Retrospective analysis of the EU resilience to a large-scale migration

Marian Zulean
University of Bucharest
mzulean@yahoo.com

Gabriela Prelipcean
"Stefan cel Mare" University of Suceava
gprelipcean@yahoo.com

Costinel Anuta
University of Bucharest
costinel.anuta@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The migration issue raises lots of questions regarding the resilience of the EU in front of such large-scale migration. This paper is the introductory part of larger research project that has in view to analyze the EU and some of the national strategic documents in order to detect when and how the migration as a security risk showed up and to clarify if it is a objective risk for EU security or it is just a tool of negotiation. The large-scale migration is a wicked problem that needs a foresight exercise not only to better understand the issue of migration but also to assess Emergency Preparedness of the EU and to prepare a long term strategy or scenarios, with regard to the way the current migration waves will impact the current European architecture. We propose to design a classical Delphi study, as basis for the above-mentioned exercise.

Keywords

Large-scale migration, European Union resilience, EU security, retrospective analysis, foresight exercise.

INTRODUCTION

The European Union grew steadily from a tiny economic "alliance of coal and steel" to become a European-wide "soft power" with global aspirations. The Lisbon Treaty in 2007 has acted as a "negotiated" Constitution for supranational governance, in order to build a community, resilient to grand challenges and committed to prosperity of its citizens. The step-by-step construction of the EU has been pretty successful until now.

However, in the last couple of years migration became an issue of inter-governmental tensions, as well as a risk to national and European security that might endanger the physical existence of the EU. With an unprecedented volume of large-scale migrants (487,000 people arrived on EU southern shores in the first nine months of 2015 only) the phenomenon started some "migration wars", many disagreements on responsibility between Italy or Greece and Britain, Hungary and the Czech Republic, countries that signaled opposition to the quota plan even before it had been formally proposed, as well as disagreements between Western and Eastern European countries on sharing the responsibility or decisions to build fences at the borders (Hungary) or to suspend the Schengen Agreement (Austria). In a recent article from *The Guardian*, Matteo Renzi, Italian PM threatened[i] that: "The Dublin rules, which require refugees to claim asylum in the country where they first land, need to be changed urgently if we want to save the European project." On 25 and 26 January 2016 took place The Informal

Short Paper – Planning, Foresight, and Risk Analysis
Proceedings of the ISCRAM 2016 Conference – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, May 2016
Tapia, Antunes, Bañuls, Moore and Porto de Albuquerque, eds.

meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA Council) to discuss European cooperation on security, migration and justice. The velocity and intensity of events creates the hypothesis of a catastrophic disaster comparable with the dissolution of the Roman Empire in front of migration chords.

That issue raises lots of questions regarding the resilience of the EU in front of such large-scale migration. *Is the EU on a brink of dissolution? Is it the EU equipped with strategies and institutions to manage the crisis? What kind of long-term strategies and plans can improve the resilience of the EU?*

In order to answer this questions our paper would like to investigate the strategies deployed at the EU level and some national strategies and to propose a research project to deal with methodology for improving the Emergency Preparedness and Management both at the EU and national levels.

This paper has two goals:

- to analyze the EU and some of the national strategic documents in order to detect when and how the migration as a security risk showed up and to clarify if it is a objective risk for EU security or it is just a tool of negotiation?
- to propose an EU level foresight exercise on securitization or de-securitization of migration and to find tools and methodologies to increment the EU resilience.

