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# BEAR ANY BURDEN: HOW EU GOVERNMENTS CAN MANAGE THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Susi Dennison & Josef Janning

## SUMMARY

- To restore Europe's solidarity in the face of the refugee crisis, it is vital that each country not only plays its part, but is seen to play its part.
- This paper dispels the misconceptions around the crisis by setting out a fuller picture of what each member state is doing, finding that some, like the UK, do more than their domestic narrative suggests. Some states, however, are not contributing much.
- Member states' contributions include not only hosting refugees, but also less visible actions such as giving aid for Syria, sending asylum experts to Greece, and managing the external borders.
- But much more needs to be done. European states should formalise this cooperation with a voluntary scheme to share the burden, dividing contributions by task rather than by refugee numbers. This should be supported by a common asylum fund, a global deal on resettlement, and a standing civilian force to attend to humanitarian crises outside the EU.
- This paper sets out the role that each member state could play, based on its strengths and current contributions, from diplomatic capital to finance and expertise.

April 2016 marks an unhappy anniversary for the European Union. A year has passed since two boats carrying hundreds of migrants sank off the coast of Libya within a week, killing more than 1,200 people. These tragedies forced the EU to realise that the growing number coming across the Mediterranean was not just a practical problem for southern states such as Italy and Greece, but was becoming a full-blown humanitarian and political crisis touching every country in Europe.

As hundreds of arrivals turned into thousands and then passed the million mark by Christmas, the absence of a coherent policy response led to fears that European leaders had lost control of the situation. Political deadlock spread across the member states, and the Union as a whole has appeared on the point of exchanging its historic global engagement for a panicked retreat behind national borders. Nationalist, xenophobic, and anti-EU forces are driving the debate, causing national borders to re-emerge across the Schengen Area, and EU governments to deploy short-sighted tactics in a pan-European blame game.

The reality is that large-scale migration into the EU could become the new normal. Instead of hiding from this, the EU needs to develop a coherent policy response in which responsibility for managing the crisis is shared between member states, not only in the narrow sense of accepting refugees but in the broader sense of contributing funds, personnel, and diplomatic capital. It is crucial that each member state not only plays its part, but is *seen* to play its part, to reinforce the sense that Europe is in this together. The EU's policy response should include a strong foreign

policy dimension that does not merely react to the current push factors driving refugee flows, such as the Syrian war, but also anticipates and responds to growing and future flows from areas such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Horn of Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa.

This paper attempts to contribute to that response by presenting a comprehensive picture of EU member states' contributions to managing the refugee crisis – from the well-known efforts, such as Germany's role in accepting refugees, to the less recognised ones, such as various countries' financial contributions to humanitarian aid in Syria and use of the common Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). It goes on to set out the additional steps needed for a coherent, Europe-wide response to the refugee crisis, and which country could deliver each aspect. Its aim is to show that, although the EU is in crisis, a collective response is within reach.

## The EU–Turkey deal

The EU–Turkey deal, announced on 17 March, was the first real step out of the impasse, setting the terms for greater cooperation on managing the south-eastern gateway into Europe. It was a recognition that the EU must attend to the foreign policy dimension of refugee flows – addressing their causes in refugees' countries of origin and transit – if it is to pull through the current crisis.

And, if it starts to reduce dangerous arrivals by sea, the deal could begin to generate a sense that EU leaders are capable of bringing the crisis under control. Since the deal came into force in early April, daily arrivals in Greece have indeed dropped significantly to hundreds rather than thousands. At the same time, arrivals to Italy via Libya have started to pick up again – as have the number of deaths en route, with an estimated 400 dying in a single shipwreck on 18 April.

The main cornerstones of the deal were the “one in, one out” agreement, under which the EU will resettle a Syrian refugee from Turkey for every failed asylum seeker that Turkey accepts back from Greece, up to a limit of 72,000; a doubling of the €3 billion aid package to Turkey to help refugees in the country, with the second tranche to start to be released once the €3 billion has been spent; and the promise of visa liberalisation – with time limits and conditions – for Turks to travel to the EU.

However, as embodied in the desperate, violent responses of refugees in Greek camps facing transfer back to Turkey ahead of the deal's implementation, there are major obstacles ahead. The deal faces serious questions about its legality, hinging on whether Turkey qualifies as a safe country to which refugees can be returned; and doubts about Greece's capacity to process asylum requests in time. Some member states are concerned that the deal could pose a security risk, arguing that the promised visa liberalisation for Turkey and the pressure on Greece to rush asylum applications could make it easier for would-be terrorists to enter the EU.

In addition, the Turkey deal alone cannot resolve the EU's immigration problem. Although Russia's announcement that it would withdraw troops has changed the dynamics in Syria, the peace talks look increasingly fragile, and achieving any sort of peace and stability in the country will take time. Rebuilding a country to which large numbers of displaced Syrians are able to return will take much longer. In addition, mixed in with the current flows are large numbers of people who do not fulfil the criteria for refugee status, and so do not fall under the deal's provisions for resettlement.

The deal is limited in scope. It does not help the refugee situation in Lebanon and Jordan, where the EU has responded only by pledging more money. Nor does it engage with the need to upgrade border monitoring and migration management on the EU's external borders. The EU–Turkey deal also includes a commitment to resettle refugees directly from the camps – this is a step in the right direction, since a significant scaling-up of legal routes could discourage people from making the journey, but it will be difficult to achieve in the current EU environment.

## Challenges to a unified EU response

The shortcomings of the EU–Turkey deal reflect problems in the current environment within Europe that will impede the development of any coherent response to the refugee crisis.

### *Divisions between member states*

First among these are the deep divisions between member states on how Europe should approach the crisis. Even if the EU–Turkey deal's “one in, one out” agreement begins to function, there will still be the need to deal with the more than 50,000 refugees who are currently in Greece and who, once they are granted asylum, will have to be integrated into European societies.

In September 2015, EU member states committed to relocate 160,000 refugees across the Union from Italy, Greece, and Hungary over the next two years. However, this has been very difficult to implement due to the reluctance of certain states: as of 18 April 2016, only 1,263 had been relocated. The Visegrad Group – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia – strongly oppose relocation, while key states such as the UK refuse to participate, and states such as Sweden and Austria signal that they are already full. As a result, many other member states are able to hide behind these groups' recalcitrance.

