

Dudás Zoltán<sup>1</sup>

## SETTING UP RECEPTION SITES AND CAMPS OUTSIDE EUROPE IN CONNECTION WITH THE CURRENT MIGRATION WAVE

### (EURÓPÁN KÍVÜLI FOGADÓ PONTOK ÉS TÁBOROK A JELENKORI MIGRÁCIÓS HULLÁMMAL KAPCSOLATBAN)

*Current events have shown that we have to increasingly expect a massive population displacement originating especially from the Middle East and Africa. The civilization crisis caused by the refugees and economic migrants becomes unmanageable when their numbers reach a critical mass. The vast majority of the asylum seekers arriving to Europe come from countries which are not considered war zones based on the UN Refugee Convention, so they must leave the European Union after their application has been examined, but there is no sufficient police force and financial resource to control this process. In this paper some European attempts aiming at the solution of the problems arising in the wake of the enormous 2015 wave of refugees are outlined based on a few relevant examples, and by examining possible sites outside the continent, an attempt is made to suggest a solution of the problem of hosting and care of asylum seekers.*

**Keywords:** temporary refugee camp, security, distancing, hotspot

*Napjaink történései alátámasztják, hogy egyre inkább számolni kell erőteljes, főleg Közel-kelet és Afrika felől érkező népességmozgással. A menekültek, illetve a gazdasági bevándorlók okozta civilizációs veszélyhelyzet egy kritikus tömeg elérését követően kezelhetetlenné válik. A cikk néhány példa erejéig felvillantja a 2015 évi nagy menekülthullám kapcsán fogantatott európai megoldás kísérleteket, továbbá igyekszik a kontinensen kívüli helyszínek számbavételével javaslatot is megfogalmazni az Európába igyekvő menedékkérők tábori elszállásolása és ellátása terén.*

**Kulcsszavak:** átmeneti menekülttábor, biztonság, távolságtartás, hotspot

## INTRODUCTION

In the year 2015 the number of asylum seekers arriving to the countries of the European Union was twice as high as in the preceding years, namely 1,255,600. The largest number was reported from Germany 441,800, 35% of the total number of asylum seekers. The second largest number was of those arriving to Hungary 174,000 (14%), followed by Sweden with 156,000 (12%), Austria with 85,000 (7%) and Italy with 83,000 (7%). Finally, among the countries reporting considerable numbers of asylum seekers, France should be mentioned with 70,600 persons (6%). Comparing the data of influx with figures from the previous year, the highest increase was found for Finland (+822%), followed by Hungary (+323%), Austria (+233%), Belgium (+178%), Spain (+167%) and Germany (+155%). The increase in the number of asylum seekers per one million inhabitant was largest in Hungary with a reported figure of 17,699 persons, followed by Sweden with 16,016 persons, Austria with 9,970 persons, Finland with 5,876

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<sup>1</sup>PhD student, National University of Public Service, Doctoral School of Military Engineering. E-mail: [zdudas@jak.ppke.hu](mailto:zdudas@jak.ppke.hu); ORCID: 0000-0003-0346-3206

persons and Germany with 5,441 persons. In order to provide a comprehensive picture, one should mention also the countries where the number of asylum seekers per one million inhabitant was lowest: Croatia 34 persons, Slovakia 50 persons, Romania 62 persons, Portugal 80 persons and Lithuania 93 persons. The above numbers indicate the extent to which the individual countries are interested in the negotiations conducted in connection with the largest migration of modern history<sup>2</sup>.

Hungary, Austria and Germany as well as Sweden and Finland of the Scandinavian countries are leading the statistics in almost every respect, they therefore have an eminent interest in the refugee crisis being solved as soon as possible and in an acceptable manner. At the same time the figures relating to the countries less involved indicate the role they should play in the process.