THE RISK OF MIGRATION: RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EU STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

In order to detect when and how the migration as a security risk showed up at the EU level, we did a brief retrospective analysis of medium and long-term strategies, such as the European Security Strategy (Solana Strategy) from 2003 and its Implementation Report of 2008. No significant reference could be found in Solana Strategy but some 4 references were found on the Report on Implementation of ESS (2008):

a. State failure affects our security through crime, **illegal immigration** and, most recently, piracy. (page 1)
b. Natural disasters, environmental degradation and competition for resources exacerbate conflict, especially in situations of poverty and population growth, with humanitarian, health, political and security consequences, including **greater migration**. (page 6)
c. The Mediterranean, an area of major importance and opportunity for Europe, still poses complex challenges, such as insufficient political reform and **illegal migration**. (page 7)
d. The Union for the Mediterranean, launched in July 2008, provides a renewed political moment to pursue this with our southern partners, through a wide-ranging agenda, including on maritime safety, energy, water and **migration**. (page 12)

Thus, the two documents have the following shortcomings: 1) they are rather short-term (or muddling through) approaches and 2) they are dealing with missions rather from outside of the EU.

On the other hand, Justice and Home Affairs is the EU pillar dealing with internal policies such as the fight against terrorism and organized crime, cybercrime and violent radicalization, the trafficking of human beings and asylum and immigration at large. Let's analyze briefly the issue of migration as a risk in the medium term strategies of JHA. The EU Internal Security Strategy approved by the Council of the EU in 2010 has one reference on migration in the chapter on "Integrated border management". It also sets mechanisms to implement the Stockholm Programme that covered –not directly- the issue of migration when it relates with terrorism and organized crime.

The Internal Security Strategy has been replaced in 2015 by the European Agenda on Security, which focuses on such priorities as terrorism, organized crime and cybercrime as interlinked threats. The issue of migration became an important focus, mainly announcing The European Agenda on Migration as one of the initiatives of the Commission Work Programme for 2015. In this strategy dedicated entirely to migration the EU aims at taking immediate action to prevent further losses of migrants' lives by supporting financially "Frontex, safe and legal resettlement of people to Europe, to the Regional Protection and Development Programmes and to the most affected Member States." The Agenda treats migration both as an opportunity and a challenge for the EU. The four pillars of a long-term strategy are:

1. Reducing the incentives for irregular migration;

Short Paper – Planning, Foresight, and Risk Analysis
Proceedings of the ISCRAM 2016 Conference – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, May 2016
Tapia, Antunes, Bañuls, Moore and Porto de Albuquerque, eds.

2.   Saving lives and securing the external borders;
3.   Strengthening the common asylum policy and
4.   Developing a new policy on legal migration.

From the semantic and content analysis above it can be easily drawn the argument that migration was not a security risk until recently and it was constructed in the recent history of the last years (securitization of migration). It was rather considered an opportunity but the large scale migration of 2015 changed the mindset.

In order to detect when and how the migration as a security risk showed up in the national strategic documents, we chose a set of security strategies of EU member states (Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Spain, UK) promoted between 1994 and 2015, available in English.

We performed a semantic analysis of the risk / threat assessment sections from the above-mentioned documents, using Tropes software, in order to delineate the "semantic ecosystem" of migration for each case. Figure 1 pictures references to the word "migration" within the European national security documents dedicated to assess the security risks and propose policies. A first observation from the picture is that we noticed an increased references to "migration" in the security strategies promoted around 2003-2004 in the Central and Eastern Europe , followed by a light decrease of them in the documents published afterwards and another light increase after 2013. One possible explanation should be related to the spillover effects of the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