Even if these relocations were carried out at the rate of 6,000 a month, as proposed by EU migration commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos to reach the 160,000 target in two years, this would be far from sufficient to ease the current pressure on Greece, now that the Macedonian border is closed.

## *Resistance to majority rule*

Second, it is particularly difficult to overcome these divisions, as the appetite for decisions being forced through or imposed by a majority is at rock bottom across the EU. Germany's efforts to push the EU–Turkey deal has only increased resentment that was already simmering over the September relocation agreement being reached by a qualified majority – rather than a consensus.

In early 2016, a new set of coalitions have emerged within the EU around different approaches to handling the refugee crisis. Loosely, these can be broken down into three groups: the “refugees welcome, but the situation must be managed” coalition, centred around Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands; the Visegrad Group, which has been outspoken in its opposition to the relocation decision; and the “Balkan route” coalition led by Austria, which agreed in February 2016 to close its borders and block the south-eastern passage into the EU.

Against this backdrop, Germany will continue to play a leadership role, but there should be a focus on brokerage and consensus-building, and a sense of collective ownership in developing and implementing policy solutions. Two of the states with the greatest number of asylum applications per capita – Germany and Sweden – as well as the Netherlands, which currently holds the presidency, have strong records of exercising this style of leadership in the EU. This is reflected in their rankings in ECFR's Foreign Policy Scorecard,<sup>1</sup> which has produced an annual ranking of member states according to their contributions on key foreign policy decisions over the last five years. It is vital that these countries deploy their ability to lead again now.

However, it is critical both for Chancellor Angela Merkel's domestic standing, and for generating the EU-wide political will to move forward together, that Germany does not lead this effort alone. Other states that are directly affected by the crisis, including Austria, Greece, Italy, and particularly Sweden – which has been struggling with a national crisis in handling the refugee arrivals, and has lost faith over the past six months that the EU can formulate a coherent response to the crisis – will be a critical part of this. Any policy response will need to take their concerns into account.

## *Implementation gap*

Third, and linked to these two previous issues, there is a large gap between decisions made and actions taken on the refugee crisis since autumn 2015, which is the cause of real concern in Brussels and other EU capitals. Although the relocation decision is legally binding, it simply has not been implemented by member states. Some other decisions have taken a very long time – such as reaching an agreement on each member state's share of the financial support pledged to Turkey; or are implemented only gradually, such as the upgrading of the role and capacity of EU border agency

Frontex. Despite promises of humanitarian assistance to Turkey as part of the deal, the Commission reported on 20 April that Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Spain had yet to make any payments.

Some non-implementation by governments is strategic – especially on relocation – in a deliberate undercutting of EU policy. Certain policymakers in East and Central Europe are practising a form of civil disobedience vis-à-vis Brussels, in order to send a message to Berlin, while some governments in Western Europe hide behind this obstructionism, seeking to get a free ride on the refugee response.

Both patterns deeply irritate Germany's leadership, which sees itself as serving the common European good with its actions on the refugee crisis. In Berlin's view, deliberate non-implementation is placing the integrity of European rules and processes in question, and so undermining the very instruments that Germany is seeking to use to lead the response to the crisis. EU member states and institutions can ill afford for any more commitments to go undelivered at this point, as this could cause faith in the European project to reach critically low levels within both government circles and the wider public. A roadmap for the policy response should be designed with this in mind.

## *Who is doing what?*

To move beyond the fraught processes that produced the EU–Turkey deal and achieve a coherent European response to the refugee crisis, it is important to consider the full picture of member states' contributions, which are often underestimated. The policy response should also be based on a recognition of what is actually happening across the EU, to dispel some of the differences between reality and the prevailing narratives that exist on the crisis.

Contributions to the crisis are often considered mostly in terms of domestic policy – i.e. the reception and integration of refugees – but a full picture should also include foreign policy contributions to addressing flows at their source, in refugees' countries of origin and transit. In addition, some member states underplay the extent of their contributions in order to appear tough to domestic audiences, finding it more politically expedient to pander to the national press.

The misconceptions about countries' contributions are damaging, allowing a sense that some of the larger states are doing very little. This breeds public resentment in countries taking on a large share of the burden, such as Germany, and it is used by some smaller countries as an excuse to refuse to do their bit, assuming that the cost of non-participation at an EU level is minimal. A more comprehensive picture of responses to the crisis can help address these problems, and create the basis for effective negotiations on sharing the burden.

<sup>1</sup> ECFR Foreign Policy Scorecard, 2010–2016, available at <http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard>.

Table 1

Country	Share of total EU first-time asylum applicants in 2015	Relocation of refugees from Italy and Greece by March 2015	Use of EU funds for migration and border policy		Contribution to EU-Africa Trust fund (€ million)	Humanitarian aid to Syria, 2012 – 2015 (\$ million) <sup>i</sup>
			AMIF (€ million)	Internal Security Fund (€ million)		
<b>EU</b>	100%	937	314.0	238.86	1,800 <sup>ii</sup>	592.73 <sup>iii</sup>
<b>Austria</b>	6.8%	0	9.96	3.19	3.0	11.86
<b>Belgium</b>	3.1%	24	6.88	2.75	10.0	58.41
<b>Bulgaria</b>	1.6%	2	3.98	5.09	0.05	0.44
<b>Croatia</b>	0.0%	0	9.95	3.20	0	0.62
<b>Cyprus</b>	0.2%	6	3.01	2.98	0	No data
<b>Czech Republic</b>	0.1%	0	0	0	0.74	1.02
<b>Denmark</b>	1.7%	0	0	0.72	6.0	61.93
<b>Estonia</b>	0.0%	0	0.71	4.23	0.15	0.32
<b>Finland</b>	2.6%	173	9.49	6.36	5.0	23.17
<b>France</b>	5.6%	283	27.17	22,60	3.0	43.41
<b>Germany</b>	35.2%	57	53.42	9.41	3.0	339.45
<b>Greece</b>	0.9%	N/A	25.92	26.34	0	67.02
<b>Hungary</b>	13.9%	0	5.51	5.50	0.7	0.23
<b>Ireland</b>	0.3%	10	0	0	3.0	23.26
<b>Italy</b>	6.6%	N/A	31.64	21.54	10.0	31.54
<b>Latvia</b>	0.0%	6	17.14	2.30	0.05	0.56
<b>Lithuania</b>	0.0%	6	0.67	23.51	0.05	0.83
<b>Luxembourg</b>	0.2%	30	0.56	0.90	3.1	11.41
<b>Malta</b>	0.1%	21	18.10	8.96	0.25	0.34
<b>Netherlands</b>	3.4%	98	10.66	7.88	15.0	65.18
<b>Poland</b>	0.8%	0	4.86	7.88	1.1	3.02
<b>Portugal</b>	0.1%	149	9.87	4.64	0.25	0.66
<b>Romania</b>	0.1%	15	1.71	6.89	0.1	0.3
<b>Slovakia</b>	0.0%	0	0.91	2.18	0.5	0.23
<b>Slovenia</b>	0.0%	0	5.24	8.88	0.05	0.18
<b>Spain</b>	1.2%	18	18.18	18.35	3.0	22.22
<b>Sweden</b>	12.4%	39	10.79	32.58	3.0	82.75
<b>UK</b>	3.1%	0	27.48	N/A <sup>iv</sup>	3.0	767.99

