**ENG VERSION - KIT#5 MIGRATORY FLOWS TO EUROPE, WHAT SITUATION FOR WHAT MANAGEMENT?**

TEASER - Migration flows towards Europe, which management for which situation ?

Migration issues are at the heart of European and national debates. To understand the challenges related to these issues and decrypt the roles of the stakeholders, we propose discussing various aspects relating to migration flows in Europe and their management.

While the historical aspect sets the stage for us to put things into context, we will later on address three aspects which drive and structure the migration management on a European scale. First, we will revisit a specific aspect of the policies led by the European States that is the desire to externalize migration management. More specifically the wish to delegate the migration management to countries outside of the EU.

In addition to these aspects, we will explore two of the challenges that currently shape or should shape migratory policies in the future: those related to Europe’s demographic decline and migrations caused by climate change.

Are you ready ?

VIDEO 1 - The history and current state of migration flows towards and within the EU

Since the beginning of time, men and women have migrated in search of better lands and living conditions. Several historical events, the rise of international trades, the industrial revolution and the explosion of globalization have transformed the way people exchange and move, **making migrations faster and easier**. In 2020, there were just over 280 million international migrants worldwide, or about **3.5% of the global population**. This figure has remained stable since 1990. Amongst international migrations, intra-regional migrations are of particular importance, mainly due to the reduced distance between countries and migration destinations. For instance, the EU is often portrayed as a significant area for intra-regional exchanges. This is largely due to the existence of the **Schengen agreements**, which allow citizens of 27 European countries to move almost freely within this space.

How have the migration flows to and within the EU evolved? Although the situation naturally varies from one member state to another, we can determine three major phases since the mid-20th century.

The first phase began in 1945, at the end of World War II. It was marked by Western and Northern European countries to support their reconstruction efforts. Therefore France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom entered into bilateral agreements with Southern European countries such as Italy, Portugal, Greece, and Spain as well as former colonial territories, in order to recruit low-skilled labor for mines and factory work. This organized migration was primarily conceived as a temporary solution.

The oil crisis of 1974 marked the start of the second phase. Weakened by recession and unemployment, European governments slowed down the recruitment of foreign workers. However, and despite significant restrictions on labor immigration, host states realized that immigrants from the first phase did not necessarily intend to return to their home countries. **They then decided to allow families to join the already settled workers.**

This process, better known as family reunification, remains to this day one of the main pathways to access EU territories for international migrants. These two first phases of immigration were also marked by the arrival in Europe of people fleeing conflicts related to decolonization such as Vietnamese Boat People, and the Cold War, as did many opponents of the former USSR communist regime.

The third phase, which is still ongoing, began in 1990 with the end of the Cold War. Although traditional migrations related to work and family reunification keep on being witnessed, the current phase is primarily characterized by the **profound complexity of contemporary migrations**.

Migrations related to conflicts originate from the reshaping of the continent’s borders following the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, as witnessed with former Yugoslavia, but are also linked to more distant conflicts with complex causes, such as in Afghanistan and Sudan. Added to this the intra-European migration resulting from the right to freedom of movement granted to European workers and students, known as the Erasmus generation. This intra-European migration has significantly increased following successive enlargements of the EU. Indeed, member states have multiplied measures to attract foreign students to their territories, to the point where these can now be considered a distinct category of migrants.

As of today, what is the situation in Europe? In 2016, there were **20 million intra-European migrants**, followed by **12 million migrants from Asia and the Middle Eas**t, and **10 million North-African and sub-Saharan migrants**. Intra-European migrations have therefore become the majority and are mainly from Romania, Poland, Italy, and Portugal. After being primarily considered an emigration destination, Europe and the EU has gradually transformed into an immigration destination since the mid-20th century. It has become increasingly hard to link migrations to a single cause, as the motives add up. The rising awareness of climate change has particularly led to a greater recognition of environmental causes of migration, which add to economic, political and demographic causes.

VIDEO 2 - Migration flows towards Europe: which management for which situation - the externalization of migration policies

The control of the EU’s borders is a technically complex and politically sensitive issue. Despite the existence of a common legal framework allowing member States to harmonize their legislations on practices on migrations, the migration flows control strongly depends on the independent will of each States.

However, we can note a fundamental trend which developed from the 2000s and significantly strengthened since the migrant reception crisis in 2015: **the externalization of migration policies**. This involves one State or a group of States delegating the responsibility for managing migration flows to others. In short, it consists in pushing Europe’s borders further away in order to reduce or prevent the arrival of migrants on its territory.

The externalization primarily consists of agreements with so-called Transit countries located at the EU’s border. These agreements define the conditions for reception and return of asylum seekers who travel through presumed “safe” third countries before arriving on European territory.

In theory, the notion of “safe” third countries applies to States that adhere to the 1951 Geneva Convention and apply the same principles as those granted to asylum seekers in European states. To make these agreements attractive, states and group of states that externalize their migration policies offer financial, diplomatic, or administrative help to their partners. The EU-Turkey declaration of March 18,2016 can illustrate this mechanism. The EU State members negotiated the return of Syrian asylum seekers from Greece to Turkey in exchange for a payment of 6 billion euros to the Turkish government, the promise to simplify the granting of visa for its citizens, and negotiations regarding Turkey’s adhesion to the Union. More recently in June 2023, the European Commission committed to invest 100 million euros into Tunisia to help this country in implementing measures related to border management, search and rescue operations, and the return of migrants to Tunisia.

Simultaneously, European institutions and States have developed policies and measures establishing a **link between migration policies and aid to developing countries**, as can testify the creation of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. It consists of a development aid program of over 5 billion euros, benefiting 26 partner countries, and tackling irregular migration. Moreover, bilateral agreements are regularly concluded between states, such as between Spain and Morocco, Italy and Tunisia, or Italy and Libya.