A second observation regards the low references (or poor "semantic ecosystem") in the strategic documents of West Europe countries, with some noticeable exceptions (Spain).
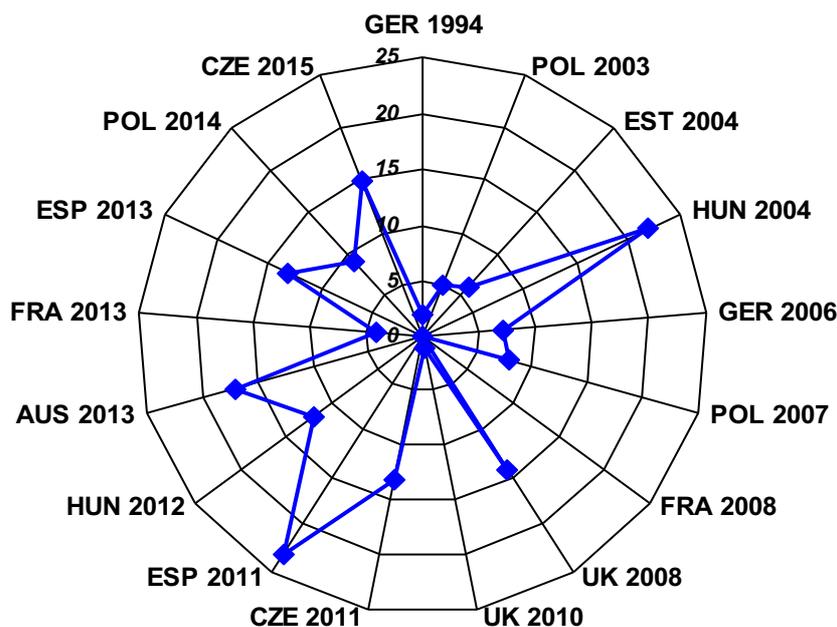

Figure no.1: Number of references to migration in the analyzed national strategies

We chose to deeper analyze the strategic documents of Hungary. The main reason of choosing the Hungarian case regards the disponibility of two strategic documents translated into English, its geopolitical position as a Schengen border and the very visible and coherent manner in which Hungarian leadership managed the flows of migration in the last couple of years. How did Hungary anticipate the risk of migration in the national security strategies?

The 2004 National Security Strategy (NSS-2004) started from the assumption that Hungary's borders are expected to remain the external borders of the EU and the Schengen area also for a longer term and anticipated

Short Paper – Planning, Foresight, and Risk Analysis
Proceedings of the ISCRAM 2016 Conference – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, May 2016
*Tapia, Antunes, Bañuls, Moore and Porto de Albuquerque, eds.*

that migration could bring economic and demographic advantages as well as carrying security risks. Similar approach of a Schengen border country has been kept in the new NSS from 2012. One important caveat of the study is related to the fact that we were able to perform the semantic analysis only on the national documents translated in English.

In the Figure no.2 and 3 it can be easily seen the connection of migration with other concepts (words) from the NSS. The "semantic ecosystem" of 2004 strategy is more developed and more related with security terms in comparison with the 2012 ecosystem. The left hand side words (in blue) are the words before the keyword (migration) while the right hand side words (in red) are words connected afterwards. Further analyzing the specific paragraphs containing migration, which is described as a complex phenomenon carrying security risks, we noticed that the left hand side words are mainly seen as drivers for migration (e.g. instability feeding cross-border organized crime and terrorism may increase the challenges of migration), while the right hand side words may describe the areas impacted by the phenomenon (e.g. use by the criminal organizations or terrorist groups of the migration channels to establish or reinforce their positions in Hungary).
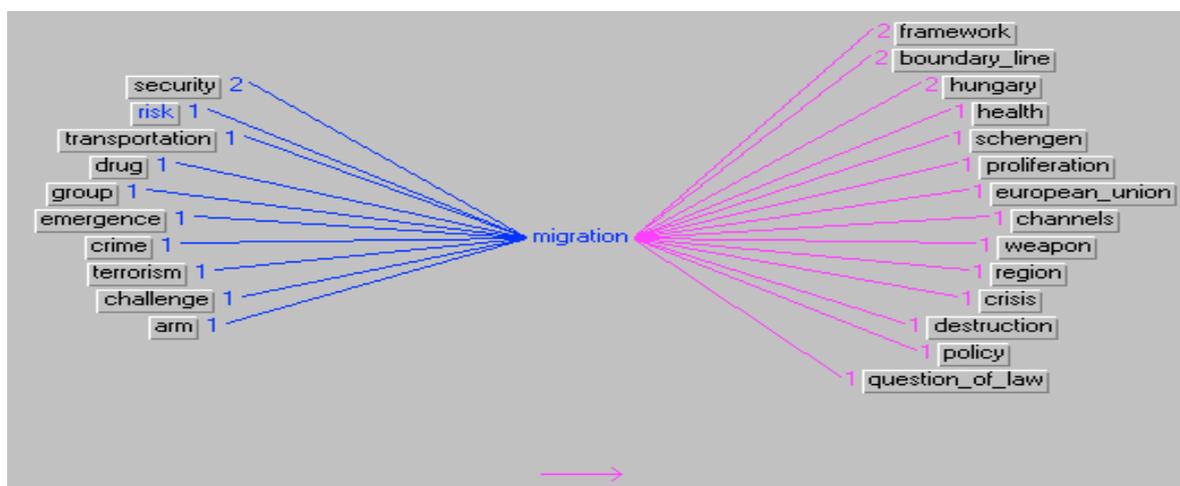
Source: own analysis using Tropes software