i Financial Tracking Service, UNOCHA.

iv The UK does not participate in the ISF.

Source: European Commission, Eurostat, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

ii EC contribution, not EU total.

iii EC contribution, not EU total.

To restore solidarity, it is important to generate a sense of agency and a belief that member states can work together to tackle the problem, and to recognise the specific pressures that some states are under. These include the ongoing economic crisis, varying security threats, and different experiences in terms of refugee arrivals, both at state and more local levels.

With the aim of shedding light on the real scale of contributions, the table to the left offers data on who is doing what on certain aspects of the refugee crisis. It not only considers reception of refugees – giving the proportion of the EU’s total asylum applications handled by each country, and their contribution in terms of relocating refugees from Italy and Greece – but also looks at member states’ use of asylum and migration funds, which get less attention. This includes withdrawals from the EU’s two funds for domestic policy on migration, the Internal Security Fund and the AMIF, which support reception, integration, and asylum procedures; and border security, respectively. The table also gives figures on each country’s humanitarian aid to Syria, and to the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, an emergency body set up in November 2015 to address the root causes of irregular migration and displacement in Africa.

Unsurprisingly, Germany, Sweden, and Greece are major contributors in all aspects, but in some areas – such as humanitarian aid to key crisis regions such as Syria – member states such as the UK are doing far more than their domestic narratives might lead us to believe. Some smaller states, such as Portugal, are making significant contributions across the board and are developing the capacity to do more.<sup>2</sup>

## Recommendations

A European policy response to the refugee crisis should centre around three key elements:

- Each member state must not only play its part, but be *seen* to play its part. Currently, the refusal of certain larger EU states (particularly the UK) to relocate refugees from countries on the EU’s external borders provides cover for other states refusing to participate at all. Making it clear that all states are contributing, albeit in diverse ways, would take away this excuse, and reinforce a sense that member states are in this together.
- A comprehensive and voluntary scheme to share the burden between member states. The agreement should not only focus on the number of refugees that each EU state is willing to take in, as is the case at present, but also include other contributions that states can make – from financial support and human resources for reception, accommodation, and integration, to external border management.

- The integration of the foreign policy dimension into the policy response. The EU’s policy response should include foreign policy measures, such as long-term overseas aid to refugee camps in other regions, the resettlement of refugees from camps that neighbour Syria, and diplomatic efforts on conflicts that drive refugee flows.

Based on these elements, the following policy recommendations would help EU member states to manage the crisis effectively:

### *Burden-sharing by task*

First, European countries should develop a system of burden-sharing by task rather than by refugee numbers, with different states taking responsibility – voluntarily – for different aspects of the policy response.

Member states are already cooperating on some key areas, such as organising returns, including transport of rejected asylum applicants. Returns data for the past six months shows that Germany, Italy, Austria, France, Bulgaria, and Sweden have all coordinated flights with other EU states. In addition, the diplomatic leadership of the EU-3 (Germany, France, and the UK) in negotiations including the Iran talks has provided a starting point for EU input into the Syria peace talks – a core part of an effective foreign policy response to the crisis.

Germany and France’s immediate offers to send personnel to Greece to implement the EU–Turkey deal are further evidence of international cooperation, and led to other member states following suit. Table 2 details member states’ contributions of enforcement and asylum officials to Greece since the EU–Turkey deal came into force. Relatively large contributions from states such as the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, and Poland indicate a willingness to contribute in this way, even from those member states that are perceived as far from the centre of the refugee crisis response, and they could be further developed.

Though some burden-sharing is already taking place, the breakdown of tasks should be clearly and publicly set out, so that all member states are aware of each other’s commitments. This would allow them to hold each other to account, and to justify their contributions to their domestic audience as part of a European initiative, matched by their neighbours. Member states could agree to accept refugees as one option for how to contribute. The goodwill shown by some states, such as Portugal, which has offered to take 10,000 refugees, and Germany, which accepts that it will likely have to take on the lion’s share of the burden, could help encourage other states that are more reluctant on this front.

This task breakdown should also include the foreign policy interventions that are needed to reduce flows over the longer term, going beyond Syria to countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Albania, Serbia, Somalia, and Eritrea,

<sup>2</sup> Paul Ames, “Portugal to Syrians: Come West”, *Politico*, 22 March 2016, available at <http://www.politico.eu/article/portugal-to-syrians-come-west-refugee-crisis-portuguese-prime-ministerantonio-costa/>.

which were among the top source countries for arrivals in Europe in 2015. Arrivals from Pakistan and North Africa in particular have grown in the first months of 2016. Europe has historical responsibilities in these areas, and, to varying degrees across member states, influence in developing responses to the factors driving migration.

Measures to secure the EU's external borders should also be included in the pooling of resources, since this is a crucial part of managing migration flows into the EU. These include the Commission's December 2015 border package, which proposed a European Borders and Coast Guard and systematic checks of EU citizens at the external borders. Table 1 therefore includes countries' withdrawals from the Internal Security Fund – the EU's funding instrument for collective border protection – though this paper will not consider it in detail.