## 1. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE HOTSPOTS

As a result of the unprecedented refugee influx, the authorities involved in the management of the problem are considerably overtaxed. Processing the data and examination of the individual requests takes more than a year, during which time the applicants need housing and care. The current wave of migrants is a mixed group including refugees forcibly displaced by war or political persecution as well as economic migrants. The migrants arrive into the European Union on two main routes: by sea from the shores of Libya and Tunisia to Italy, and on land through Turkey, Greece and the countries of former Yugoslavia. Different agencies of the European Union such as Frontex, EASO, Europol, and Eurojust<sup>3</sup> have been established with the aim of providing support, each in its specific field, to the Member States in the protection of the external EU borders, in border controls, and in the registration of refugees. Support is given in the process control and protocols of decision making regarding the applications and in the fight against organized crime, in order to efficiently constrain illegal migration and human trafficking on the continent. In the founding documents of two agencies – Frontex and EASO – the task of providing high level technical and operative support for the Member States in border control and in managing the migration systems is emphasized. [1]

With the aim of solving the migration problem, the European Union has urged the establishing of hotspots (registration centres where the refugees are identified and provided with documents) on the external borders of the Union, especially in Greece and Italy. [2] At the time of writing this paper the official number of asylum seekers in Greece is 16 thousand, but the actual number is estimated to be 60 thousand. Even in the extremely cold winter of 2016/17 about 1,600 persons arrived to Greece from Turkey each month<sup>4</sup>. The fact that earlier about the same number

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<sup>2</sup> Eurostat – News release 44/2016 - 4 March 2016, p.2.

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/790eba01-381c-4163-bcd2-a54959b99ed6> Downloaded: 03 09 2016

<sup>3</sup> Frontex, Border Control Agency of the European Union <http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/origin/>  
EASO, European Asylum Support Office

[https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EASO-Brochure-EN%20\\_0.pdf](https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EASO-Brochure-EN%20_0.pdf)

Europol, European Police Office <https://www.europol.europa.eu/>

Eurojust, <http://www.eurojust.europa.eu/about/background/Pages/History.aspx>

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<sup>4</sup> UNHCR – Greece data snapshot 5 February 2017

of migrants arrived each day even in the winter months proves the efficiency and importance of the agreement of 20 March 2016 between Turkey and the EU. If this agreement were terminated, the pressure on Greece would increase once more, and the number of refugees would increase to hundreds of thousands of people.

The building of the hotspots in Greece is a halting process, the centres have not been completed for the time scheduled. Out of the five hotspots the Moria camp on the island of Lesbos is the most important. It has a capacity for 3,500 persons. The other hotspots are not fully utilized because they are not along the main routes of migration. At the same time, the camp on Lesbos houses twice the number of people it has been built for. In the overcrowded camp there has been unrest leading to fights and the outbreak of fires. During the one year history of the Moria camp refugees twice set the camp on fire, first in September 2015, and then again on 24<sup>th</sup> November, when a large part of the camp burned down, two inmates died and another two were seriously injured<sup>5</sup>. Following the incident, there were attempts to channel the flow of migrants to other camps. The Greek decision makers have realized that instead of the earlier practice of housing and determining the status of refugees in Athens and Thessaloniki, it was preferable to send them to camps wherefrom their expulsion is easier. They, therefore, tend to keep migrants on the islands of the Aegean Sea closer to Turkey. Distancing refugees from the capital or larger cities has thus become the standard policy of the Greek authorities.

Distancing has increasingly been adopted in the practice of dealing with the flow of immigrants. An official said at the opening ceremony of the home for unaccompanied minors at Fót (Hungary) that refugee management is somewhat similar to rescuing people from drowning. If someone has to rescue a drowning victim, it is essential that the rescuer should stay at a safe distance from the victim. First rescue from the shore, or from a boat should be attempted. If the rescuer has to enter the water, the victim may try to pull the rescuer onto him, or grab him in a way that his life, too, is endangered. The rescuer should keep a safe distance from the victim in order to make a successful rescue. Distancing is such an important rule if the victim grabs the rescuer, the latter has to use certain techniques in order to get free. [3] Distancing protects the rescuer and provides professional help for the victim.

Choosing a site for hosting the refugees close to the place of the conflict is in harmony with both the international protocols and the recommendations of the United Nations. Accordingly, the asylum request should be lodged in the first safe country closest to the zone of conflict. [4] This concept has not been applied in managing the first great wave of migration of 2015, and as a result, masses of migrants from the Middle-East and Sub-Saharan Africa have arrived in the heart of Europe. Notably, south of the Sahel region there had been no conflicts which would have justified the exodus.