Figure no.2: Semantic analysis of the Hungarian NSS 2004 regarding the migration term
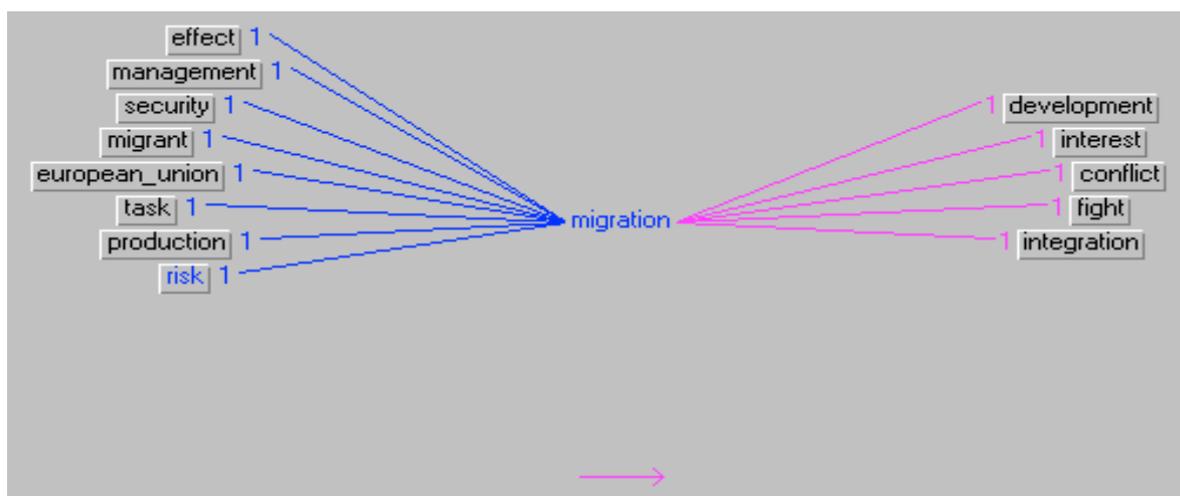
Source: own analysis using Tropes software

Figure no.3: Semantic analysis of the Hungarian NSS 2012 regarding the migration term

Short Paper – Planning, Foresight, and Risk Analysis
Proceedings of the ISCRAM 2016 Conference – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, May 2016
Tapia, Antunes, Bañuls, Moore and Porto de Albuquerque, eds.

Hungary is the case where the issue of migration as a security risk is present in all strategies, maybe due to its status as a Schengen country but the NSS 2012 has less references and proximities of national security concepts. Again, as previously mentioned, the context plays a role in explaining the light de-securitization from 2004 to 2012, the former being a strategy concerned with the outcomes of the Yugoslavian wars while its Eastern neighbor, Romania, was still a candidate country to the EU membership.

The analysis showed that the EU strategic documents included migration as a risk but there is no evidence regarding the solutions and policies able to tackle the issue of large scale migration and to improve the resilience.

WHAT KIND OF LONG-TERM STRATEGIES AND PLANS CAN IMPROVE THE RESILIENCE OF THE EU?