### *Common asylum fund*

A common asylum fund, with a sufficient budget, would be needed to support these initiatives. All member states would contribute based on capacity, and the fund would be used to underpin all aspects of the refugee crisis response, including the humanitarian action task force, and financial support to countries processing higher numbers of arrivals. Contributions to this fund might be all that is on offer from the most reluctant states, which are relatively untouched by the crisis in terms of numbers of arrivals (particularly the Visegrad Group).

There is already a common Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) that member states draw from, but it would need to be significantly scaled up, with a much expanded budget (including member state contributions) in order to fund the initiatives described above, supporting states on the basis of direct payments per capita of refugees and asylum seekers hosted. Sebastian Dullien's paper on the economics of the refugee crisis estimates the total cost for a full refugee crisis response at around €70 billion a year.<sup>3</sup>

Payments from AMIF for the period 2014–2020 total around €324 million so far.<sup>4</sup> They vary significantly between states – as Table 1 shows. The larger fund could be administered centrally by the Commission's budgetary department, DG Budget, as the direct link to structural funds might be useful in terms of incentivising all states to participate. Since intake of refugees will increase pressure on EU states and regions, an argument can be made that this should affect allocations.

### *Humanitarian action task force*

Second, the EU should develop a humanitarian action task force that operates within the Union's borders, processing asylum claims, determining the distribution across member states of those granted asylum, and coordinating the return of those who are rejected. It would operate as a standing

<sup>3</sup> Sebastian Dullien, "Paying the price: The cost of Europe's refugee crisis", European Council on Foreign Relations, 28 April 2016, available at <http://ecfr.eu>

<sup>4</sup> According to European Commission data.

force with a temporary mandate in each location where it is deployed, providing shelter, food, medical services, training and education while the refugees await decisions, and would be funded through the Common Asylum Fund.

Crucially, asylum decisions would be made by the task force, not by individual member states. In order to make this work, the task force would need a mandate to treat the EU as a single country for the purpose of asylum claims. One challenge to this centralised process would be the issue of assigning destinations to asylum seekers, rather than allowing them to apply where they choose – which for many would be Germany. However, under the scheme, refugees would gain the promise of a permanent home, instead of the uncertain prospect of trying to reach Germany (or being trapped in Greece for as long as the border effectively remains closed) with no certainty that their claim will be accepted. Another challenge is the fact that France and some other states remain strongly attached to the principle that asylum seekers must apply to the first EU country they reach. Any suspension of this rule would have to be on the basis of a time-limited arrangement to get the EU through a crisis.

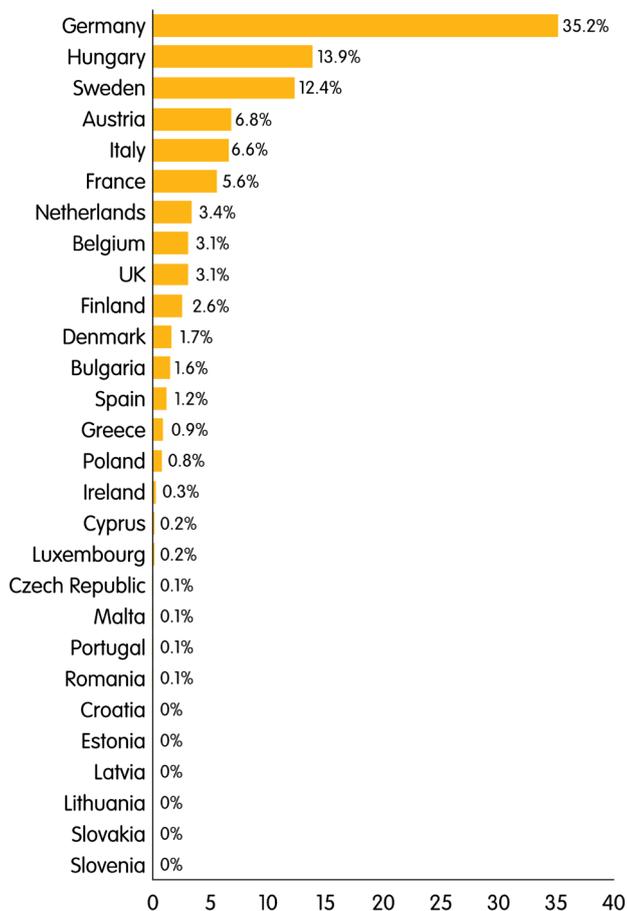
A standing EU task force would be faster and more effective than the current uncoordinated contributions from individual member states. The Greek government, for example, has expressed major concerns about pulling together piecemeal personnel contributions into a unified force to implement the EU–Turkey deal. The challenges facing the early stages of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)/Frontex operation in the country make it clear that this task force needs the explicit endorsement of member states, and needs a leader who is able to negotiate directly with EU heads of state – possibly a former head of state themselves – with a more political profile than the current Frontex operation. It should be staffed by personnel contributions from member states and Frontex, rather than simply operating within existing institutions.

The first job of the task force would be to launch a collective crisis operation in Greece, in collaboration with the EASO, to process the applications of the estimated 56,000 refugees currently stuck in the country. It would have a temporary mandate for one year to ease the pressure on the country. All those offered asylum would be transferred from Greece to EU member states on the basis of an agreed allocation, organised under the burden-sharing system described above.

### *Humanitarian intervention force*

To strengthen the foreign policy response to the refugee crisis, European policymakers should establish a standing, civilian humanitarian intervention force (HIF), commonly funded and strong enough to assist in humanitarian crises in its wider neighbourhood early and effectively. The force would plan, lead, coordinate, and carry out humanitarian assistance efforts in the EU's wider neighbourhood: Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the wider Middle East, and North Africa, with the potential for its mandate to be extended

## Share of total EU first time asylum applicants by member state, 2015



into sub-Saharan Africa. It would be a hub for humanitarian assistance by member states, managing refugee camps and aid programmes, and delivering aid to victims of war and natural disasters.