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<https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/country.php?id=83> Downloaded: 22 02 2017

<sup>5</sup> Firebreaks out at Moria migrant camp on Greek island of Lesbos, The Guardian, 25 November 2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/25/fire-breaks-out-at-lesvos-migrant-camp-moria> Downloaded: 15 08 2016

## 2. CENTRAL-EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES

There prevails considerable confusion and a clear concept is missing for the implementation and management of hotspots in Italy and Greece. EU Member States which have agreed to send experts to these frontline countries to start the process of filtering incoming migrants, have not yet deployed the promised experts. Although Greece has been given by the Council of Europe over then 27.8 million Euros in emergency support, as well as a long-term support of 474 million Euros for the period 2014-2020 to cover the costs of processing asylum requests, replacement and expulsion, it gets no operative support in the management of the hotspots and in receiving the migrants. [2]

In Europe the migration wave was highest not at the time of the Middle-Eastern “Arab-spring”, but later, when the fighting in the civil wars became less heavy [5]. While in earlier years the number of migrants arriving to Europe was a manageable few tens of thousands, it became uncontrollable in 2014. In Hungary 1,693 persons arrived in 2011 and 2,157 persons in 2012. In 2014 their number rose considerably, to 42,777, while in 2015 to 177,135. [6] The increase in the statistics described in the Introduction had been due to this process. The United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR had not been prepared for a wave of migration of such an extent and depth. [7] In order to summarize the experiences, it is worth relating to some past examples that received considerable publicity.

Earlier UNHCR did not apply a uniform policy in the management of receiving and hosting refugees. The former so-called socialist countries (countries of the Soviet bloc) used to treat the refugee problem internally. A good example is the case of the political refugees to Hungary from Transylvania, or of those fleeing the wars on the Balkans. Beyond accepting help from international relief agencies, Hungary did not turn to other countries and did not enter into bilateral agreements with European or overseas countries.

In the countries of Western Europe refugees were distributed based on a mutual agreement concerning the quotas. The requirements and wishes of the refugees had also been taken into consideration. Hungarians emigrating to the West in the 1960s and 70s were among those handled this way. The emigrants were hosted in open camps, where they had to wait for periods of eighteen months to two years. They were free to move in the neighbourhood, but could not leave the camps on their own accord. Distribution of the refugees was based on offers coming from transatlantic states, and the refugees were free to accept or reject the offer of a specific country. The sooner an offer was accepted, the sooner the refugee was able to leave the camp. Many refugees ended up overseas, in the UK, or in Scandinavian countries. It is perhaps because of these different historical approaches and solutions why it is so difficult now to settle the disputes over the distribution quotas within the European Union.

The 2015 migrant wave was of such an unprecedented scale, that earlier strategies and protocols had become useless in handling the situation. Therefore, the different countries adopted two kinds of policies:

1. they either tried to halt the inflow of migrants by implementing border control measures like Spain, France, the UK, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary;

2. or allowed the migrants to freely enter their country and arranged for their hosting and care in an ad hoc manner, like Greece, Austria, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

The first of these strategies is irrelevant to the implementation of camps, therefore in the following we will concentrate on the situation in Austria, where most of the criteria for creating transitional camps can be identified. In 2015 more than one million asylum seekers arrived to Germany, most of whom entered the country through Austria. Before border controls and inland surveillance had started operating in Hungary, migrants in Austria took the Vienna-Linz-Passau route along the A4-A1-A8 motorways and the railway lines parallel to these, whereas after the flow had been halted by Hungary, they switched to a route through Croatia and Slovenia, and continued along the A10 motorway through Klagenfurt to Salzburg. The camp in Traiskirchen close to Vienna, which had been in existence for some time, was filled up with refugees within a few weeks, so that some migrants had to sleep outside the buildings in open air. Amnesty International started an investigation of the conditions in the camp, although it had been attempted to follow all the earlier protocols<sup>6</sup>. The camp was eventually closed down by the health authorities, and the reception of further refugees was banned. Unlike in Hungary, unaccompanied minor migrants were not received separately in the Austrian camps; there were 1,700 unaccompanied children in the Traiskirchen camp. As the camps had filled up, Austrian authorities tried to find an alternative solution that is how 300 children and women got to the Centre for Further Education of the Ministry of Interior in Lower Austria. Refugees were also housed in hotels, holiday resorts and mobile homes<sup>7</sup>.