The concept of resilience is pretty new in the social sciences and it was borrowed from the engineering or biology sciences to portray the capability of a system to continue to function even if it faced stress or shocks. David Woods explains that resilience is a label for four basic concepts: (1) resilience as rebound from trauma; (2) resilience as a synonym for robustness; (3) resilience as the opposite of brittleness, and 4) resilience as network architectures that can sustain the ability to adapt to future surprises as conditions evolve (Woods, 2015).

The association of the "resilience" and "migration" concepts was quite uncommon in the literature. Some authors (Parkes, 2015) described how the perception of migration has changed in the last decades from a triumph of globalization to be considered a geopolitical risk. By the same token, Bourbeau (2015) tried to realize a theorization of the link between migration, resilience and security by examining ways in which resilience precedes a socially constructed understanding of international migration as a security risk, based on France experience.

In the same line of argumentation Philippe Bourbeau did an extensive literature review on resilience and resiliencism. He illustrates his arguments with the securitization of migration in the cases of France and Canada (Bourbeau, 2013). He distinguishes three types of resilience: resilience as Maintainance, resilience as Marginality and resilience as Renewal (Bourbeau, 2013).

The EU is committed to build resilience to stresses and shocks as a pre-requisite for reduced humanitarian needs, poverty reduction and sustainable development as was stated in the EU Resilience Compendium. According to the EU documents resilience is defined as "the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, to adapt, and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks" (COM (2012)586). That definition raises a question regarding the strategic planning on all EU levels and domains. What kinds of EU institutions deal with resilience and have a strategic plan to build resilience and to respond to a large scale migration?

Our inquiry identified that the main pillar having a systematic approach to resilience is Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). Thus, the European Commission presented, in 2012, a Communication called "The EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from food crises", followed by an Action Plan and several other policies. The Council of the EU adopted- in May 2013- the Council Conclusions on EU approach to resilience. In April 2015 the European Commission presented a Communication on capacity-building in support of security and development. A policy brief to the European Parliament underlines the conclusion that the "concept of resilience brings under the same umbrella different short and long-term approaches to risk management, which deal not only with imminent disasters (i.e. flooding, fires) but also with complex crises (i.e. chronic conflicts) and risk trends (i.e. climate change, environmental degradation" (ERPS, 2015).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper is the introductory part of a larger research project that we are going to design and build for a European research area.

We observed the social construction of the (large-scale) migration as a security risk both in the "communitarian" (EU) level and at the national or regional levels. However it is not clear if large-scale migration became an existential risk for the EU that could trigger its dissolution.

Another finding is related with the "evaluation" of the medium and long-term strategies at the EU level and national security strategies regarding the capacity to anticipate large scale migration waves and the actions to

Short Paper – Planning, Foresight, and Risk Analysis
Proceedings of the ISCRAM 2016 Conference – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, May 2016
Tapia, Antunes, Bañuls, Moore and Porto de Albuquerque, eds.

analyze systemic vulnerabilities and build a resilient EU in order to face such a risk. Starting from a definition of resilience as an ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, to adapt, and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks we found out that the concept of resilience is not very well defined and not used at the higher level (EU level). Also, a very systematic approach to resilience is very well designed at the CSDP level, but it is rather connected with the world outside of the EU.

All these aspects show how the large-scale migration is a wicked problem that needs a foresight exercise not only to better understand the issue of migration, but also to assess Emergency Preparedness of the EU and to prepare a long term strategy or scenarios, with regard to the way the current migration waves will impact the resilience of the current European architecture.

In the following part of our research we propose to design a classical Delphi study (Linstone, Turoff, 1975), as basis for the above-mentioned exercise. Using the Delphi technique and foresight exercise we will be able to emphasize and to understand the gaps and issues at all policy levels in the EU emergency management and to offer policy recommendation for the European and national leaders. We have some experience in designing a research project and assessing the Emergency Preparedness at the national level (Zulean, Prelipcean, 2013). We consider that the Delphi study will be the best way to approach the problems and structure a system of inquiry that can be continued by an extensive research project.

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