Ideally, the HIF would be established as an EU agency, funded under the EU budget through existing funds or member state contributions in proportion to GDP. This would allow for a central budget, a qualified personnel base, an integrated operational headquarters, and good lines of communication to the EU's other external policy instruments. Of particular importance would be links to the situation analysis and crisis response capacities of the European External Action Service, and to the relevant departments of NATO.

The HIF would require resources in the range of 0.05 to 0.1 percent of EU GDP, i.e. between €7 billion and 14 billion annually, representing 5 to 10 percent of the EU budget. Funding could to some extent be diverted from governments' existing allocations to the refugee programmes of international organisations and NGOs, but the bulk of the budget would have to be new money if other areas of development assistance, disaster relief, and human development are to be kept at present levels.

The HIF would cooperate with UNHCR as well as with EU

member state humanitarian assistance organisations, and with host country governments. It is not meant to substitute for the development of European military intervention capabilities, nor for conflict prevention or peace-building efforts, but it is a recognition that these efforts are not always the only or even the best way to affect the most urgent conflicts. The force would directly involve Europeans in conflict regions, and demonstrate the EU's commitment to its humanitarian values.

In response to the current refugee crisis, the HIF would work closely with governments and international organisations to set up and administer housing for refugees as close to their home country as possible, providing food, medical services, and education and vocational training. If put in place immediately, it could take over the implementation of projects under the EU-Turkey deal, working alongside the Turkish authorities. It would immediately engage in Lebanon and Jordan, where the situation is becoming more critical by the week.

Of course, such an ambitious proposal would be controversial in many member states. Some governments, not feeling pressure from refugee arrivals, might object to an EU-funded civilian intervention force, while others would rather invest in tightening security and controls on the EU's external borders. But its ambition is commensurate with the scale of the refugee crisis.

Indeed, if member states cannot reach an agreement on establishing the HIF, it should still be created by a coalition of the willing, who would provide the legal basis, budget, and personnel. This coalition could be led by France and Germany, and would likely include member states particularly affected by the failure to address the refugee problem in the region (such as Italy, Spain, Austria, the Benelux countries, and the Nordic countries), or particularly interested in conflict resolution (such as the UK), or in maintaining the values of the EU (such as Sweden). Participating member states should call on the EU to help through voluntary contributions to budget and infrastructure, with the aim of securing continuous funding under the next midterm financial framework, effective from 2020. Contributions to the HIF would count under the comprehensive burden-sharing scheme discussed above.

The HIF would help to address the weaknesses of Europe's current approach to humanitarian assistance outside its borders, which have been highlighted by the refugee crisis. Aid for refugees systematically comes too late and falls short, because the resources become available with a considerable time lag. As a result, Europe fails to affect the dynamics and development of crises, and has little direct involvement in the humanitarian side beyond the limited presence of member state or EU representatives.

Currently, much of member states' support for refugees outside the EU goes via UNHCR and other UN agencies, made voluntarily on a project funding request basis. UNHCR

Table 2

Country	Contribution to foreign policy response
<b>Austria</b>	Participation in the Humanitarian Intervention Force
<b>Belgium</b>	Participation in the Humanitarian Intervention Force
<b>Bulgaria</b>	
<b>Croatia</b>	
<b>Cyprus</b>	
<b>Czech Republic</b>	
<b>Denmark</b>	Participate in Humanitarian Intervention Force. Resettle refugees as part of a new global deal on resettlement.
<b>Estonia</b>	
<b>Finland</b>	Participate in Humanitarian Intervention Force. Resettle more refugees. Under the EU-Turkey deal, Finland has resettled 11 Syrians from Turkey.
<b>France</b>	Lead, with the UK and the Netherlands, an internationalisation campaign for a global deal on resettlement issue at the UN on behalf of the EU, and set an example by resettling more refugees. Resettlement will likely focus on Lebanon rather than Turkey, given historical ties. Government is considering action over insecurity in the Sahel, which contributes to current and future refugee flows. France is well-placed to lead a working party on this issue, given its security role in the region, local knowledge, and links with key regional players (such as Algeria, Morocco, and in West Africa). Lead, with Germany, on Humanitarian Intervention Force.
<b>Germany</b>	Diplomatic leadership on the foreign policy component of the crisis, including a new initiative on Syria. Lead, with France, on the Humanitarian Intervention Force. Resettle more refugees as part of a global deal. Since the implementation of the EU-Turkey deal, Germany has resettled 54 Syrians from Turkey.
<b>Greece</b>	Participate in Humanitarian Intervention force.
<b>Hungary</b>	
<b>Ireland</b>	Resettle refugees as part of a new global deal on resettlement.
<b>Italy</b>	Play a role in renewed Syria initiative in the EU context alongside other EU G5 members (France, Germany and UK). Participate in Humanitarian Intervention Force.
<b>Latvia</b>	
<b>Lithuania</b>	
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Participation in Humanitarian Intervention Force.
<b>Malta</b>	

Resource contributions: Existing commitments to EU-Turkey deal, and suggested contributions to Humanitarian Action Task Force	Proportion of successful asylum applicants to accept from Greece <sup>i</sup>	Refugees to accept through resettlement per year over 5 years <sup>ii</sup>
Committed: 5 EASO and 15 Frontex officers. Suggested: 50 enforcement and 30 asylum officers.	2.62%	2,185
Committed: 53 EASO officers.	2.91%	2,746
Committed: 4 EASO and 16 Frontex officers. Suggested: 50 officers	1.25%	930
Committed: 12 Frontex officers. Suggested: 30 enforcement and 20 asylum officers	1.73%	615
Committed: 8 EASO officers. Suggested: 30 enforcement and 20 asylum officers.	0.39%	158
Committed: 10 EASO and 30 Frontex officers.	2.98%	1,718
Committed: 11 EASO and 5 Frontex officers. Suggested: 50 enforcement and 30 asylum officers.	N/A	1,600
Committed: 20 Frontex and 2 EASO officers. Suggested: 50 officers	1.76%	217
Committed: 10 Frontex and 6 EASO officers. Suggested: 50 enforcement and 30 asylum officers.	1.72%	1,375
Committed: 200 Frontex and 150 EASO officers.	14.17%	15,306
Committed: 123 EASO and 100 Frontex officers	18.42%	19,906
	1.90%	1,840
Committed: 75 Frontex and 3 EASO officers.	1.79%	1,450
Committed: 6 EASO officers Suggested: 50 enforcement and 30 asylum officers.	N/A <sup>iii</sup>	1,223
Committed: 1 EASO officer Suggested: 50 enforcement and 30 asylum officers	11.84%	12,702
Committed: 36 Frontex officers Suggested: 20 asylum officers	1.21%	302
Committed: 25 Frontex officers to the EU-Turkey deal. Suggested: 20 asylum officers	1.16%	451
Committed: 3 Frontex and 5 EASO officers Suggested: 30 enforcement and 20 asylum officers	0.85%	249
Committed: 2 Frontex officers Suggested: 30 enforcement and 20 asylum officers	0.69%	74