The situation was similar in the province of Carinthia, in the neighbourhood of Slovenia, with the difference that originally there had not been camps like in the Vienna area. A camp of 6 giant tents for 3,500 persons was set up in Spielfeld right at the border. From here asylum seekers were transported by buses directly to Salzburg. When the camp had filled up, refugees were hosted in other localities in the neighbourhood. The most remarkable case was that of the detention facility of the police station in Klagenfurt, where 50 refugees were sent, and the Red Cross was requested to care for them. Such a possible solution arose in other countries as well: Sweden wanted to house the refugees in empty prison buildings<sup>8</sup>. In Austria the migrants did not meet friendly reception from the local population. For instance in the Carinthian Ossiach the mayor ordered to stop the renovation of a home which the authorities had wanted to use as a distribution centre for immigrants. In Sankt Georgen am Langsee in the same province, local authorities protested against the plan of setting up a camp of tents for 400 asylum seekers<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Austria refugee camp branded 'shameful' by Amnesty International - BBC News <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33940654> Downloaded: 23 06 2017

<sup>7</sup> No respect for human rights at Traiskirchen camp, The Local, Austria's news in English <https://www.thelocal.at/20150814/no-respect-for-human-rights-at-traiskirchen-refugee-camp> Downloaded: 25 06 2017

<sup>8</sup> Prison to be turned into refugee reception centre, Radio Sweden, 1 October 2015 <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6268243> Downloaded: 26 06 2017

<sup>9</sup> Markus Staudinger: Pühringer will EU-Asylquote noch heuer - sonst Aufnahmestopp in Österreich, Oberösterreich Nachrichten, 04. August 2015 <http://www.nachrichten.at/nachrichten/politik/innenpolitik/Puehringer-will-EU-Asylquote-noch-heuer-sonst-Aufnahmestopp-in-OEsterreich;art385,1934520> Downloaded: 23 06 2017

Eventually Austrian authorities resorted to the practice of transporting refugees to localities close to the German border as soon as possible, wherefrom they could easily get to the country that had been their goal. As a result, several camps sprang up in and around Salzburg. In the most crowded period refugees were hosted in the underground parking garage of a shopping mall in the centre of Salzburg, and later in holiday homes and tourist accommodations in the area<sup>10</sup>.

After 2004 the federal states of Germany had gradually switched to housing refugees in an integrated way, but in the wake of the spiralling migration of 2015 only half of those arriving could be hosted in that way, while the rest were put up in camps. [8] Currently there is no uniform system valid for the whole country, asylum seekers are housed in an ad hoc manner by the German authorities. In Berlin, for instance, refugees have been hosted in sports arenas and empty apartments.<sup>11</sup>

In dealing with the distribution of asylum seekers the European Council intended to apply national quotas. However, the 3 February 2017 meeting of European leaders on Malta has brought a turnaround in this respect<sup>12</sup>. For the protection of the lives of those arriving on sea, whose number in 2016 was more than 180 thousand, it was decided to set up new reception and housing facilities in Libya.

### 3. POSSIBLE TEMPORARY CAMPS IN AFRICA

There are two approaches to the problem of hosting refugees, but sometimes they mix up. One of them regards integration as a possible solution. Examples are the standards adopted in Lebanon, Germany and North Italy. According to the other, refugees should be hosted in camps like in Turkey, Greece, Jordan, France or, as it happens, Hungary. However, when the reception facilities for integrated hosting become scarce, those believing in integration are forced to put up asylum seekers in camps. Currently there is an enormous operational pressure on the authorities of the EU Member States whose task is to process asylum requests, because in the mean time they have also to provide for the refugees and organize their constant supervision. It could have been foreseen from the developments that, like in the case of visa applications, the asylum requests should also be examined outside Europe.

The European Union has several agencies involved in refugee management. These are able, beyond performing coordination tasks, to participate in the care of refugees. As far as its founding concept and organisation is concerned, EASO is capable of operating reception facilities financed by the European Union. There are several existing examples of such sites managed by the agencies in the Member States, including e.g. the Youth Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg established by the Council of Europe<sup>13</sup>, where young people from European and

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<sup>10</sup> Björn Hengst: Sie sind nun in Deutschland, Online Spiegel TV <http://www.spiegel.de/video/wegscheid-in-bayern-fluechtlinge-ueberqueren-grenze-video-1621065.html> Downloaded: 11 03 2017

<sup>11</sup> Soeren Kern: Germany Confiscating Homes to Use for Migrants, Gatestone Institute, 14 May 2017 <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/10352/germany-migrants-property-rights> Downloaded: 25 06 2017

