Schengen area. It has caused significant amount of problems to the countries as the refugees coming to Europe are not always able to get inside Schengen, leaving all of them to SEE countries.³⁵ Even refugees fear being trapped in South-Eastern Europe as Schengen countries are closing borders.³⁶

Key Member States and NGOs Involved and Their Views

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is an agency that was set up to protect refugees and resolve problems with refugees around the world. The agency was established in December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. UNHCR has helped tens of millions of refugees restart their lives. UNHCR has staff of more than 9300 people in 123 countries. UNHCR should not be mistaken to UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC).³⁷

UNHCR has expressed its concern on the situation of asylum systems not meeting the international standards in SEE. UNHCR has budgeted 46,7 million US dollars for 2015 for helping the situation in SEE which is a slightly more than in 2014.³⁸

South-Eastern Europe (SEE)

South-Eastern Europe (SEE) is geographical region in Europe which consists primarily of the Balkan peninsula. Countries included to the region can vary greatly due to political, economic, historical and cultural reasons but the most used model is the Balkan Model, which is based on the boundaries of Balkan Peninsula. Countries included to the region are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia, Greece, Serbia, Slovenia and Hungary.³⁹ In the region of South-Eastern Europe live more than 75 million people, 10% of the whole population of Europe.⁴⁰

The opinions of the countries in SEE on refugee crisis vary significantly Majority of people living in the countries are against refugees passing through their countries.⁴¹ According to some analysis the crisis has started opening up old wounds in the region.

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<http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2015/10/25/refugees-surge-unabated-through-balkans-as-leaders-gather-for-crisis-summit.html>

³⁵ <http://www.schengenvisainfo.com/schengen-visa-countries-list>

³⁶ <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/refugees-fear-being-trapped-in-balkans-11-19-2015>

³⁷ <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c2.html>

³⁸ <http://www.unhcr.org/5461e60d14a.html>

³⁹ <http://www.infoplease.com/dk/encyclopedia/southeast-europe.html>

⁴⁰ http://www.geohive.com/earth/his_proj_europe.aspx

⁴¹ <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/page/refugee-crisis>

⁴² On the other hand, some countries have started working in cooperation to solve the issue and a significant amount of resources are being put into it solving the issue.⁴³

Amnesty International

Amnesty International expresses its concern on European leaders not taking actions fast enough to tackle Europe's refugee and migrant crisis. Amnesty International points out that even children and disabled are being forced to camp out under the open sky. Amnesty is asking for opening safe and legal routes to Europe to help refugees seek asylum from Europe without having to cross the Mediterranean Sea.⁴⁴

European Union

European Union recognizes the problems South-Eastern Europe is facing with the migrant crisis. EU recommends cross border cooperation to solve the problems and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker underlines the importance of communication between the countries facing similar problems. The EU suggests measures such as permanent exchange of information, limiting secondary movements and border management to help solving the problem.⁴⁵

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December 18, 2010	The Arab Spring starts in Tunisia and spreads out to other arab countries, including Syria
January 26, 2011	Protests in Syria start
June 6, 2011	Refugee flow to Turkey intensifies, some of the refugees continue towards South-Eastern Europe
November 11, 2013	Bulgaria starts building a fence on Turkish border
August 11, 2014	DAESH takes control of most of the Syrian Oil and Gas fields and large parts of land.
September 14, 2015	500 000 refugees have entered EU in 2015

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

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<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/refugee-crisis-reopens-old-wounds-in-balkans-09-25-2015>

⁴³ <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-croatia-solve-migrant-crisis-together-11-06-2015>

⁴⁴

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/09/what-can-europe-do-to-welcome-refugees/>

⁴⁵ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5904_en.htm

- Security Council – Resolution **S/RES/2139** (2014) - 22 February 2014
http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2139.pdf
- General Assembly – Resolution **A/RES/69/152** (2015) – 17 February 2015
<http://www.unhcr.org/55e054479.html>
- General Assembly – Human Rights Council **A/HRC/30** (2015) – 30 September 2015
http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/a_hrc_res_30_10.pdf
- Security Council – Report of the Secretary General **S/2015/813** (2015) – 22 October 2015
http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2015_813.pdf

Possible Solutions

There are several propositions on solving the refugee crisis. Cooperation is needed for all of them. Ultimately, South-Eastern Europe cannot solve the crisis on its own and significant effort is needed from the European Union and the whole international community.⁴⁶

Sharing the refugees around Europe

Approximately 750 000 refugees have arrived to Europe by sea in 2015. Most of the refugees are still in southern parts of Europe and in South-Eastern Europe. If the refugees arriving to Europe would be shared equally to European countries the pressure on South-Eastern Europe and other receiving countries would decline and more people in need of help could be helped.⁴⁷

“The Australian Solution”

Australia's policy on immigrants is to “stop boats”. Australia has banned asylum seekers from settling to the country and at least so far the policy has proved to work. Europe could do the same and stop saving people from the boats on Mediterranean Sea and it would help receiving countries including SEE. The policy would mean more deaths in the Mediterranean but it would in addition slow down the people-smuggling trade.⁴⁸

Give out more

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/11843234/Seven-proposed-solutions-for-the-EU-refugee-crisis.html>

⁴⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>

⁴⁸

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/tony-abbott-tells-europe-to-stop-the-boats-like-australia-as-migrant-crisis-continues-10191566.html>

The UNHCR has urged developed countries to give more aid to the countries where the refugees are coming from. According to UNHCR it would mean that the refugees wouldn't have to seek asylum from Europe, which would mean less refugees to SEE. The difficult economic situation in Europe is a challenge to this solution.

Helping more refugees

This solution demands all European countries to do as Germany has done. Germany has opened its doors saying all asylum seekers from Syria are welcome to remain in Germany. This solution could help those refugees that need protection and in addition help SEE countries. This solution would not require actions from SEE as the countries have taken many refugees from Syria and other countries by now. ⁴⁹

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-opens-its-gates-berlin-says-all-syrian-asylum-seekers-are-welcome-to-remain-as-britain-is-10470062.html>

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