Country	Contribution to foreign policy response
<b>Netherlands</b>	<p>May support or act as a third lead on UK-French internationalisation initiative as part of UN Security Council membership pitch. As part of this, it should set an example by accepting more refugees through resettlement. It has already resettled 31 Syrian refugees from Turkey since EU-Turkey deal.</p> <p>As current holder of presidency, it should encourage contributions to a collective asylum fund.</p> <p>Participate in Humanitarian Intervention Force.</p>
<b>Poland</b>	
<b>Portugal</b>	<p>Portugal has doubled its relocation numbers to 10,000, and called for an air-bridge to bring more refugees from Greece. It is in third place behind France and Finland in terms of numbers relocated.</p> <p>It could lead an EU drive to increase resettlement and support a UK/French/Dutch initiative on this.</p>
<b>Romania</b>	
<b>Slovakia</b>	
<b>Slovenia</b>	
<b>Spain</b>	Participate in Humanitarian Intervention Force
<b>Sweden</b>	<p>Sweden could lead a taskforce within the Council looking at the link between development interventions and migration flows to Europe, focusing on countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan that have the potential to create future refugee flows.</p> <p>Sweden should commit to resettling more refugees. It has already resettled 17 refugees from Turkey since the EU-Turkey deal.</p> <p>Participate in Humanitarian Intervention Force.</p>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<p>The UK should lead, alongside France and the Netherlands, a campaign for a global deal on resettlement after the February 2016 London pledging conference. It should set an example by increasing the number of refugee resettlements.</p> <p>The UK would also be well placed to drive forward a Syria initiative in the EU context.</p> <p>Smaller states (notably Sweden) see the UK as critical in negotiating readmission agreements with countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan.</p>

i For more on this, see "Annex: European schemes for relocation and resettlement", available at [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication\\_on\\_the\\_european\\_agenda\\_on\\_migration\\_annex\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_annex_en.pdf).

ii The suggested numbers here are taken from the International Rescue Committee's report, "Pathways to Protection: Resettlement and Europe's Response to a Global Refugee Crisis", March 2016, available at <http://rescue-uk.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Pathways%20to%20protection%20-%20IRC.pdf>.

iii Ireland was not part of the relocation scheme but might be willing to take in a number of refugees as part of a collective effort to move towards a European response.

iv In light of Portugal's willingness to take in more refugees, it could be willing to go above this figure.

Resource contributions: Existing commitments to EU-Turkey deal, and suggested contributions to Humanitarian Action Task Force	Proportion of successful asylum applicants to accept from Greece	Refugees to accept through resettlement per year over 5 years
<p>Committed: 2 Frontex and 5 EASO officers</p> <p>Suggested: 150 enforcement and 100 asylum officers, to set an example as current presidency</p>	4.35%	4,360
Committed: 45 Frontex and 5 EASO officers.	5.64%	5,626
Committed: 35 Frontex and 40 EASO officers.	3.89% <sup>iv</sup>	1,773
Committed: 52 Frontex and 24 EASO officers	3.75%	2,691
Committed: 90 Frontex officers	1.78%	868
Committed: 9 Frontex and 2 EASO officers	1.15%	363
<p>Committed: 3 Frontex and 62 EASO officers</p> <p>Suggested: 200 enforcement and 100 asylum officers</p>	9.10%	8,962
<p>Committed: 5 Frontex and 50 EASO officers</p> <p>Suggested: 100 enforcement officers</p>	2.92%	2,701
<p>Committed: 9 EASO officers</p> <p>Suggested: 200 enforcement and 100 asylum officers</p>	X	15,608

is set to spend about \$5 billion on refugees globally in 2016, almost half of which comes from EU member states and from the Commission. The EU has its own instrument for administering humanitarian assistance beyond Europe's borders in the form of the Commission's humanitarian aid department, DG ECHO, but it also funds UNHCR activities.

Until recently, this structure of engagement was rarely questioned, thanks to two widely held beliefs. First, that EU countries were making a sufficient contribution to refugee assistance, and second, that the negative effects of these crises generally did not reach Europe on a large scale. The refugee crisis has shattered both these assumptions. The size of the problem clearly exceeds the after-the-fact resource provision via UNHCR, and the impacts of conflicts in the wider neighbourhood are now reaching the EU at full force.

An ambitious engagement by European states as laid out above – either via the EU or via a coalition of member states – would mean more money and more attention to the humanitarian cause, which could benefit both the UN system and the NGO community. The HIF would not attempt to replicate the existing UN system but complement it: the EU's focus would be on its wider neighbourhood, and European funding would still go to UNHCR's activities in other regions.

The humanitarian operations of European NGOs would be affected in so far as they receive public funding for their work with refugees. For example, about 44 percent of Oxfam's 2014 revenue came from various public sources, including governments, the EU, and other international organisations.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, only 12 percent of its total programme expenditure was allocated to the MENA region. Substantial new funding of refugee work through the HIF would mean the investment of unprecedented resources in this area, which would also open new ways for European NGOs to engage alongside the HIF.

### *A new deal on resettlement*

Finally, the EU should reach a new deal on resettlement, to scale up the number of refugees taken directly from camps outside the EU and discourage people from making the dangerous journey to Europe. This would also allow the EU to prioritise the most vulnerable and to conduct robust security checks, countering the fear that terrorists or fighters returning from Syria could conceal themselves among refugee flows in order to enter Europe.