However, In Calais, it is France that finds itself in the position of an externalization partner. Since the 2003 Le Touquet agreements, the French government has been responsible for managing migration flows towards the United Kingdom, not without challenges.

An additional step to externalization was recently crossed by the United Kingdom and Denmark, which expressed the wish to send their asylum seekers back towards Rwanda. However, this project violates the obligations of these States under international conventions they have ratified, such as the Geneva convention.

Finally, the externalization strategy is corroborated by the creation of hot spots located at the external borders of the EU, such as on the islands of Lesbos in Greece or Lampedusa in Italy. These hotspots are identification and registration centers for asylum seekers and migrants arriving in Europe. They serve as a tool to keep people at the external borders of the EU before allowing them to enter its territory or not.

All of these examples show that externalization has become an essential strategy at the scale of the EU and its members. While its internal borders seem to have relaxed due to the Schengen Agreement, it is undeniable that its external borders have been reinforced, justifying the use of the term “fortress Europe”.

VIDEO 3 - Challenges and demographic dynamics of the European Union: the role of migration

The EU is currently facing three challenges related to its demographic transformation: population decline, aging, and population imbalances across Europe. But what is the role of migration in addressing these challenges?

Let’s start with the population decline. The birth rate considered necessary to maintain a constant population is 2.1 children per woman. However, this figure is much lower than in reality. The only reason why the population has not started to decline is precisely that the migration balance is positive, meaning that the number of immigrants in the EU is higher than the number of people leaving the EU. Therefore, in addition to promoting policies helping to balance private and professional lives, such as extending paternity and maternity leave, effective reception and integration policies are necessary to counteract the population decline.

On the other hand, the increase in life expectancy has led to an aging population and a decrease in the working-age population. This decline puts pressure on public budgets, as the number of people contributing to social insurance is lower than the number of pension beneficiaries. Implementing systems that successfully integrate migrants into the labor market can increase tax revenues, which is beneficial for public finances. It can also enable migrants to enjoy all the rights and benefits of EU workers.

The aging population has also led to an increased demand for healthcare. While it is important for public healthcare systems to become more efficient and resilient, immigrant workers, whether skilled or not, can help address this challenge. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic it became more obvious that the significant amount of migrant medical and nursing staff was essential to keep the healthcare system afloat in the EU. To attract more migrant healthcare workers, it will be necessary to re-evaluate the accreditation of qualifications in the healthcare field. Often, even if migrants already hold valid university degrees in their home countries, they must undergo long and tedious procedures before they can practice their discipline.

Finally, population decline and aging vary from country to country (sometimes even within the same country), and internal migration exacerbates these disparities. In addition to facing labor shortage due to their demographic transition, some Eastern European countries like Poland or Hungary also have to deal with a brain drain and the migration of young workers to other EU countries.

Therefore, we can see how migration can help the EU overcome the challenges related to its demographic transformation. However, it is also important to note that migration not only brings benefits to EU countries but also to other countries.

VIDEO 4 - Climate migration

Climate change is one of the most challenging issues facing the world today. It is negatively affecting people all around the world and will continue to do so in the future. One of the most important effects on people and our societies is the impact that climate change has on human migration.

Many people think that migration driven by climate change will happen in the future, but people are already on the move. This is due to impacts like sea level rise, coastal erosion, temperature increase, climate variability and extreme events like hurricanes and floods that are increasing in intensity and frequency.

Every year millions of people are forced to flee their homes because of environmental disasters. In 2022 alone, over 32 million people were internally displaced, meaning forced to migrate within their own countries, because of sudden shock events. More than 1.1 million people were displaced by drought in Somalia alone. And these figures do not account for all those who move because of more gradual changes, like sea level rise.

Europeans are also on the move because of a changing climate.

**>> personnes déplacées**

 Disasters, primarily floods, storms, and wildfires, have displaced more than **400,000** people in Europe since the start of **2021**.

**>> Garder en l’état + calendrier ou flèche chronologique 2021—-----2024**

Floods forced some 83,000 people from their homes in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium in July of 2021.

**>> 2021**

**carte Allemagne, aux Pays-Bas et en Belgique +**

**innondations**

**83000 personnes qui marchent**

In May of 2023, Italy saw the displacement of some 36,000 people by floods and storms in the Emiglia Romagna region.

**>> 2023**

**carte Italie**

**tempête**

**36000 personnes qui marchent**

But the countries and continents of the world that are most vulnerable to climate change are developing countries. Most of these countries have little to no historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, but they will bear the global brunt of its adverse impacts on our environments – especially in places dependent on farming, fishing, forestry and other natural resources.  In some small island developing states like Fiji, entire communities are being relocated.

You may have heard of the term “climate refugees” to refer to all those people forced to migrate because of climate change. However, you should know that legally there is no such thing as a ‘climate refugee’ in international law. The 1951 Geneva Convention, an international treaty allowing for the protection of refugees worldwide, does not include climate change or any other type of environmental hazard as a justification for obtaining refugee status. So, while millions of people may consider themselves refugees fleeing the unjust and unequal impacts of climate change, at present they are not entitled to international protection. One of the misconceptions around climate refugees is also the idea that people move internationally, when most people today who are negatively affected by climate change migrate within their own countries.

We want to minimize the number of people forced to flee their homes, in Europe and abroad, but migration is not always a bad thing. For many people who are affected by climate change, migration is a **survival strategy** that saves lives. And, when people are given choices and able to migrate in safe, orderly, and regular ways, migration can offer more than survival. It can offer migrants and their families a way to adapt to a changing climate and provide better opportunities and more safety and security. In some cases, it may be those people who are unable to migrate out of harm’s way, trapped in dangerous environments, that suffer the most at the hands of climate change.