<sup>12</sup> Jacopo Barigazzi, David M. Herszenhorn: EU backs plan to shut Libya route to migrants, Politico – 3 February 2017 <http://www.politico.eu/article/eu-backs-plan-to-shut-libya-route-to-migrants-refugees-crisis-europe/> Downloaded: 11 03 2017

<sup>13</sup> Council of Europe – European Youth Centre Budapest

other countries can live, study and meet under suitable conditions. The asylum processing sites set up in Greece, which are functioning with more or less success, but they should have a much larger capacity and a more extensive function. [9]

The geographical characteristics of the area concerned should be carefully considered when building camps for hosting large masses of people. Planners should collect data and explore sources of information as regards the climatic conditions and topography of the territory. Geographical characteristics at the given latitude, terrain, prevailing winds, available water reserves, the time-lag necessary for supplying (transporting) food, minimalizing energy consumption and the sustainability of energy supply are all factors that may influence the operation and lasting efficiency of the camps. [10]

Human settlements take a long time to develop. It may take several centuries or even millennia until a settlement finds its ideal place in a specific environment. Roads and intersections develop gradually, just like the way water reserves are utilized. The communities of the settlements strive at making the best use of the climatic and topographic conditions for both their habitation and their sustenance. Communities relied on the accumulated knowledge of several generations when deciding which areas are suitable for husbandry, which for habitation, and which are those that cannot be utilized. [11] When putting in place camps suitable for hosting masses of people, no such accumulated knowledge is available, therefore it is important to collect and analyse all available information regarding the climatic and topographical conditions of the area.

Utilizing the natural endowments is of primary importance. As shown by existing examples, it is not only inhuman to build a camp in the middle of a desert, it is also uneconomical<sup>14</sup>. Geographical evaluation of the area should precede the building of any camp for more than 10,000 people. If conditions in the given area are not favourable, a new site should be looked for. Experts taking part in choosing the site should consider whether a normal settlement would spontaneously develop in the area. If technical equipment for the necessary geological investigations, e.g. soil tests or exploring underground water resources, is not available, information helping in decision making can be obtained from locals or even from historical research. The presence of water is essential not only for sustaining life, but also for temperature control and transportation. A proper environment may influence also the morals and psychological condition of the inmates, another reason why choosing the optimal site should be aimed at.

The geographical properties of the region should be taken into consideration when looking for a site for a camp. Existing advantages of the terrain and of the environment should be utilized as much as possible. These will contribute to the safety and sustainability of the camp. The volume and vicinity of basic supplies like food, water and energy are important aspects. If these have to be transported from a distance because they are not locally available, the number of risk factors will increase, leading to higher vulnerability. [10]

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[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/eycb/Library/Hungarian\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/eycb/Library/Hungarian_en.asp) Downloaded: 14 03 2017

<sup>14</sup> Simon Rawles, Angela Robson: The Syrians who prefer war-torn home to refugee camp <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2013/jul/25/syrian-refugee-camp-video> Downloaded: 25 11 2016

Attention should also be paid to conflicts which may arise from differences in religious denomination. Sunni and Shiite refugees should not be hosted in the same camp. Christians – despised by Shiites and persecuted by Sunnis – as well as aboriginal peoples should be housed separately. It is easier and costs less money to provide safety, education and health care for homogenous groups. It is also easier to organize various events for them, because no attention is needed to be paid to cultural differences. Following this logic, it is advisable to set up hosting facilities and camps for groups which are homogenous as regards their religion and ethnicity.

Several agenda have been put forward for saving the life of refugees arriving to Europe by sea, suggesting their registration in camps in Africa. There are many migrants in Algeria, but if their asylum request is favourably settled, they must be transported through another country, Morocco, to get into the EU, or if they leave Algeria by sea, the journey is almost three times as long as from Tunisia or Libya<sup>15</sup>.

Fayez al-Sarraj, head of the Government of National Accord of Libya, is an appropriate political figure for managing the wave of refugees coming from Africa, because he is backed by the Western powers, and his forces control the capital city, Tripoli as well as the largest part of the country<sup>16</sup>. Early in 2017 he pledged to hold up the masses of refugees setting out to cross the Mediterranean Sea. This is why it has become an urgent task to set up reception facilities and transitory camps for the migrants in Libya.