The focus for EU states so far has been to take refugees from Turkey, although commitments on the role of each member state have yet to be agreed. However, the EU should also work at UN level to push for a global programme on resettlement to alleviate the pressure on countries such as Jordan and Lebanon, and those in the Horn of Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. UNHCR has called for a global initiative to resettle 10 percent of the five million Syrian refugees – around

500,000 people. A group of EU member states (possibly led by the UK, France, and the Netherlands) could agree a sufficient EU contribution to this goal and use it as a basis to push for a global solidarity pact on resettlement at the UN. The Orderly Departure Program, which was organised for Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s–1990s under UNHCR (the UK, France, and Germany were key participants, alongside the US, Canada, Australia, and Norway), provides a model for this initiative.

Handling the practical aspects of such a deal would be a challenge – member states with experience of working on resettlement with UNHCR, including Sweden and the UK, note that the system is already under pressure and that increased capacity would be needed to support a new deal on resettlement. National asylum boards and EU interior ministries could play a more direct role in a scaled-up effort on resettlement under the EU's enhanced cooperation system as outlined in this paper.

### Who should do what?

A major challenge for the proposed European refugee crisis response is sequencing. There is no point trying to implement the different parts of the package on their own – the measures are interdependent. However, different parts of the package are more significant to some member states than to others – for example, states currently under intense pressure from refugee arrivals, such as Sweden, Greece, and Austria, may be unlikely to accept any deal without a commitment from others in Europe to key components of the package and increased resources to support their response to domestic challenges. (Annex A sets out a breakdown, based on interviews carried out across the EU in February and March 2016, of the key concerns driving key member states.)

As is clear from attempts to implement the relocation deal, neither the European Commission nor any single member state – even one as powerful as Germany – is capable of driving this new approach forward alone. A coalition of the willing will be essential. This group already exists: the Netherlands, holding the EU presidency, along with Germany and Greece, is currently acting as an informal steering group on the policy response to the refugee crisis, and would be well placed to spearhead this new approach.

German policymakers understand that the likely price of a European response is that they will shoulder an outsized share of the burden – but it is important that the contributions of others are not simply window-dressing. Early signs of success in managing the refugees in the EU through a humanitarian action task force led by a coalition of the willing could help to isolate the non-cooperative Visegrad and “Balkan route” coalitions. It could undercut their argument that this aspect of the deal was forced upon them, and bring them back into the EU-wide discussion about managing future flows. It would also serve to rebuild the confidence of states such as Sweden, which have lost faith in the chances of a coherent EU response.

In order to move forward this coalition of the willing, the

<sup>5</sup> Oxfam Annual Report 2014–2015, p. 123, available at [https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/story/oxfam\\_annual\\_report\\_2014\\_-\\_2015\\_final.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/story/oxfam_annual_report_2014_-_2015_final.pdf).

European Commission should abandon the effort to push through the autumn relocation deal. Because of the bad blood generated by that deal, many member states are not willing to implement their commitments, and continued failed attempts to push them to do so discredit the EU's ability to implement solutions on the crisis. Table 1 sets out the state of play as of 15 March: 10 states had received no refugees, and only France, Finland, and Portugal had gone above double digits. Hungary and Slovakia are challenging the deal at the European Court of Justice, and Poland has stated in the wake of the Brussels attacks that it will not receive any more refugees. Given that the current figure of 160,000 refugees to be relocated is in any case too small to make much impact on the numbers already in the EU, it would make sense to focus negotiating capital on generating a new, common approach, and, with the goodwill generated on that front, push for the reopening of routes within the EU to ease the pressure on Greece more gradually.

The table below sets out a breakdown of who could do what in a reconceptualised policy response to the refugee crisis, based on what member states are currently doing, their capacities, and the political environment of each. This is intended as a starting point for an EU plan of action. In addition to this picture, as set out in Sebastian Dullien's paper, "Paying the price: The cost of Europe's refugee crisis", all member states should contribute on the basis of their capacities to a common asylum fund with a target of €70 billion annually.

The proportion of successful asylum applicants that each state should accept from Greece are based on the Commission's relocation formula. This takes into account: population size, total GDP, average number of spontaneous asylum applications and the number of resettled refugees per million inhabitants in 2010–2014, and unemployment rate. The number of refugees that each member state should accept through resettlement – i.e. from countries outside the EU, such as Jordan and Lebanon – are based on International Rescue Committee figures, which use member state population size and GDP. They do not take into account other factors such as labour market absorption capacity and number of refugees taken in per capita in recent years, and are therefore included here only as a starting point to illustrate how a breakdown might work.

## Conclusion

A coherent European policy response to the refugee crisis is urgently needed to address the linked humanitarian and political crises playing out within the EU's borders. It is essential for the EU to demonstrate the capacity to address this crisis in order to move beyond the current impasse. The debate has become so toxic that political leaders are afraid to challenge the arguments of the far right, which are increasingly influencing the mainstream across Europe, and the leaders are instead making impossible promises to close borders and reduce flows to the EU to zero, and – worse – questioning whether Europe should be taking in refugees at all.

If the EU stands for anything today, it is for a community of nations that supported each other's rebuilding in the aftermath of war to construct one of the most powerful blocs in the world. If in the twenty-first century we no longer have faith in the values on which the EU was constructed – such as offering protection to the most vulnerable – then we have no base from which to shape an increasingly competitive and dangerous world.

Ultimately, there is no "solution" to migration. As long as there are wars and crises around the world, people will continue to come to Europe in need of protection. Europe's population will become more mixed, and pretending otherwise is not only futile, it could destroy the EU itself.

# Annex A

Country	Current perspective on refugee crisis
France	France has taken a low-key role in the response to the refugee crisis preoccupied with security at home and abroad, and with a government that is nervous about the links made between the two by the Front National – and the right wing of the Republican Party. It has promised to deliver on its relocation commitments, but nothing more. France has had relatively low flow of asylum seeker arrivals so far, but is operating at full capacity in terms of refugee accommodation facilities, which preoccupies the Interior Ministry in particular. France was notably absent from Merkel's strategy in pushing the Turkey deal through the Council in March. France is wary about the German decision to move forward without it, but a request from Berlin to work more closely together could incentivise it to do more on the refugee crisis, as the Franco-German EU motor remains important to Paris.
Germany	Germany accepts that it will have to continue to take a large share of responsibility for Europe's response to the refugee crisis, but currently feels very isolated in the stand it is taking. It is important that the domestic audience does not see Germany as standing alone, so a broadened response, with more partners on board, is in Berlin's interest.
Greece	For Greece, effective burden sharing must have two sides: financial contributions and accepting refugees. Though the €700m humanitarian assistance is welcome, the feeling in Athens is that if the EU-Turkey deal is not effectively implemented, money will not be enough to stabilise the situation. Relocation and return are seen as critical for maintaining the current capacity levels, so the EU-Turkey deal is hugely important for the Greek government. While Greece is in theory open to support for processing arrivals, they have concerns about sovereignty and about the practicality of a system in which personnel are sent from across the EU to Greece. They would want the co-ordinating of processing to remain under the jurisdiction of Greek ministries, either via a Greek task force overseeing support that comes through pan-EU NGO and government assistance, or via their existing mechanisms. Greece has little choice but to continue to play its current role on the frontline in terms of processing arrivals. However, it could be encouraged to carry this out more effectively if it was offered incentives. The promise of more money would not be useful here, since capacity is currently so stretched and their absorption capacity for a cash injection suffers a number of restrictions at the moment. The offer of flexibility on some of the bailout conditions would be more useful. For example, Greek coastguard personnel complained that cutbacks and restrictions on hiring have left them with only 6,000 personnel for the entire maritime border. They suggested that member states could help by allowing exemptions in hiring freezes for critical areas such as the coastguard. This is not burden sharing but it would be perceived as a clear sign of solidarity, and would boost operational capacity.
Italy	Italy has been under significantly less pressure from arrivals in 2016 compared to 2014 and the first half of 2015. It has two key concerns in the current environment: first, that other EU states should not take decisions, such as border closures, that push migrant flows back to the routes into the EU through Italy. Second, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi is domestically committed to his initiative to move Italy back to the heart of EU decision-making – the refugee crisis will be a test case for this. Because of the number of refugees already in Italy and the pressure that increased arrivals via Libya are putting on the country, Rome may be reluctant to lead increased commitments on relocation and resettlement, but could be persuadable if this is part of a new EU deal.
Netherlands	The Netherlands has been a critical ally for Germany in securing the Turkey deal during its EU presidency (the first half of 2016), and there is strong domestic support for resettlement and for an increase in overseas processing of asylum applications (referred to in some circles as the "Samsom plan", after the leader of the Dutch Labour Party). Although the climate in terms of integrating refugees has worsened in recent years, the Dutch could be expected to resettle some refugees as part of an EU initiative on burden sharing by task. They are also likely to support a UK/French initiative for a global pact on resettlement, which could help the Dutch pitch for UNSC membership next year. They might also be expected, as holders of the presidency, to corral financial contributions financially to a collective asylum fund.
Sweden	Sweden is currently dealing with a national political crisis triggered by unmanageable levels of arrivals – the EU's highest per capita intake of refugees in 2015 – and is sceptical about the chances of a collective European response. However, it is interested in EU measures which aim to manage flows over the long term. Despite the crisis over the handling the current stock of refugees, and negotiating the returns of 80,000 rejected asylum seekers, there is political interest in Sweden expanding legal avenues of entry into Europe. Resettlement and tackling smuggling are both seen as parts of the discussion. For Sweden, readmission agreements are a crucial corollary – and cooperation on a European level is necessary to leverage influence through aid and commercial relationships across the EU.
United Kingdom	The UK has distanced itself entirely from the EU response on the refugee crisis since its April 2015 announcement that it would not take in those who had travelled to the EU "illegally". UK asylum policy for the past decade has been centred around discouraging the "wrong sort" of asylum seekers, i.e. those who travel to make a claim on UK soil, and the government has long argued that resettlement is an important means to prioritise the most vulnerable (although the UK's commitment to take in 20,000 through this route over the next five years is minimal in comparison to the need). In this sense, the Turkey deal marks a shift by the EU in the UK's direction in terms of asylum policy, and this, combined with the UK's hands being a little freer at a European level now that its renegotiation has been completed (alongside fears in London about the impact that an appearance of lack of EU control on the refugee crisis could have on the referendum vote on 23 June) means that the UK may be willing to shift to a slightly more supportive role in some areas.
Cities/regions	Finally, migration is becoming a huge issue in the urban agenda as cities across the EU are carrying the brunt of the crisis. The issue was raised in discussions in Berlin and Athens (involving MPs from 10 EU states - Poland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Greece, Slovenia, Estonia) that in many cases, it is in fact local or regional authorities that could unlock the capacity (and political will) on relocation and resettlement, even if national governments would have to authorise arrivals in the member state. Through the EU Committee of the Regions or some other EU body, a network of refugee champion cities or regions could be created to facilitate upward pressure on national governments on this front where there are blockages at national level.

## About the authors

*Susi Dennison* is co-director of the European Power Programme and senior policy fellow at ECFR. Her recent publications at ECFR include the “European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2016”, “The road back to European Power” (both with other ECFR authors) and “Europe’s neighbourhood: crisis as the new normal”, with Nick Witney.

*Josef Janning* is senior policy fellow at ECFR and head of its Berlin Office. He is an expert on European affairs, international relations, and foreign and security policies, with 30 years of experience in academic institutions, foundations, and public policy think-tanks. He has published widely in books, journals, and magazines.

## Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to many ECFR colleagues, including Manuel Lafont Rapnouil, Tara Varma, Fredrik Wesslau, Laura Kelleher, Dina Pardijs, Jeremy Shapiro and Vessela Tcherneva for their support in the research and development of this paper. Hannah Stone and Gareth Davies’ editorial work has, as always, been invaluable. A number of ECFR’s council members, including Gerald Knaus and Diana Janse have also offered helpful insights on the development of the policy ideas within this publication. All mistakes remain entirely the responsibility of the authors.

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ISBN: 978-1-910118-54-2

Published by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR),  
7th Floor, Kings Buildings,  
16 Smith Square, London,  
SW1p 3HQ, United Kingdom

[london@ecfr.eu](mailto:london@ecfr.eu)