#### 4. SITES IN LIBYA

Libya is a country of 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup> in North Africa. Its population of less than six million is concentrated in its northern, Mediterranean part and the Barca Plateau (10% of the total area). Before the civil war which started in 2011 its economy depended mostly upon the oil and gas industry. The largest part of the population is Libyan Arab. Before the civil war Egyptian immigrant labour force constituted 15% of the population, most of whom worked in the energy sector. In the wake of the civil war, the country and its administration fell apart. The western part around Tripoli, the capital, is controlled by the internationally recognized Government of National Accord led by Fayez al-Sarraj, while the Benghazi based eastern part is under the control alternately of revolutionaries and the Islamic State, and some oases in the desert area are controlled by the Islamic State and Berber tribes. [12]

When setting up a camp in Libya with the purpose of receiving migrants and examining their asylum request, the amount of time they will spend there and the procedures envisaged should be carefully considered. If their stay is limited to a few days, they can be hosted in temporary shelters, whereas for longer stays of several weeks or months they should be put up in permanent housing facilities. Temporary and permanent facilities differ in their structure and purpose. Temporary camps have the task of receiving and protecting migrants for a short period, and are characterized by a considerable fluctuation of the inmates. In permanent camps refugees should receive real and on-going protection until the problem of their habitation and

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<sup>15</sup> Sasskia Houttuin, Eva Huson: Algeria, the new migrant staging post for Europe <https://www.irinnews.org/feature/2016/10/25/algeria-new-migrant-staging-post-europe> Downloaded: 04 01 2017

<sup>16</sup> Lesley Wroughton.: Western powers voice support Libyan PM in standoff with rivals, Reuters, 31 October 2016 <http://news.trust.org/item/20161031153523-hbi4j> Downloaded: 13 12 2016



livelihoods solved, either on their own accord or with outside support. Camps may also play an important role in the process of the registration of refugees, during which, beyond the operational procedures, their temporary hosting and provision should also be taken care of.

When there is need for the continuous hosting of more than thousand migrants, building a permanent camp is justified, taking into account sustainability and cost efficiency at the same time. Permanent camps do not considerably differ from temporary ones as regards their function and the materials used for their construction, the differences between the two types are much greater in respect of the time needed to put them in place, their structure, size and facilities. Permanent camps should not host more than ten thousand persons even under optimal conditions. Camps with populations exceeding this number are difficult to run, and accommodation and facilities are less viable and less humane. It is a more complex task to plan the different sectors of permanent camps, where a high number of inmates must be provided for. [13]

Administrative headquarters, offices, communal spaces should have a central position because of their intensive use. Another specific trait of camps designed for non-military use – especially refugee camps – is the location of storing facilities in the proximity of the central sector and not on the periphery.

For safe operation the Libyan camp should be in the neighbourhood of Tripoli. The capital has two airports, one of which is suitable for receiving international air traffic. Unfortunately, Libya has no rivers with permanent water flow, the water supply of the country relies on the 300-400 mm annual precipitation falling in the coastal region and collected in seasonal river beds (wadis). Brega and Benghazi are cities which, apart from the capital, have infrastructures that would be suitable for hosting ten thousand people, but they are no real alternatives due to the lack of proper public administration and safety. Another possible site would be Sabha, which has the advantage of being situated along the main route used by the migrants, has an airport as well as the necessary infrastructure. The camp could accept not only refugees coming from the South, from Niger and Chad, but also those captured by Frontex on the Mediterranean Sea and sent back to their countries of origin. For migrants arriving through the Sahara, Sabha would be an ideal site where they could lodge their asylum requests, whereas for those rescued from the sea and sent back to Africa the logistic problem would be enormous, because the city is in the middle of the desert, at a distance of more than 500 km from the coast even by the shortest route. Currently migrants use the city as a resting place before they continue their journey. It is improbable that those who have reached the seaside would be willing to turn back for having their requests processed<sup>17</sup>.

Tripoli, the capital or its immediate neighbourhood would be an ideal place for both those coming from Sub-Saharan Africa and those captured on the Mediterranean Sea. The planners of this camp should consider not only the terrain and climatic conditions, but also urbanization and other aspects signified by the local population. Ethnical differences should be considered as well, because the population of Libya is mostly Arab, whereas the migrants coming from

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<sup>17</sup> Andrew McGregor: The Strategic Topography of Southern Libya, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 25 May 2016  
<https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-strategic-topography-of-southern-libya> Downloaded: 26 06 2017

south of the Sahel region belong to ethnicities of Black Africa. Other possible camp sites include the territory of Chad, the border areas of Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, N'Djamena or its neighbourhood, which can safely be reached by African migrants and where they can lodge their asylum requests. Such a solution could ensure that the desert would not take more victims than the Mediterranean Sea<sup>18</sup>. The investigation of possible camp sites south of the Sahel region is beyond the scope of the present paper.

In view of the current situation and considering what is happening in Turkey, it is justified to think about setting up transitory or permanent camps not only in Africa, but also in larger middle-eastern cities not exposed to attacks by the radical Islam. Such possible cities would be Tartus and Latakia in Syria on the Mediterranean coast or Homs on the bank of the river Orontes. All three are capital cities of Syrian governorates. Sustainability, transport and provision would call for camps to be established on the border of one or both governorate capitals on the coast. [14]

Research on refugee camps is getting more extensive internationally, e.g. in Oxford the Refugee Studies Centre, an academic research institution, has launched a project dealing with the establishment of refugee camps. [15] In the Development Plan of the Hungarian National University of Public Service special attention is devoted to migration research: *“Migration has become a phenomenon transforming the future of our country as well as of Europe. NUPS should become a Hungarian and international knowledge centre in migration research. Departments of the University teach and do research on migration in several dimensions. The research activities should be coordinated as a future strategic field of the University.”*<sup>19</sup>

## SUMMARY

Europe is faced with a migration wave unprecedented in the post World War II period. The official organizations and central decision makers have failed to recognize the true weight of the problem, and tried to process the asylum requests primarily within the boundaries of the Union. Later the difficulties arising in housing the refugees and in providing for them, as well as the increased security hazards prompted the EU to set up hotspots, establishing facilities where the requests can be examined and wherefrom those granted asylum can be distributed into individual member states based on relocation quotas, while those whose claim is denied can be sent back to their countries of origin. Creating hotspots in Greece and Italy started with a considerable delay and among much confusion, and the existing ones have failed to fulfil their planned function.

Overcrowding and malfunction of the European facilities have led to the conclusion that refugees should be received, hosted and housed, in accordance with the UN Protocol, in the first safe country they enter, a policy advocated by Hungary since the beginning of the migration wave. The requests of migrants wanting to emigrate to Europe for economic reasons should be

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<sup>18</sup> Daniel Flynn: African migrants risk all in Sahara to reach Europe, Reuters – World News, 28 May 2015 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-niger-idUSKBN0OD1UK20150528> Downloaded: 25 06 2017

<sup>19</sup> Nemzeti Közszerzői Egyetem: Intézményfejlesztési Terv 2015-2020 (Development Plan of the National University of Public Service 2015-2020) Kutatási prioritások meghatározása (Setting research priorities) XIX.p.29. [http://uni-nke.hu/uploads/media\\_items/intezmenyfejlesztési-terv-2015-2020.original.pdf](http://uni-nke.hu/uploads/media_items/intezmenyfejlesztési-terv-2015-2020.original.pdf) Downloaded: 22 01 2017

examined outside the European Union. For the masses of migrants coming from Africa, geographically the most appropriate site to process their request would be Libya, where a camp for ten thousand people could be set up.

The European Union is in possession of the expertise and financial resources necessary for preventing the recurrence of the 2015 crisis, when an unlimited number of migrants of diverse origin flooded Europe. For both security and humanitarian reasons the Union cannot renounce the obligation to set up refugee reception facilities and camps outside Europe. By running camps in the vicinity of the migrants' countries of origin, the Union guarantees the safety of its own citizens as well as that of the asylum seekers. Naturally, decision makers should continuously monitor the developments and give instant answers when necessary.

The possibility of putting up checkpoints and camps both in the Libyan site discussed above and in the potential sites in Chad or Syria, indicates that such facilities can be set up not only at the end points of migration, but – based on the principle of subsidiarity, beyond solidarity – also in suitable locations closer to the areas where the problems have arisen.

The indirect aim of this paper has been to suggest ideas and possible solutions for experts and decision makers engaged in the reception and hosting of displaced people in the Middle-East, Africa or other crisis areas of the world. The ideas put forward are to be freely applied in all situations where large masses of civil population have to be hosted in refugee camps.

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